

Gateways

A Newsletter of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America

SPRING/SUMMER 2010, ISSUE 58

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR by Stephen Spitalny	3
RESEARCH	
Deepening Our Capacities to Meet the Children in Our Care • <i>Nancy Blanning</i>	4
Observations of Children Under Three in the Kindergarten • <i>Lisa Gromicko</i>	8
The Seasonal Festivals in Early Childhood • <i>Nancy Foster</i>	10
A Story for the Evergreen Garden • <i>Joan Almon</i>	12
OBSERVING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORK	
Thoughts on My Visit to North America • <i>Helle Heckmann</i>	13
Getting Over Easy • <i>Cynthia Aldinger</i>	16
SUPPORTING THE ADULTS	
It Takes a Village to Raise a Child • <i>Andrea Gambardella</i>	19
Reflections on Working with Parents • <i>Kimberly Lewis</i>	21
AROUND THE WORLD	
Wawa Munakuy Nursery-Kindergarten • <i>JoAnne Dennee and Joyce Gallardo</i>	23
PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES	
Clean-Up Time: Chaos or Co-operation? • <i>Barbara Klocek</i>	27
The Importance of Touch • <i>Laurie Clark</i>	28
<i>with a Spring Cleaning Circle composed by Laurie Clark</i>	30
BOOK REVIEW	
<i>Awakening to Child Health</i> Reviewed by Stephen Spitalny	32
CALENDAR OF EVENTS	33

From the Editor

Stephen Spitalny

More and more it becomes clear that it is all about the will!

The challenges we face as early childhood educators are, by and large, the result of the diminishing will capacities of young children. One of the causes is the proliferation of technological gadgets that are promoted as necessary for modern life, and specifically those marketed for children. Consumer culture has conspired to create products that deliver to young children exactly what is most detrimental for their development, while advertising wizards spin same products in such a way that parents line up in droves to make sure their child is not left out. The gadgets take children away from their life of will activity.

Similarly, the so-called “food” given to so many children is lacking in nutritional value and life energy. Food is the substance the digestive system, the metabolic system, has to work with. This is the sphere of the will in the physical body. Another factor is the way young children are related to by most adults, especially in the realm of verbal communication. Adults offer explanations, instructions, and questions, questions, and more questions to the young child. This prematurely awakens the child in his thinking, and diverts him away from the developmental relating through the will. We see children who don’t imitate, who haven’t achieved mastery of their own bodies, and who don’t (or can’t) seem to do anything.

The engaged will of the adult is the antidote for this situation. The adult’s will must be active both in activity and in thinking. By utilizing our will in thinking we can create situations that wake up the child’s will forces that have been put to sleep or damaged. And we must become makers and creators, engaging ourselves in will activities for the sake of the children—making gardens, toys, dolls, food, and so on. The will forces of the adult must exaggerate themselves, must “over-engage,” as example for the children to begin to imitate—imitating both the activities, and the adult’s engagement of will forces.

Adversarial forces are attacking the human being at its most tender and formative stages, preventing the positive unfolding of new gifts from the spiritual world

of which the children are the bearers. Our responsibility, as soon as we become aware of the situation, is to stand up for the protection of childhood. In the lectures given to the teachers prior to the opening of the first Waldorf school in 1919 (published as *Study of Man*), Rudolf Steiner spoke over and over about the education of the will. This is THE essential pedagogical activity, even more so today, especially for the young child.

In this issue of *Gateways*, Cynthia Aldinger’s article “Getting Over Easy” takes a look at both sides of this situation—the will of the adult, and the situation of the child. In her article she says, “One colleague, to whom I have looked for guidance over the years, was concerned that the idea of children learning by imitation was falling by the wayside. She was aware of a number of adults who were beginning to verbally assign tasks to the children, rather than trusting that they would eventually become involved via imitation. Her concern resonated in me, and I shared that I often did a specific task myself for weeks before really expecting the children to participate.” For me, this is a frightening picture that makes me want to redouble my efforts to work out of imitation as a pathway of strengthening the will of the young child. I am interested in what new ways colleagues have found to work in the realm of will education for the young child so we can share those ideas in these pages in future issues.

This issue is filled with so much that can support our work and broaden our perspectives, and it is here because colleagues have taken the time to write down their ideas and questions and send them to this editor, and take a chance that others are interested. That is how we create *Gateways* together—it is a venue for sharing ideas and activities, and for bringing up questions that all serve the work we do with young children in North America, and throughout the world. Thanks again to all who have submitted articles and stories, songs and activities for this issue, and for all the past and future issues of *Gateways*. We depend on you!

Dr. Karnow included a verse referring to “a knighthood of our time” in his lectures synopsis in this issue. We can recognize ourselves as members of this knighthood that serves the future in these dark times, and align ourselves with this force for the good in all our striving.

Deepening Our Capacities to Meet the Children in Our Care

Notes from the 2010 East Coast Early Childhood Conference

• Nancy Blanning

The content which follows comes from lectures presented by Dr. Gerald Karnow at the 2010 East Coast Early Childhood Conference in Spring Valley, NY, on Feb. 12-14. This presentation concluded a three-year consideration of the young child's journey into incarnation of the "I" and how we can observe this unfolding.

Secretly, began Dr. Karnow, we should consider early childhood as the most important work in Waldorf education. The experiences in early childhood provide the foundation for all of life and are most crucial in facilitating healthy incarnation of the human being. Last year the work in our kindergartens was characterized as "priestly." A picture from Steiner's *Cosmic Memory* describes a grove where the priestess sings her listeners into becoming the vehicle for the incarnated spiritual "I." Her priestly deed was preparation for the human being to be able to say "I." Likewise, the task of Waldorf early childhood education is incarnation of the "I" in the children.

Another component of this secret is that it requires the greatest amount of selflessness on the part of the educator. What matters is not so much what we *know* as what we *create* around the children so the "I" can find the proper residence in the physical organism. We are the midwives, the priests, and potentially also the physicians for the children we work with—and for the parents and ourselves as well. This selflessness has to do with creating an environment that permits the "I" to experience itself. A powerful example of how the child comes to experience himself comes in Steiner's lecture, "Self-Education in the Light of Spiritual Science" (Berlin, March 14, 1912). Spiritual science appreciates that there is a higher Self acting upon the child outside of his normal self.

Besides what we take hold of as educators developing out of our normal consciousness,

something is already working on the child as a higher being outside of his normal self. If we focus on this, we will perhaps find another kind of education at work on the child, whereas in our normal education we turn only to the personal self of the child.

Where do we find what works on the child as a higher Self, and which belongs to the child, but doesn't enter his consciousness? Astonishing but true: it is children's play, the meaningful, well carried out play of all children that the higher Self works on. With the child's play we can only create preconditions for an education. What is accomplished in play happens basically through the self-activity of the child, through everything that cannot be confined to strict rules. Indeed, the essential, educational aspect of play is based on the fact that we call a halt to our rules and to all our arts of education and leave the child to his own impulses. For what does the child do when we leave him to his own impulses? When playing with external objects the child can try out whether this or that will work through his own activity. He brings his own will into activity, into movement. Because of the way in which the external objects behave under the influence of the will, it then happens that the child educates himself for life, simply through play, in a completely different way than through the influence of an older person or of someone's pedagogical principles. For this reason it is so very important that we mix as little of the rational or intellectual as possible into children's play. The more that play has to do with what cannot be comprehended but is simply beheld in its living character, the better it is.

We have to set ourselves aside to permit the real being of the child to enter; this can only happen during the first seven years. We selflessly remove ourselves to create an environment in which we can perceive the true being of the child through his play.

What is this environment in which the child can “self-educate”? The classroom during free play can seem a chaotic mess, yet it is a “mess” in which there lives order. There are little clusters of activity here and there. It is an incredible cauldron of chaotic but organized activity. At a secret sign, the classroom is miraculously brought back into form through an orderly activity. The differentiated chaos is brought into a social unity. In witnessing this himself, Dr. Karnow realized that the whole organism of the class—a new creation—is being entered into by the children; the past which the children bring with them is entering the present. The teacher provides the right circumstances that permit this entry to happen into a highly differentiated way. This entry happens through the portals of the foundational senses of touch, life, self-movement, and balance, which the children need to experience in both the indoor and outdoor classroom. The consciousness of the teacher in holding each child in mind and her conscientiousness in guiding all that happens during the day creates a “kindergarten bubble,” a protective sheath that surrounds the group.

As the child is “self-educating,” he is also being formed through the experiences that come to him through the environment. In the first seven years the child is literally forming as well as growing the physical body. What we are doing in Waldorf early childhood education is so transformative that it changes the physical body. That is part of the secret of our work. All the child experiences through the senses and the more subtle aspects of mood, warmth of soul, joyfulness, and rhythmic order influence how the child’s body develops toward a healthy incarnation. As we understand this, we can appreciate how we can bring healing influences toward the children in our care. Rudolf Steiner learned this through work with his first student, Otto Specht, a boy with hydrocephalus who no one thought could be educated. Through Rudolf Steiner’s pedagogical methods, the size and form of the boy’s head shrunk and he eventually became a medical doctor.

This series of conferences began two years ago with considering “difficult children” (based on the title of Henning Kohler’s book, *Difficult Children: There Is No Such Thing*.) Otto Specht was Rudolf Steiner’s “difficult child” through whom he developed the basis for what became Waldorf education twenty years later. Now nearing a century since the founding of the first Waldorf school, we encounter increasing

numbers of children who fall into this “difficult” category. These are children whose incarnation is not going right; they struggle to find a comfortable and harmonious inhabitation of the physical body with their “I.” That the child is having some incarnational problem is seen quickly through our irritability or annoyance because a child is not doing what he is supposed to. We lose patience and want to know what to do.

One step toward knowing what to do is to look to the child’s bodily form as a way to understand the behaviors that perplex and challenge us. Consider that we have two children in a class displaying opposite tendencies. One is fearful and retreats into a corner. Another one annoyingly jumps right into everyone’s face. We worry about both, wanting to encourage the first and contain the other so that we can create a whole, harmonious organism. As a physician, Dr. Karnow sits and watches and notes the polarities of the two different children. He works from the idea that every behavior has its roots in the morphology, the form and structure, of the body. So he looks at forms, specifically the form of the face. On the quiet child he sees that the facial features are a bit flattened, as though held back. The child running around has a face that comes forward, enters into space. He looks at the forms and the child’s movement or lack thereof—chaotic movement, headless movement. He begins to find a connection between outer behavior and the child’s physical form. He comes to a preliminary conclusion that the quiet individuality is holding back from really being incarnated, is not pressing his features out into the world. The other gesture of form is “I will stick myself into your business all the time and will not stop.” This is an organic behavior that places itself into the classroom. This knowledge comes out of an inner participation in the form of the child, which can tell us a secret of how that individuality is entering into the body. This insight comes not out of judgment or criticism but of out of a deeply warmed interest in wanting to understand the child’s formative gesture.

All of our observations, to be humanely objective and morally upright, must be founded on what Dr. Karnow calls “the rock.” This “rock” is the image of humanity as a three-fold being shared with us through Rudolf Steiner’s insights. This is the image of mankind as a spiritual being. Through this image we hold and behold the child in reverence, not judgment. We can discover huge secrets about what an individuality brings into this life if we stand upon

“the rock.” In our observation first we *look*, then we *see*, and finally we *behold*. These are all different activities, focusing our attention more and more intently. In the wonder of beholding, we become what we behold. Through our eyes we enter into what we are looking at. We experience what we behold as if we were that ourselves. We become “one with” through this process. We often “look” and do not “see.” But when we “behold,” we become “one with.” This is the mood that must permeate our looking at a child so intimately. We must stand upon ‘the rock’ to make discriminations in our beholding.

If we look at children’s heads, we see how highly individual they are. The head is differentiated into regions that reflect thinking (forehead region), feeling (central part of face), and willing (the jaw area.) If, for example, we looked at the upper lips of children in the class, a short upper lip might suggest that maturation stopped and kept the lip up. Another one keeps the lip down all the time; what impression does that convey? A lower jaw thrust forward looks as if it will attack. If the behaviors fit these impressions, we can see that an aspect expressed in the form of the body has emancipated and expressed itself psychologically in behavior.

We can use this approach to observation in contemplating the form of the child—not only the face but also the whole head, ear, three-foldness of head-trunk-limbs, and so on. Then we see what imagination these suggest. What comes of imagination, coupled with objective but warmed consideration of the behaviors emancipated from the body form, can lead us to the inspiration and intuition of what to do for the child. What can we emphasize within or bring into the kindergarten environment that will have a balancing and harmonizing effect? How can we bring healing in the pedagogical realm?

A big question confronting us is when it is appropriate to bring in other therapies. Dr. Karnow’s answer—when the child cannot be contained in the “kindergarten bubble.” If the child’s capacity to imitate does not fall within what we provide for the class, the child steps outside of our pedagogical domain and cannot relate in an ordered way to the breathing “chaos.” Then we have to come to an understanding, a diagnosis (which literally means “understanding through and through”) and see where we can bring something to achieve balance. We can seek the support of anthroposophic medicine and therapeutic eurythmy. In some cases, sensory

integration/sensory processing therapies are allies where the child’s issues lie beyond what can be sufficiently addressed through our classroom environments.

Throughout this lecture series, we have considered the first seven years as the time the child grows the healthy physical body through the support of the etheric body. Everything of the physical body has to be imbued with the etheric. The body creates its form and grows. When certain stages of growth are completed, the etheric body is emancipated from that task and becomes available for other activities. Previous lectures² have described this process and how the forces of the etheric body are birthed in three stages, ultimately to be available for use as thinking forces. We can have a glimmer of this invisible etheric world when we look at a colored disk and then see the complementary color magically appear as a glow when we then gaze upon a white surface. Something of this freed etheric force we project outward, allowing us to participate in an invisible world.

The etheric body is hard to speak about because, though we live within it all the time, we are unaware of its presence, “asleep” to it. But we can wake up to this reality. Through our thinking forces, we actually take hold of these emancipated forces that rise out of our body. When we realize that we can consciously relate to what the etheric is, we have tools that we *can* and *do* work with, whether we know it or not. We must know as educators that what we do with our emancipated ether body affects the world around us and every other human being we meet. For example, we can send our gaze to another—an etheric encounter—and that person experiences it. Through our work with the child in the first seven years, we are working to assist the proper emancipation of the child’s etheric through the environment and our actual being. As we create the space and present ourselves, we work deeply into the being of the child. We can do that more consciously and effectively when we understand the subtle distinctions of the etheric body—the four ethers themselves.

We know that the physical body is highly differentiated. It has aspects relating to the four elements—mineral, water/fluid, air, and fire/warmth. The etheric body is also differentiated into four aspects that relate to the elements. The solid, mineral substance of the physical body has to be drawn into a living state. If a mineral part of the human being is

not lifted up, it literally becomes solid, like a kidney stone. The aspect of the etheric body that lifts the solid into life is the *life ether*

This is also true for fluids. Water also has to be kept alive and maintained in a living state. We know the truth of this when we see its failure in an older person with heavy, swollen legs. The ether which brings the fluid into life is known as the *chemical/sound/tone ether*. It is the *light ether* which works in the air, which we can read about in *Cosmic Memory* or *Occult Science*. Air and light ether work as opposites. Air fills in the space between things; light separates and creates borders, reveals distinctions. We experience *warmth ether* when we take outer warmth and make it inner warmth. Through the interaction of these ethers with earthly elements, we have forces that bring our bodily substance into a living state. We can positively support the living state of the child and his incarnation into earthly life when we intentionally work with the ethers in our classrooms.

Where are the ethers in the classroom? We can first consider warmth in both the physical and soul warmth we have in our classrooms. Warmth in whatever form influences all the children. Each child has her own warmth organization but is also affected by outer warmth in the room. We must make sure the children are warmly dressed. Whenever we consider these issues of warmth, we are working with the warmth ether.

How do we work with the air? We need to tend the physical air itself and then go to the light ether. We think we see light but rather we experience the effects of the light ether's activity, which reveals things and brings about separation. The air has to be circulating and light ether present in the lighting of the room. It must not be too light or too dark.

Is there fluidity in the room? Rhythm, the interdependence of everything we have in the classroom, how we can go from one play area to another so the children can move with social harmony—these are all expression of the chemical or tone ether. Yet it is not just harmony of objects and implements in the room but harmony of the being of the teacher and the harmony between teachers that also matters.

And what is the life ether? It is joy. The life ether is that which always permits the creation of life. It is unending and always present.

All of these are practical things we can consider. How we work with these etheric subtleties in our

thinking also offers the children something to grow upon. How can we get to know the ethers from the inside out? Of the warmth ether we ask, "What permeates everything?" It is the warmth ether that can penetrate everything. So when we enter a class, we send the warmth of our thought into everything, filling the space. Warmth has no barriers but lifts and permeates all.

In order to get inside the light ether, one can ask, "What is revelation, what is unveiling?" Here we can experience our thoughts as making discriminations in our environment. We can see what is out of order in the environment, in relationships.

The chemical ether poses a question of what is harmonization, order, interdependence, transformation of one thing into another. How is that living within the room, within the children, within oneself?

And of the life ether, we ask what is self-creating life?

The theme throughout the three-years' presentation of lectures has been how we can bring healing and wholeness to the children on their path into incarnation. The challenges thrust upon the children seem to grow only more complex and subtle. They sometimes seem even phantom-like, living in shadows that our light of ordinary thinking cannot reveal. To meet these darkened forces, the children need champions. Dr. Karl König, founder of the curative education Camphill movement, expressed this in a verse that Dr. Karnow shared.

*There is a knighthood of our time
Whose members do not ride through the
darkness
Of physical forests as of old,
But through the forests of darkened minds.
They are armed with a spiritual armor
An inner sun makes them radiant.
Out of them shines healing—
Healing that flows from the knowledge of the
Image of Mankind as a spiritual being.
They must create inner order, inner justice,
Peace and conviction in the darkness of our
time.*

We have to form a knighthood where we can all shine our inner sun, no matter what is happening outside. Whatever we do in relation to the ethers will work deeply into the bodies of the children in our care. With these we are taking in the forces of the

sun and permitting something to grow and thrive that will not otherwise work. Then we will be what Dr. König calls the knights who have “an inner sun.”

Dr. Karnow reminded us of our indebtedness to Rudolf Steiner. From him we have the “Image of Mankind as a spiritual being.” There is nothing we do in Waldorf education that is not founded upon the insights of anthroposophy Rudolf Steiner so generously offers to us. We must never cease deepening our relationship with these fundamental sources. These insights are the “rock” upon which this new knighthood stands.

Observations of Children Under Three in the Kindergarten

• Lisa Gromicko

The benefits of mixed-aged kindergartens are many, especially today with smaller families and frequently unsettled family dynamics. One important benefit spoken of is that young children will have fewer caregivers in the early years, if they have been included at earlier ages in the kindergarten. As younger and younger children come into the kindergartens in our schools today, many questions have arisen. This year, I had the valuable opportunity to experience and learn from the addition (due to school necessity) of several youngest children to my kindergarten class.

The primary questions that I carry now are: What is the long-term health impact for children under three years old, of the “kindergarten” experience? Shouldn’t children from birth to age three, have an age-appropriate experience instead, because of their critical life stage? What does “kindergarten readiness” really mean, in this age of inclusion? I feel that we need to earnestly revisit this question, in particular.

Two successful early childhood models of mixed ages (including children under three) come to mind. They are Nøkken, a care center in Copenhagen, and the LifeWays care centers in North America. What they share is the inclusion of youngest children, but more importantly, the *separation* of the youngest children from the “kindergarten age” children during large parts of the day/morning. I believe that this is essential if we are going to include youngest children into our “kindergarten” programs. This adds to

References

Rudolf Steiner. *Self-Education in the Light of Spiritual Science* (Mercury Press).

Dr. Karnow’s other lectures in this series are summarized in *Gateways* issues 54, 55, and 57.

Nancy Blanning *has been teaching in Waldorf Early Childhood for over 25 years. She is also a teacher trainer, mentor, and remedial consultant to other Waldorf schools, as well as a WECAN board member.*

the school expense of our programs, which must provide a sufficient number of adults to attend to the youngest children, while allowing the needs of the kindergarten-aged children to also be met. This year, I ended up needing two assistants, and this was without being able to separate the younger children from the group.

The following are some general, practical observations that I made of the class this year, from a traditional “class”-size-group perspective. The additions to our existing kindergarten age group this year were ten two-and-a-half-year-olds and several young three-year-olds.

Two-and-a-half-year-olds need:

- Humor, tenderness, predictability, SIMPLICITY, repetition
- *Much* more lead time before transitions than kindergarten-aged children
- *Small* group size
- Not having to hold hands with other children
- Food cut-up/cooled off
- LOTS and LOTS of food!
- Plenty of time in the morning rhythm for several bathroom/diapering changes
- A lot of interaction with adults: hugs, rocking, modeling play, modeling social exchanges, modeling kindness, conflict mediation, help to build “houses”
- Physical care: washing hands, potty training, putting on and taking off shoes/clothes, nose

drips, diapering, washing face, using napkin, using spoon

- Not being expected to participate in “kindergarten” activities
- Adult attention to building volatility between youngest children and frequent pre-emptive measures by adults to avoid injury—often providing monitored space & time for toddler children to attempt to work it out—not jumping in too soon (while also trying to avoid a brawl)
- Adult tolerance for the words “mine!” and “no!”
- Adult objectivity, humor
- Predictable rest-times (pillow, blanket – some children this age still need a morning nap)
- Space to play without interference from older children,
- Tagging along with adults all morning,
- Encouragement, opportunities for autonomy
- Not being asked to go very long without a potty break (they often don’t ask for one and won’t want to stop for one, either)
- Floor-time in circle, with simple gestures and plenty of repetition
- Quiet times
- Simple puppetry for story/ with repetition of verse and telling the story long enough
- More adult involvement than with kindergarten children in establishing simple ‘rules’ such as staying in our chair at the table, keeping our clothes on, not pushing/hitting/biting, “gentle hands”
- Adult awareness of the **choking danger** of many play and household items
- Adult-only accessible locks on the doors or gates leading outside
- Some “formed” toys like a tea set, little cars, dolls, blocks, spoons, places to climb into, stools
- A few “extra special” adult tools for distraction such as a little finger puppet that comes out of adult’s apron pocket, a picture book
- The ability for an adult to take a tantruming toddler for a “walk” through school or outside to see the bunny or other distraction
- Child-proof/odor proof diaper pail - recommended: “Diaper Genie” (you don’t have to buy their refills, just use medium-sized garbage bags, changed daily)
- Potty chairs

Special challenges with younger children:

- Communication challenges with speaking. Many are still in “naming” phase of speech.

- Easily over-stimulated by each other and by the daily activities of the whole group.
- Frequent volatility and aggressiveness with each other and toward older children, “defensiveness” patterns.
- Parallel play, not cooperative yet.
- More challenging behaviors around February and March, with many turning three.
- Emergence of “I”—need for autonomy within boundaries, protection of the senses.

Kindergarten age children (with very young children included) need:

- Humor, tenderness, empathy, understanding around frustration about the “little” children
- Security of knowing that adults are aware of what the younger children are doing
- Help from adults to see that younger children are “learning” and how they can help them, too
- Protection of their (older children’s) play space
- Guidance in how to integrate younger children into play (e.g. Puppet shows with youngest children as willing audience members—very successful)
- Enough puppetry and large building materials
- Maintenance of “form,” predictability
- Inclusions in circle that are for “them”
- Privileges, e.g. Washing dishes, directing “clean-up,” using certain “teacher” items
- Adult modeling and support of working with conflict with youngest children
- Adults modeling patience, tolerance and compassion for younger children in their tantrums
- Maintaining some “sacredness”
- Encouragement and acknowledgement of their “big brother/big sister” efforts in helping the youngest
- Being allowed to be “little” themselves
- Taking a loudly crying younger child out of the room during “quiet” times (e.g. Story, birthday celebrations, circle, rest)
- Participation in care of the environment
- Space away from younger children
- Adults also being available for *them*.

Special challenges with the older children (with youngest children present):

- Regression of level of play from the preceding year, lasting into the winter. Less building, in particular.
- Concerns of parents regarding possible

simplification of class activities, aggressiveness of youngest children.

- Less ability for adults to spend on more complex or extended projects with kindergarten children.
- Teacher needs: Flexibility; willingness to simplify and adapt; slowing down.

Many beautiful interactions happen daily between the oldest and youngest children. I have sensed that the presence of these youngest children brought a golden “grace” to the kindergarten-aged children; much sweeter and more innocent play developed, with very little cynicism. But, the ongoing, observable stresses for the youngest children and challenges for the oldest children in a combined class can be significant and require great consideration, as we weigh the benefits and costs of including children under three in the kindergarten.

Consider the words of Dr. Elisabeth Jacobi in “Kindergarten Readiness” (*The Developing Child: The*

First Seven Years, WECAN, p. 109):

A three-year-old or a younger child has almost a protective covering over himself which preserves him in his world. If one brings such a child into the kindergarten, then this covering rips open in about three weeks and a “plucked, featherless little bird” stands before us. This can happen even if the child visits the kindergarten on an hourly basis, and the torn covering cannot be repaired simply by removing the child from the kindergarten. This unveiling of the protective covering occurs naturally between three-and-a-half- to four years old. Only then is the child really ready for the kindergarten.

Lisa Gromicko lives in Boulder, Colorado and has spent fourteen years in Waldorf early childhood settings. She can be reached at: lisagromicko@mac.com.

The Seasonal Festivals in Early Childhood Seeking the Universally Human

- Nancy Foster

One of the wonderful, and wonderfully challenging, characteristics of Waldorf early childhood education is that there is no curriculum. Unlike the education for older children, there is no specific outline of subjects offered by Rudolf Steiner for these early years. Rather, it is sometimes said that “the curriculum is the teacher.” To that I might add two other elements, forming a threefold curriculum: the teacher or caregiver, the developing child, and the social and cultural community, including the parents, surrounding the school or program.

The teacher or caregiver, striving inwardly and outwardly to be worthy of imitation, creates an environment in which each child may feel recognized and held in a mood of dream-consciousness. The child, developing according to lawful, archetypal stages, yet a unique individuality, leads the deeply-observant teacher or caregiver to provide nourishing surroundings and activities. And the school community, offering its particular mix of culture, race, religion, ideals, and questions, all within a specific geographic location, provides a social context within which the teacher and children are

active together.

In the earlier years of Waldorf early childhood education in North America we looked to our European mentors and colleagues for guidance and inspiration out of their deeply-grounded experience. Many of us took up their offerings with gratitude and great joy. For me, as a new teacher, the whole concept of “festivals” was new, and I was awed by the richness of what I assumed were “Waldorf traditions” for celebrating these special times of the year. Especially abundant were the possibilities for observing Advent and Christmas.

Only later did we come to realize that many of these beautiful festival observances did not originate in Waldorf education but were European cultural and religious traditions. The European Waldorf schools were embedded in what was then a relatively homogeneous society, and it was natural that the traditions of that time and place found their way into the schools, where the teachers experienced them deeply, enriched them through their work with Rudolf Steiner’s insights, and brought them to the children in a living way.

Today in North America we live in a diverse society, in widely disparate geographical areas with correspondingly distinct climates, each school surrounded by its own mixture of natural and cultural conditions.

The inner and outer work of teachers and caregivers continues to be guided by our commitment to anthroposophy and Waldorf pedagogy; the growth and development of the children in our care still follow the archetypal laws revealed to us by Rudolf Steiner's research; but the realities of our school communities present us with a context that challenges and inspires us to re-examine some of our cherished festival traditions in order to welcome and include fully every child and family.

For many Waldorf early childhood teachers and caregivers, this is a matter for "research," a challenge to look ever more deeply into our own festival life as adults and how we bring this into our work with the children and families of our schools. We seek a growing understanding not only of the meaning and significance of the cardinal points of the year and their seasonal festivals— Michaelmas, Advent/Christmas, Easter/Spring, and Whitsun/St. John's/Summer—but also of the nature and task of early childhood.

Our question becomes: How can we penetrate to an experience of these seasonal festivals that will be meaningful and nourishing for families of every background, and how can we bring this experience into the life of the young child in a developmentally appropriate way? This is a path of inner and outer work; each teacher or caregiver and each school traveling the path will find helpful signposts, steep hills and deep valleys, accidental detours, and all the joys and challenges of any journey of importance.

Above all, we may strive to bear in mind the incarnating child in our care. How can we support and strengthen the child's pre-birth intention to be born in this particular body, at this particular time, in this particular place? How can we help the child to find firm ground from which to embark on his or her life's journey? In our early childhood work, we seek to bring archetypal life experiences to the children, and we might consider festivals in this light, choosing to bring each festival in its most archetypal form of uniting the human being with the earthly and the heavenly worlds—bringing a sense of the wholeness of humanity rather than a multiplicity of representations. We wish the young child to

experience rather than to *learn about*; that will come in later years, in the rich curriculum of the Waldorf lower school and high school.

Our new WECAN publication will include a collection of articles as a sampling of various teachers' journey on the "festival path." Within the variety, we hope readers will see evidence of the striving to work with the threefold curriculum mentioned above: the teacher or caregiver, the developing child, and the school community.

The book will begin with a selection of articles on festivals in general, to lay a basis for the sections on the seasonal festivals themselves. We hope it will offer encouragement and renewed inspiration for every teacher's and caregiver's festival work.

This article was adapted from editor Nancy Foster's introduction to the forthcoming WECAN book, The Seasonal Festivals in Early Childhood. The following story by Joan Almon will also be included in the book, along with contributions from Freya Jaffke, Marjorie Thatcher, Ruth Ker, Helle Heckmann, Susan Silverio, Christof-Andreas Lindenberg, Holly Koteen-Soulé, Stephen Spitalny, and more. Publication is scheduled for September, 2010.



A Story for the Evergreen Garden

• Joan Almon

Author's note: After fifteen years out of the classroom, I stepped back in as a nursery teacher at the Washington Waldorf School in fall of 2009 to help a friend who was recovering from an illness. As Advent approached I knew I needed to approach the winter holidays anew. In the past I had drawn heavily on Advent circles learned from European teachers. Now I needed something that spoke to a 21st-century group of American parents and their children and was meaningful to me, as well.

I thought deeply about the families in my class. Of the thirteen, there were six Jewish families, two Islamic families, one Hindu Sikh family, and the rest I was not sure about. I sought for images that could feed the souls of the children but be accessible to all who walked the spiral of the Evergreen Garden (Washington Waldorf School's name for the traditional Advent Garden).

Over the years I had told many stories about Mother Earth and her creatures, and the changing ways of the forest through the seasons. Now she came strongly to mind. The resulting story also touches on elements of our fall festivals when we cut the apple and revealed the star inside, and when Mother Earth and her creatures observed Halloween and Lantern festivals. The children were used to her by now, and these little three-year-olds listened intently in the darkened garden.

In the past I did not publish stories or songs until I had used them for several years and they had passed the test of time. I had not thought of sharing this one, but one of the lyre players who was present encouraged me to send it to Gateways. I am glad to do so, but please take it lightly and if you wish to use it, feel free to change it as needed. Best of all, let it stimulate your own ideas of how to approach this beautiful garden which seems as relevant today as it did thirty-five years ago when I first created one in my kindergarten.

Winter was beginning. Snow and ice covered the ground and the days were growing dark. Mother Earth called her creatures together and said, "It is time for our Evergreen Garden. It will bring warmth and light to the earth in deep winter. Who will help me?"

"We will help lay a path through the woods," said the stones. "And we shall sparkle in the candlelight like the stars in the sky," said the crystals.

"We shall lay a spiral path of evergreen branches," said the pine and the fir. "We shall hold the candles," said the apples, "for we have stars in our hearts." The queen of the bees said she would give the wax from her hive to make golden candles. "I shall bring new life to the garden," said the red, red rose.

The animals of the forest spoke. They would guard the garden and make sure no harm came to those who walked it. The stars said they wanted to take part, and some fell to earth to light the pathway of the garden. Mother Earth thanked them all and said only one thing was missing – the children's love was needed to fill the garden.

Then came the children, and one by one they walked the spiral of the garden, lighting their candles and setting them down on the golden stars. Soon the garden shone with light.

(Music while the teacher walks the spiral, lighting her candle. She is followed by each child and parent, one by one. At the end the co-teacher or assistant lights her candle. The music ends and a closing is said.)

"Now our garden is full of light.

It shines with love in the dark winter's night."

Joan Almon is the director of the U.S. branch of the Alliance for Childhood. She is a former Waldorf kindergarten teacher, was co-founder of WECAN, and has worked internationally as a consultant to Waldorf educators and training programs.

Thoughts on My Visit to North America

• Helle Heckmann

First, I would like to thank all the early childhood teachers and the families I stayed with on my two month trip to North America. It was a fantastic experience for me to visit so many different early childhood centers that are as varied as the environment and community where they exist. Children of today have such different needs and that is why it is important that Waldorf education provide a range of choices. Our Waldorf early childhood centers have to meet the needs of the children that come to us. We are not a defined program, but must remain flexible in our options so that the needs of our children are met as our highest priority. This can include early childhood centers connected to grade schools, off-site early childhood centers, and in-home centers.

The loss of the world of childhood is a real danger today, especially with the onset of early academics in kindergartens and even with younger children. Instead of seeing the young children as something quite special in their own right, they are viewed and taught as little adults. Even in our Waldorf early childhood centers, it is common to observe a form of this “teaching” with a focus on the role of the teachers, schedules, and activities. The clearest example is the trend in Waldorf early childhood centers to separate the children into different age groups during the first seven years. The benefits of keeping children aged three to six together have been lost.

We must examine closely whether the needs of these children can be met when an early childhood center is in the same location as a grade school. Does the close proximity offer enough protection to the young children from the energy and needs of the older student? Do we make unfair allowances when we are part of a larger school? Are early childhood pedagogical decisions made by those who have really penetrated the issues of the young child or by a larger group of colleagues who may not have these questions as a focus? Is there a way to work together

when we don't work side by side?

I would like to expand on these thoughts and others from my experience in America. I hope that these ideas will not be viewed as judgmental, but rather as observations to provoke further conversations. I know I am a foreigner and see with my foreign eyes, but my hope is that it will be insightful to my American colleagues to see what is observed by an outsider. I want to share the importance of the following:

- Continuity of Care for the Young Child
- Creating a Weekly Rhythm for Children and Not Just a Beat
- Providing a Daily Rhythm That Allows For Consistency and Enough Time
- Movement Opportunities
- Adult Models Worthy of Imitation
- Trusting the Child to Learn on His Own
- Providing Clear Expectations and Descriptions of What We Offer to Parents

Continuity of Care for the Young Child

What explains the trend to separate children by age in early childhood instead of designing a program that meets the needs of all of these children together? I see the first seven years as a whole and believe that the children in this age group should be cared for together. It allows the very young children to see where they are heading and the older child to see where they have come from. However, it is becoming more and more of a tendency in the Waldorf movement to split up this age group. There are parent/child classes, daycares, nursery classes, preschools, kindergartens, and extended care, all subject to sub-grouping children in the first seven years by age. This means that at an age when a child is most vulnerable, we force him to make attachments to many different caregivers. This is a form of violence towards the child because in reality

the young child needs as little change as possible, especially when considering care outside the home. It is also a big concern that some classes for the very young child are created out of need for enrollment in kindergarten and grade school classes without first considering the needs of the young child and how to create continuity of care for his whole early childhood.

Creating a Weekly Rhythm for Children and Not Just a Beat

Some schools offer one, two, three, four, and five days per week options plus the option of morning or afternoon care, and sometimes even “after afternoon” care. This is often out of trying to meet the need of the parents, more than it is out of our understanding of the needs of the child. When we offer less than three consecutive days a week, we provide children with just a “beat” instead of a rhythm. And when we offer different options to children in the same class, we create a situation where there is a lack of consistency in the children’s social relationships. How can a child develop play and social skills in a classroom community if they do not know who to expect to be in their circle of friends the next day?

Providing a Daily Rhythm That Allows For Consistency and Enough Time

It was very common in my visit to North America to see early childhood classes that consisted of short morning hours (three to four hours) followed by an optional afternoon program. All of the pedagogical offerings are put in the morning care for the children. It is as if the afternoon care is not considered part of the pedagogical day or valued in the same way as the morning program. The afternoon care provider is not always a trained teacher and is often not even part of the morning program, which creates an unnecessary transition for the children. Despite these issues, more and more children are enrolling in the afternoon care programs.

The morning time of three to four hours usually includes an artistic activity, indoor free play, circle time, snack, outdoor play, storytelling, and sometimes lunch. Moving from indoors to outdoors (or outdoors to indoors) requires time to take shoes and clothes on or off. All of these activities pressed into just a few hours means that the children and teachers are often stressed to complete all the assigned tasks. Many times the lack of time causes teachers to rush through the real work of the

kindergarten (cleaning, cooking, doing the dishes, etc.), which is something of great importance to the children.

Most of the children of today are lacking movement in their daily lives. They often experience great difficulty when entering fully into free play and can take up to an hour before they actually begin to really “play.” It is challenging for them to dress themselves and they have trouble sitting at a table and showing manners during eating. Movement, free play, and life skills—these important tasks take up at least four hours a day in the kindergarten. Then there are our other activities such as circle time, storytelling, household work, and artistic activities.

The morning ends and some of the children leave and some stay. What is the experience like for those children who see their friends going home, but they have to stay? Those children staying often have to change rooms and the person who is caring for them. They are sometimes mixed with children from other classes. In just one day, they have to suffer through a great lack of consistency. Kindergartens with structures like this need to reconsider these issues.

Movement Opportunities

Children of today are “up in their head” and need to move back down into their physical bodies. Even though they are provided with time outdoors, it doesn’t necessarily mean that they are “moving.” This lack of movement makes it crucial for teachers to research how they can bring appropriate movement to the children in their care.

Adult Models Worthy of Imitation

Adult role models of the home arts (cooking, cleaning, building, gardening, etc.) provide real work that can stream out into the play of children and are more than ever needed because of the lack of housework in the home. Children are in great need of caregivers who consciously examine how to be worthy models of imitation.

Caregivers must penetrate the questions:

- What do the children in our care need?
- What do they get from their home life?
- How can we support the child in becoming a human being through daily life?

From these questions, we have to find a way to provide experiences for the child so they get what they really need—an understanding of the world around them.

The family structure has changed dramatically in recent years. The home is no longer the center of

the family, but a jumping-off point to the multitude of errands, responsibilities, and activities where family members must go. Children used to be brought up with many siblings and family members of various ages offering countless opportunities to care for others, be cared for, and smooth out the “sharp corners” of their own temperaments. Now most children come from smaller families, often with only one or no siblings. Waldorf early childhood centers are quickly becoming a substitute for the traditional home—offering a place where time can slow down, housework can be accomplished with cooperation from the children, and they can be truly cared for and nourished and learn how to take care of others. Providing a “home life” environment for children gives them the space to be able to do things out of intrinsic motivation, instead of learning how to do things because they are told how.

Trusting the Child to Learn on His Own

Care providers must be able to hold back their own desires and expectations for the child and understand how important it is for the child to learn how to meet life’s challenges on his own and in his own time. Children of today are over-watched, over-loved and over-protected. They have very few chances to feel on their own how they are. It is necessary for the caregiver to provide the opportunity for the child to learn on his own. For example, a young child falls on the ground. The caregiver remains neutral in her response. After just a moment, the child looks up at the sky and notices the clouds. Then, he rolls over and see a little worm. He has fallen, and perhaps been a little hurt, but the sky is still here, the worm is still here, the world is still here. He experiences the unspoken message, “Even though I fall, the world is not falling apart.” But, what if, instead, the child looks up upon falling and sees fear on his caregiver’s face. The caregiver is worried: *What if he is really hurt? Maybe he has a concussion. What will I tell his parents?* The child responds to the fear by screaming. Then, the caregiver rushes over to comfort the child, but in reality is really comforting herself and her own fears. She has robbed the child of an important learning opportunity—to overcome pain and survive.

Providing Clear Expectations and Descriptions of What We Offer to Parents

Early childhood teachers spend a lot of time working with parents. It is true that this is a very important aspect of our work.

The important questions to ask are:

- Do we clearly state to parents what we expect

from them and what they can expect from us?

- Are we clear about what we offer the children in our care and why?
- Do we, as teachers, have a deep understanding of the life of childhood and how it is shaped today with changing family structures, the current societal pressures put on parents, and the individual needs of the children in our care?
- Do we allow for our early childhood centers to evolve based on these needs?
- Do we share our specific offerings with parents so they can, out of freedom, decide if our early childhood center will meet the needs of their family?

We also must remember the important role parents play in the lives of their children— mainly, that of giving true love. This love germinates the seeds lying deep within the young child. And while we may lament for what children have lost because of our modern times, this is the time when they have come and we can look forward to knowing the fruits of their work here.

So, my dear colleagues, these are my inner thoughts of the two beautiful months I spent in North America, visiting so many different centers, meeting many wise women (and some men) and enjoying lovely conversations with friends, old and new. It is not important that we agree on all the specific points, but rather that we create the possibility to talk about these issues. It is out of this dialogue that we can each find the best solutions for the children in our care, wherever we are in the world. It is so crucial to repeatedly ask ourselves: “Why do I do what I do?” We all have the goal to work on our own individual spiritual paths, but we also meet together in our shared study of anthroposophy. It is through this community that we can continue to explore our ideas and grow as individuals, teachers, and early childhood centers.

I also want to thank you all for advocating for young children because it is something that they cannot do for themselves. They are often overlooked in our society. But, the truth is, a society is ultimately judged by how it treats its children, its old people, and those who are ill. If these groups of people are treated well, then it shows a society that is healthy and functional. Let us hope that all our global societies will get there one day.

Helle Heckmann *founded the influential Nøkken child care center in Copenhagen, Denmark. She has written several books about her work, most recently Childhood’s Garden with companion DVD, A Summer Day in Nøkken (available from WECAN).*

Getting Over Easy

Challenging Ourselves to Learn New Things

• Cynthia Aldinger

I was in my late forties or early fifties when my eldest son taught me how to fry an egg over-easy. Up until then I had always scrambled. All my attempts at turning an egg had ended in the necessity of scrambling anyway. Recently, while preparing breakfast eggs for my husband and myself, I noticed how, with great ease, I can now turn an egg. In fact, my over-easy eggs are rather lovely! I remarked to my husband that I cannot understand why it was so difficult for me before. Seemingly without thought, I can turn an egg! With his marvelous scientific background, my husband explained to me that over time I have developed an awareness of the right amount of butter in the pan, how to crack the egg with ease, the way the egg looks when it is really ready to turn, how to slip the spatula under the egg without breaking it open, and how just the right motion of my arm and wrist flip the egg gently over – easy!

Together he and I are having a similar, though not quite as easy, experience with our current study of Rudolf Steiner's book *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. Decades ago, while studying this book with my fellow students at Emerson College in England, I considered the possibility that I might go stark raving mad before I would ever actually understand this content. Over the years of teaching in adult education, I dreaded the idea of being asked to lead a study or try to teach this content to others. In fact, I am still unprepared to do that. But, guess what—I am actually beginning to understand what Dr. Steiner wrote in this wonderful book.

So what, you may ask, do turning an egg and understanding a book have to do with one another? Nothing for most people. They have to do with my specific biography. However, we each have those things in our lives about which, upon first encounter, we feel "This I cannot do." Stubbornly, I held to that conviction about eggs and about that book for many, many years even

though I could do other things with eggs, and I loved and understood other Steiner books and lectures.

What changed? I think that what changed was my desire to know combined with my willingness to fail. I really loved the eggs my son made for me, and I wanted to be able to do that in my own home. I became okay with failure, knowing that my failures would still yield nice scrambled eggs. Then one day, the egg turned without breaking. Then that began to happen more and more. My mind and my body began to synchronize a new capacity. Risking failure and trying and trying and trying again became acceptable due to my desire for the new capacity.

Studying *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* has been a slightly different experience. Yes, I was willing to face the possibility of not understanding it again. But there was another level: fear. I needed to face my fear of feeling confused or crazy as I considered *thinking about thinking* and the relationships between dualism and monism, naive realism and critical idealism, and other amazing constructs. Facing my fear required trust—trusting my life's path, trusting my study partner, and trusting the spiritual beings who guide and protect me. Trust also included letting go of a specific outcome. My comprehension is still fuzzy in some parts, but the joy of learning overrides the fear and, yes, embarrassment of feeling muddled at times.

There is another important aspect to what I am learning from these two experiences. That is that not everyone learns in the exact same way or even draws the same conclusions from similar experiences. There are surely a variety of ways to ease an egg over to the other side, just as there are different ways to take up an esoteric study. It would be egotistical on my part to assume that another person's *aha* moments will be identical to mine. If I am not careful I can instruct someone

else to turn an egg just so—my way— or it will not work; better that I teach by example and try to figure out a few key components to success that I can share, leaving the rest for the other person to *discover* on her own.

Recently I was part of a collegial conversation on how to involve the children in clean-up time. One colleague, to whom I have looked for guidance over the years, was concerned that the idea of children learning by imitation was falling by the wayside. She was aware of a number of adults who were beginning to verbally assign tasks to the children, rather than trusting that they would eventually become involved via imitation. Her concern resonated in me, and I shared that I often did a specific task myself for weeks before really expecting the children to participate. In that way the imprint of the activity was in the physical space for the children to enter. However, I also noted that sometimes I would assign specific things to five- and six-year-olds in the springtime, when they were like little billy goats, and they loved the challenge.

Not long after this conversation, I received a beautiful image of a task chart created by another colleague whom I admire and respect. Pictures painted on carved wooden rounds illustrate the tasks. She noted how a new boy in her kindergarten, accustomed to the push-button world of today, was very soothed by this chart and could participate in the care of the space without her having to offer any verbal commands.

Another colleague expressed concern about the diminishing use of pentatonic and mood-of-the-fifth music, noting how soothing it is and how peaceful the children are in the care of someone who has really embraced this understanding of music for young children. Again, I felt resonance with this concern, specifically noting the difficulty people seem to have with using their kinderharps around the children, even at naptime when all that is needed is gently strumming. Also, I noted my experience of working with the Wilma Ellersiek gesture games and music and the calming effect it had on the children.

Then I remembered how another colleague had discovered that many of the old lullabies use minor thirds, rather than the pentatonic scale, and how soothing are these tunes for infants. And

I remembered fondly being in the presence of caregivers gleefully singing some old-fashioned children's games or folk tunes with the children, not with silliness but with joy, and having the awareness that these children were also content. Most likely there were other times of the day when they sang in the pentatonic scale.

How could these seemingly contradictory approaches healthily serve the children? It reminded me of a conference I attended over twenty years ago when many of the leading Steiner early childhood teachers from Europe came over and shared their expertise with us. Each morning we heard an inspiring lecture, sometimes with very contrasting ideas from the person we had heard the day before. It was both freeing and confusing. I found myself thinking, "Maybe I can really do whatever I want, take it easy on myself and just do what I am comfortable with." At the end of the week, Dr. Werner Glas spoke to us and noted that we had heard many differing things from these experts in the field. Then he said something I have never forgotten. He reminded us to remember that these individuals succeeded in what they did with young children due their depth of understanding of the children in their care and their ongoing devotion to deepening their work.

The easy way was not going to be the answer. In reality, there were fundamental principles of child development upon which these stellar teachers agreed, to include the understanding that young children learn through imitation and that mood-of-the-fifth music is the best developmentally-appropriate music for them. It was in some of their practices that there were obvious differences. Perhaps some were purists in their approach and others were interested in exploring whether there was a middle ground that also served the children.

As it turned out, I was still going to need to push up my sleeves and stretch myself, somewhat cautiously at first for fear of failure as mentioned above. It has turned out to be a lifelong dance— learning how to learn and how to relax and enjoy life at the same time.

Perhaps because of my somewhat sanguine personality, I find myself attracted to the idea that as adult learners, maybe there is something to be considered in the following:

1. Strengthening our desire to know or learn something new combined with a decreased fear of failure
2. Learning to trust and let go of specific outcomes
3. Observing the full picture of how others bring their gifts into the world

When we do this, we increase our capacities and our repertoire of what we can truly offer to ourselves and to the children in our care. Rather than continually feeling “less than” around someone who has accomplished a skill we do not yet have—like turning an egg or bringing mood-of-the-fifth music to children— we allow our interest and our desire to learn to push us forward in our efforts *over time*. It took me years of practice before I could create pentatonic songs with relative ease.

It also took me years before I gave myself permission to sing an occasional seasonal song—like “Jingle Bells”— with the children just for fun during clean-up time. Learning the difference between singing “Jingle Bells” because it was comfortable and familiar or singing it because it was joyful was an important step for me. In setting



myself up to be the *perfect*, non-risk-taking early childhood teacher, my joy was diminishing. Getting to the point where my authentic self could bring beautiful pentatonic and mood-of-the-fifth music to the children and could also sing a traditional tune with them was a big step for me.

A next big step was to learn that some people who only bring pentatonic and mood-of-the-fifth-music to the children are also authentic and joy-filled. There is no need for them to bring the folk tunes. I’ve also met master teachers whose children have learned to read their slightest gesture to indicate that cleaning is happening now, and it unfolds beautifully. I also know caregivers who have created supportive work songs or task systems in which the children appear to thrive.

Years ago I wrote an article encouraging teachers and caregivers to not get caught up in thinking there is a *one and only way* to do our work. It seems I am learning now that another step in development is to stretch ourselves and not just be comfortable with those things we already can do well. Particularly if we are to be true to the children in our care, understanding their need to learn through imitation, thrive in a variety of healthy sensory experiences, and be bathed in music that is developmentally strengthening for them, we want to stretch ourselves to learn how to offer this to them.

We want to be able to offer our best selves while we are becoming our next level of best selves. Letting go of fear, strengthening our desire to learn new things, entering with interest into the understanding of other people’s developed skills, and forgiving ourselves for our *not-quite-there-yet* stage of being can go a long way toward sustaining us in our work and our unfolding journey of life.

Cynthia Aldinger is founder and executive director of LifeWays North America. She directs LifeWays trainings and seminars across the United States and serves as a consultant to the Early Life Center project at Rudolf Steiner College in California where she is an adjunct faculty member.

It Takes a Village to Raise a Child *Extended Care in the Waldorf Schools*

• Andrea Gambardella

This is a report from a three-day focus group that met to share and explore extended care programs in Waldorf schools at the 2009 AWSNA conference in Portland, Oregon. The purpose of the focus group was to shape a way of addressing the whole of the school leadership—faculty, College of Teachers, Board—in order to garner full support for the needs of these programs. The group attempted to address an understanding of what is best for children in need of care, while meeting the realities of staff, facilities and costs of providing care programs. Nine people representing six schools and one training institute made up the group. They represented both long-standing schools and younger schools, and included early childhood morning program lead educators, extended day educators and admissions officers. Participants offered a variety of reasons for coming to this focus group: school considering opening an extended day program; programs in a school seemed piecemeal; questions concerning how to design the programs with best pedagogical practices.

Overview

One characteristic of the previous age in time, a time governed by Gabriel, was the connection of blood relations. We are now over one hundred years into a Michaelic age where blood ties are not the only or predominant unifying agent. As we look into our world we see how people are building a global society, for example in how younger people are creating communities together through the internet and how members of nuclear families are widely scattered across the globe. The fast growth of institutional infant and child care is also evidence of this, with the increasing role of non-family members in the life of children. Waldorf teachers with over twenty years' experience speak often of how the role of the teacher and school in the life of the child and family has shifted significantly, calling on more participation by teachers in the broader education of the child.

Some points to consider are:

1. The child needs constant and secure relationship and bonding to thrive. The Hungarian pediatrician, Emmi Pikler (who coined the widely used phrase “primary care provider”) did remarkable work with infant and toddler orphans, demonstrating the life-long health benefits resulting from a child’s bonding to caring adults. She also brought to the fore the benefits and detriments of the attachment-loss cycle many children experience early in life.
2. There is research demonstrating how emotional issues of insecurity cloud and veil the child’s ability to be fully present for learning in informal and formal educational settings. These children are often wrongly identified as having learning disabilities, or develop them as a result of emotional baggage. A child who is hyper-vigilant will not be able to focus for long periods on lessons in a class, or attend to social circumstances to learn valuable lessons for relationship building.
3. There is a steady stream of research published on children’s health issues arising from exhaustion and over-stimulation: sleep problems, digestive problems, asthma (breathing problems), skin and other allergies. These are likely results of our lifestyle and the lifestyle imposed on the child.
4. Play is a part of every human life, and is especially important in the youngest years of childhood (birth to fourteen years). The International Association for Play defines play as freely chosen, intrinsically motivated, and self-directed. Even the child who leaves school at noon or 3 pm is not necessarily going home to an environment that allows time for real play.
5. Schools have increased responsibilities for acculturating children, surrounding them with community, and providing mentors. (James Pewtherer spoke at the conference about moments of human meeting and how each of us in a school might be providing essential and critical meetings of recognition for a child and for each other).

Are Waldorf schools recognizing extended day/ afterschool programs as an integral part of the child's Waldorf experience? How are we viewing what we want from children for the main portion of the school day—versus how we care for their overall health between noon and 3 to 6 pm? Are we fully recognizing the young child's need for continuity of care, rhythm, minimizing transitions, and meaningful long-term relationships?

Areas to Address

Together, the group identified six areas for school committees to address and articulate the school's values. Participants listed some of these values.

Provider

- Warm, nurturing, communicative, guiding care provider
- Ideally having Waldorf training, and/or an affinity for this type of work with some background in care
- Consistent, long-term stability in staff
- A school-culture attitude that promotes the child's enthusiasm for being in care

Program

- Play, a hearty snack, warm relationship with adults
- The re-creation of "being at home in the neighborhood"
- So-called enrichment is not seen as necessary after a full day in a Waldorf school—rather, allowing for the digestion of a rich day of experiences
- Unstructured free play, with supervision with a variety of possibilities, designed by Waldorf teachers
- For older children—Homework time, the possibility for instrument lessons

Environment

- Designated space that provides comfort, familiarity and a sense of ownership
- Large enough for activity options
- Homework space, adjoining outdoor space (visually accessible)
- Supervisory environment—held but not hovering

Rhythm

- Formalities/rituals should frame the afternoon: entering into the afternoon, within the snack or meal, for the farewell

Food

- Snack provided by the program
- Consistent, simple, ensouled presentation
- Nourishing healthy food

Support of the School

- Clear communication among the teachers and providers
- Extended care staff connected to full faculty
- Substitution coverage so that attendance by the provider at faculty meeting is possible regularly or in some way
- Clear description of programs and articulation of policies

How to effect community support in your school

The group explored ways to facilitate discussion of extended day programs within the school. Below are our notes.

- Begin with the College of Teachers—write it up as a proposal, with research examples from other Waldorf schools; survey parent body for need
- Discussion with full Faculty Meeting:
- Taking it up as a study
- Define essentials
- Make visible the realities in your school—provide statistics within your school
- Survey parents for need
- Admissions—who is asking for an after school program? Keep a tally.
- What might be the growth-curve for this program in our school over the next few years?
- Can we serve the young child for such an extended day?
- Health studies
- What aligns the program with the mission of the school?
- Research the children and families within our own programs for benefits and challenges of current design.
- Who are the young children coming who have already been in care? What does it tell us?

Examples from Waldorf Schools

The schools listed below are accommodating the needs within their own community; their programs are designed for the specifics of their situation. They each have elements that can offer good research for any school looking to gain a picture of how these programs can be formed, staffed, and resourced.

Prairie Hill Waldorf School, contact Anne-Marie Freyer
Portland Waldorf School, contact Charles Forster and Robin O'Brien
Olympia Waldorf School, contact Aurora Gregory
Waldorf School of Garden City, contact Lucille Goldenberg
Highland Hall Waldorf School, contact Laura Ferris
Atlanta Waldorf School, contact Anne Sommerville-Hall

Note: In Fall 2009, WECAN posted on its website its Healthy Organizational Practices topics. Extended Care programs are a featured topic. www.waldorfearlychildhood.org.

Andrea Gambardella is WECAN's membership coordinator and served as facilitator of this focus group. Contact her at agambardella@waldorfearlychildhood.org.

Reflections on Working with Parents

• Kimberly Lewis

For decades, pioneers in the field of parent education have been quietly creating exceptional methods of working with parents. Since having my own baby far from home at the age of twenty-three, I have made a life study of parent education. As a new mother in a small workers' community in the middle of the Saudi Arabian desert, I was fortunate to find La Leche League leaders who introduced me to the "mother-to-mother support" model. This blessing inspired me to learn what I could about parenting the very young child and to bring this knowledge to other parents.

Today, in the parent-child classes that I teach, I draw on my in-depth studies of the diverse disciplines of La Leche League, anthroposophy, Waldorf education, the work of Emmi Pikler in Hungary, and the work of Magda Gerber in Los Angeles. In an attempt to integrate and synthesize the best and most essential ingredients of each of these models, I have come up with a number of approaches that I use in my classes with good results. Here are some of them.

Be worthy of imitation.

In my parent-child classes, I have discovered that, just like the children, parents can more easily internalize what I'm teaching when they have a model. So I try to model for them what I believe are the most important aspects of healthy childcare in the early years. I model optimal behaviors when I interact with the children, and perhaps more importantly, I also model them *when I interact with*

the parents. The parents get to feel the effects of these approaches first hand.

Offer unconditional acceptance.

Parents often hold an image of their future child in their mind's eye and then become disappointed or embarrassed when their actual child doesn't match up to this image. So I try to teach unconditional acceptance of the actual child in the present moment. I believe the child is always right in doing what he or she is doing (I might not endorse it, but the child has a good reason for doing it). The same is true of parents. They are doing the best they can. I can't expect them to be different in that moment. Acceptance is the starting point for understanding. It allows me to ask the right questions and discover the root of the behavior so I may offer guidance and support.

Create joyful, one-on-one interactions.

During snack, I try to model for the parents what it looks like to give 100% attention to the children during moments of care. I wash each child's hands slowly and gently, giving my full attention to the child and to the task. I offer each child just the amount of food he or she is willing to eat. The parents, too, need similar one-on-one time with me. To be seen completely by another person is one of life's great joys. I try to find a time during our morning when I can circulate among the parents and check in with each of them for a few minutes.

Keep them warm and well-nourished.

For the children this means a warm room, warm clothing and wholesome, natural food. For the parents this means human warmth, deep respect and spiritual nourishment. By creating a safe and beautiful environment, the parents are nourished. We bring the wonders of nature into the classroom; we light a candle at snack time; and we honor the festivals of the year. These rituals and traditions are touching elements to the parents.

Allow them to progress at their own pace and in their own time.

I teach the parents to give their children time to progress through each stage of development at their own pace—without being pushed or prodded. This goes for the parents as well. Every parent comes to class at a particular moment in his or her own life's journey, and this must be respected. Some parents know that Waldorf education is going to be a part of their family life even before the first day of class. Other parents warm to it gradually. Still others take what they find useful and then follow their path a separate way.

Give them the gift of uninterrupted free time.

Just like children, parents love the time, space and freedom to do whatever they are moved to do without interruption. For parents, this usually means visiting with whomever and discussing whatever they'd like. I support them by making sure there is a time and place in our morning for open conversations. Even though it isn't a particularly long part of our morning (usually twenty minutes or so while we are outside), I think it's an essential ingredient.

Do less, observe more.

While modeling purposeful work is ideal in the kindergarten, it needs to be re-examined for the youngest children. In my experience, sensitive observation is an equally important activity for parents of little children. At the beginning of each session, we do short periods of quiet observation (five minutes), and then very quickly we move into longer periods (at least twenty minutes). Most of our group discussions come out of these observation periods. Parents often try to accomplish too much when their children are little; what a blessing for them to discover they can simply sit, relax and be

with their children.

Don't put them into a position they can't get into themselves.

Children as well as parents need to feel safe and at ease. With children, it has more to do with the physical positioning of their bodies. With parents it's mostly behavioral. The principle holds true for both. I don't put parents on the spot or ask them to do anything that might make them feel uncomfortable. And while I might give them homework to do over the week, it's always optional.

Allow them to do as much as they can themselves.

The message I want the children to hear from their parents is, "You are capable. I'll stay close, but you can do it yourself." The same is true for the parents. For example, I'm not likely to try to soothe a crying child if the parent is right there doing his or her best. I offer my presence and that is enough. However, if the struggle is too great, I will step in and make a change.

Practice active listening and compassionate speaking.

With the children, I do a practice called "reporting." Rather than praising or correcting the children, I model for the parents the simple act of reporting back what I see the children doing. The same goes for the parents. Instead of saying, "Don't do that," or "Try this instead," I simply report what I see and describe the situation. For example, I might report, "You've moved your baby onto her belly. She's having difficulty moving her head. Her arms and legs cannot move freely. When she was on her back, her movements were freer and more fluid."

These ideas and tips are some of what I've learned in my study and practice of parent education. I also co-moderate a Yahoo discussion group for families and teachers who work with children under four. It's called *waldorfbirthtofour* and can be found at www.yahogroups.com. This group is a forum for sharing ideas, experiences and questions. Over the past year, I have been posting weekly musings on a variety of parenting topics to this group.

Kimberly Lewis *currently teaches parent-child classes at the Tucson Waldorf School in Arizona.*

The Inauguration of Wawa Munakuy Nursery-Kindergarten

• JoAnne Dennee and Joyce Gallardo

In early May of 2009 we had the good fortune to be present at the inauguration of Wawa Munakuy Nursery-Kindergarten (pronounced *Wa' wa Moo nah' koo wee*, meaning *for the love of the children* in Quechua, the indigenous language of Peru). As we crossed the beautifully decorated threshold that sundrenched afternoon, the delicate aroma of calla lilies and native roses wafted in the air.

We gathered together in verse, song, and dance with parents, children, and friends to give thanks for the completion of the new building which would house Wawa Munakuy. The moment of dedication had arrived and the tones of indigenous instruments invited the procession of teachers and *ninos* to enter the school. Adorned with flower crowns and dressed in native costume, the children were led by their teachers, heads dappled with flowers. Acknowledgements were made of the many friends worldwide without whose support this dream could not have come true. The Foundation Stone Meditation was read and we did the Hallelujah in eurythmy before the foundation stone was laid near the flower-bedecked arch of the portal to the kindergarten.

This beautiful new facility is part of El Proyecto Social Q'ewar (The Q'ewar Social Project), where high-quality Waldorf-inspired dolls are made by local indigenous women. In order to insure family security for the doll makers, a commitment was made to the care of their children as soon as the first baby was born. The nursery- and kindergarten-age children of the doll makers attend Wawa Munakuy in the morning, and their school-age children attend the after-school program, where tutoring and homework support is offered, as well as physical activity, movement, handwork, and music.

It took nearly 5,000 hand-made adobe bricks of mud and straw to build this new two-story home, topped with terra cotta roof-tiles, for Wawa Munakuy. Atop the tiles were placed crosses and flowers to gain the blessings of the gods of nature.

The construction was made possible thanks to increasing doll sales and two generous grants from a Swiss and a New Jersey-based foundation. The second story of the school will serve as a temporary transitional refuge for women and children suffering from domestic violence and for visiting teachers. Vilma, one of the doll makers, told us, "The Q'ewar Project has helped so many people. Here I know that I can work in a tranquil environment and my children are well cared for. It is not like this in other jobs. I cannot bring children with me to work."

The therapeutic process of doll making

The Q'ewar Project was initiated seven years ago by Peruvian native Julio Herrera Burgos, former high school art and sculpture teacher at the Waldorf School in Lima, Peru, and his wife, Evelina Lucila (Lucy) Terrazas in response to the poverty and homelessness in their community of Andahuaylillas. It would become an antidote to the common social ailments of extreme poverty, alcoholism, and malnutrition that plague *los pueblitos* and villages in the Province of Quispicanchi, to which Andahuaylillas belongs. The spiritual intention for the founding of the Project—the development of a social initiative based on compassion, respect, love, and brotherhood—is imbued with the impulse of Anthroposophy.

JoAnne, an early childhood educator at the Lake Champlain School in Vermont, has been a working advocate and supporter of the Project since the early days of its existence, when she responded to their request for marketing help for the dolls. Interest in the dolls grew and they are now sold all over the United States and abroad. JoAnne has continued to visit and work at the Q'ewar Project for two weeks each year since her first trip to Peru.

Working with the teachers and the children Joyce, who is bilingual, had been invited to spend a month at the Q'ewar Project to work with the four teachers of Wawa Munakuy, who are participating

in the Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Training in South America. These women, all residents of Andahuaylillas and all former public school teachers, were becoming familiar with the Waldorf early childhood pedagogy, but needed guidance in implementing these practices in their daily work with the children. During the beginning years of the Project, mentoring was offered by JoAnne and many activities at Wawa Munakuy were put in place; communication, however, had been encumbered by a language difference and by translators who were not themselves Waldorf teachers.

Monday is “bread day,” and the children, with their teachers, prepare and bake in the wood-fired adobe bread oven enough whole wheat bread to feed each family. Wednesday is “bathing day” and the small children are bathed in tubs outdoors under the warmth of the morning sun in mountain spring water that has been heated by solar energy. A solar-heated hot water bath house for the children, women, and men was installed last year, thanks to a donation from Germany. The caregivers wash and rinse the children with loving, gentle hands and song. Warmly wrapped in fluffy hooded towels, the children, with shining, smiling faces, are rubbed dry sitting beside the wheat field where nodding golden seed heads gaily greet them. Their hair has been shampooed, combed, and de-loused, and the little girls’ long, dark hair will be braided by the nimble fingers of the caregivers.

The community

There is a strong sense of the community of an “extended family” here that surrounds the children at the Q’ewar Project. Each morning as the younger children came through the big green doors with their mothers, they are greeted by warm smiles and a cheerful “*Buenos dias, wawas!*” from the many workers (*wawa* is the Quechua word for child). This place is like a second home to these little ones, who are one-and-a-half to three-and-a-half years old; their mothers came to work here each day while they were pregnant with the same little ones.

This sense of responsibility to the well being of all amongst the workers and children of the Project was reflected in a later conversation with Vilma, “Julio and Lucy have always told us that we needed to work together like a family and that is why I very proudly call them ‘Papa’ Julio and ‘Mama’ Lucy, since I do not have a mother or father. I feel that everyone has to support each other like a family, not only to be

concerned for my own family or my own situation. When it rains, it rains for everyone. When the sun shines, it shines for everyone.”

Establishing a healthy rhythm

As we worked together with the teachers of Wawa Munakuy to establish a healthy rhythm, each morning after greeting the children we would walk through the biodynamic gardens and along the edge of the *chacra* (corn field) where we collected ears of corn wrapped in dry leaves to make corn dollies, past the peach and avocado trees, stopping to pick flowers, or to examine seed pods that had fallen to the ground, and play in the shade of *el arbol grande* (the big sheltering tree) in the flower garden that overlooked the terraced wheat field. One morning little Christian, who was just three, dreamily watched the sunlight dancing on the leaves of the tree. He hugged its trunk and discovered that he could pull himself up to a crook where two branches met. There he sat, legs dangling, just two feet off the ground, waving at us and grinning gaily at his accomplishment.

Later, skipping happily up the steep, uneven path to the herb garden, the children carried little baskets in which they would collect chamomile or mint for tea to drink with their hot organic morning meal. The table in the kindergarten was set and decorated with flowers from the garden, the candle was lit, and a simple blessing was sung in Spanish:

*O, angel mio, guardian tan fino,
Noche y dia, tarde y temprano,
Llevame a la puerta del cielo,
O, angel mio*

“Oh, angel mine, guardian so fine; night and day, early and late; lead me until I reach heaven’s gate. Oh, angel mine.” This was followed by a verse:

*Tierra, esto tu gracia nos dio,
Sol, esto tu luz maduro.
Sol y tierra bien amados,
Nunca series olvidados.*

“Earth, who gives to us this food, sun who makes it ripe and good, Dearest Earth and dearest sun, we’ll not forget what you have done.”

The children ate heartily of the warm food. Shortly after the meal, one of the mothers who was working nearby came in to change her child’s diaper. The two younger children, who were tucked into their little beds in the corner of the room, were

soon sleeping peacefully. The older children played indoors and out. Songs and finger games, simple nature crafts, and free play filled the rest of the morning. The mothers appeared at lunch and *siesta* time, tucked their little ones into *mantas* and carried them home safely on their backs down the long, steep hill. “*Adios! Hasta la tarde!*”

The after-school program

After lunch and *siesta* the older children, who attend school in the village, begin arriving. Their homework load is a concern for them and for their parents, many of whom are unable to help their children due to their own lack of education. Thus they look to the teachers at Wawa Munakuy for support. Physical activity and purposeful movement before starting homework is encouraged, and carefully thought-out activities enhance gross motor development and balance in the children.

Jump rope and circle games are joyful alternatives to sitting behind a desk reading and writing. The children are drawn to the big llama rope spirals that have been laid out on the ground and walk forward and backward, in and out, through each spiral path. This can be a real challenge for some. A “ladder” of bamboo sticks which has been laid out invites hopping, side-stepping, forward and backward stepping, hopping on one foot. Soon the giggles and laughter of children engaged in purposeful and playful movement fill the courtyard.

We bring the play and movement to a closure with the bean bag toss, when we form a large circle and greet each other in song: “*Buenas tardes, Adriana! Buenas tardes, Sra. Joyce! Buenas tardes, Abel! Buenas tardes, Sra. Joyce!*” In this toss of the bean bag and the greeting of each other, the child is met in his unique individuality; eye contact is made, and then comes the moment of the recognition of the “I” in the other. This is always a significant moment for the child. Now with light hearts and clear minds the homework can finally begin.

When homework has been done, colorful baskets of wool yarn invite the children to work on knitting projects, some alone, with able fingers, others with help from their teachers, while their mothers skillfully knit doll clothing in the nearby knitting workshop. Knitting is a favorite activity of all the children; the younger ones can finger-knit. Finally, a hearty warm snack prepared by the teachers is served.

This afternoon we would celebrate Emanuel’s

second birthday with a birthday circle in the patio with all thirty-two children of Wawa Munakuy. Emanuel was glowing, wearing the golden silk birthday cape and gold crown. He was the tiny “prince” as we sang,

*Arroz con leche, se quiere casar...
Yo soy el principe, el hijo del rey,
quiero casarme, pero no encuentro con quien.*

“Rice with milk, he wants to marry... I am the prince, the son of the king, I want to marry, but I don’t know with whom.” The “prince” chooses his “princess” and holding his teacher’s hand, they weave in and out of the circle as we sing, “*Arroz con leche...*”

During the month Joyce was there, three joyful birthdays were celebrated at Wawa Munakuy, with crown, cape and birthday circle song, followed by a lovely birthday cake made with sweet corn meal ground from corn from the *chacra* and decorated with an array of colorful flowers from the garden. With Emanuel’s birthday celebration, the children’s day at Wawa Munakuy has come to a close—it is time to go home.

The mothers are finished with their doll-making tasks for the day and come to fetch their children. “*Buenas tardes. Hasta manana!*” The children come to each of their teachers to hug them and to say good-bye. So many lovely children to hug! At last, mothers and children weave their way back down the steep, bumpy road to home in the village, filling the oncoming dusk with their lively, happy chatter and laughter.

Special preparations for La Pachamama (Mother Earth)

In between daily pedagogical meetings with the teachers of Wawa Munakuy, weekly meetings with the whole Q’ewar community on the possible economic crisis they would face due to a decrease in doll orders, weekly meetings with the mothers on Waldorf education, and the many preparations for the inauguration of the new kindergarten building, we made and spread preparations for healing the earth in and around the Project, with the intention of helping to transform and create new elemental beings who are in the service of the Christ through our work.

Our further intention was to recognize and show our appreciation for the elementals, the nature spirits, and the Christ in Nature by offering a potentized healing preparation of several

special substances: gold, silver, copper, red rose petals, ground corn, silica, sunflower, rose quartz, frankincense, myrrh, cinnabar and aurum hypericum to *La Pachamama*. (It was possible to make this potentized healing preparation for the Q'ewar Project thanks to Dr. Basil Williams, who has been working for more than twelve years with these substances to heal the earth. He generously gifted us the minerals, the frankincense and the myrrh for the making of the preparation in Peru.) We also made and spread the bio-dynamic Barrel Compost preparation on the gardens and fields of the Project.

Human brotherhood

Our visit to El Proyecto Social Q'ewar was drawing to a close. There would not be a day after we returned home that we would not remember an experience we had had or a child, woman or man with whom we had made a special heart connection—each of them is implanted as a treasure in our souls. It was an honor to live with, to work and play, to laugh and cry with all of the wonderful people of the Project. What we witnessed here in this *pueblito* of Andahuaylillas, tucked quietly away in a peaceful valley of the Andes Mountains of Peru, is in the truest sense the *human brotherhood* of which Rudolf Steiner spoke when he said that human beings have been too long separated and ought to become socialized in brotherhood. “It must depend upon the human will to determine how brotherhood shall be awakened among men” (*The Challenge of the Times*, Anthroposophic Press, 1941, p. 177-178). The founders of the Q'ewar Project, through their unshakeable dedication and Michaelic deeds, have found the will forces to foster and develop *human brotherhood* as the basis of the social life here, out of

which were born the seeds of Waldorf education.

The effect of the world-wide economic crisis on the Project

Unfortunately, the Q'ewar Social Project, which needs to be recognized and supported as a valid representation of the Anthroposophical impulse in the world, has deeply felt the effects of the world-wide economic and financial crises. The development of a broader world market for the dolls will be essential in order to bring the Q'ewar Social Project soundly into the future. If you be moved by their story and would like to buy or sell these high-quality dolls, solicit or contribute donations, or have any suggestions, we would be very grateful. Please contact JoAnne Dennee, at earthheart@madriver.com or call 802-425-4185.

JoAnne Dennee is an early childhood educator at the Lake Champlain Waldorf School who is dedicated to giving love to the children in Vermont and Peru. She has written three books on gardening and nature curriculum. JoAnne has served as the Q'ewar Project's advocate and USA distributor for their beautiful dolls to be viewed at www.qewar.com

Joyce Gallardo is an early childhood educator and mentor. Joyce is the director of Los Amiguitos, a family day care home, where she works out of the insights of Waldorf early childhood education, offering a kindergarten-nursery program that is enriched by the work of Emmi Pikler. She has worked with children internationally in Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. Joyce graduated in August 2009 from the Spacial Dynamics Training Program.



Clean-Up Time: Chaos or Co-operation?

• Barbara Klocek

When I began teaching I dreaded clean-up time with my mixed-age kindergarten class of twenty-four children. It was definitely a time of chaos as I tried to pretend it was a smooth continuation of play. I had the sense I was trying to impose my ideas on top of the children's play, with very limited success. I was giving out directions on the fly to whoever was close by and then moving on to another area and trying to direct the flow towards cleaning up. When I had an experienced teacher come to evaluate me, I was given some direction. She sensed the chaos at this time, and suggested bringing them out of play and then starting to clean up. I was very open to trying this.

I had a few small house elves languishing in a box and brought them out in a basket that sat on a shelf with our candle. I made up a song to bring the children together.

D' B A G A, D' B A G A
With a voice so tiny, and with eyes so shiny,

B A B A B A B A, G A B
Our house elf says, "Let's clean our house." Can I help?

So began a new way of doing clean-up. I have been doing this now for quite a while and it has evolved into one of the nicest times of the day. It has opened a time for pedagogical stories as well as a rhythmic practicing of tasks by the children.

At 9:30, after circle time and free play time, I have cleared the tables. Then I sing out, "Older children may come." This means that they leave their play and come to set the table, count and push in the chairs. Then we gather big sheets, marbles, etc. and sing the song, "With a voice so tiny (see above)." The children have learned that means to come and hear a story from the house elves. They sit around the teacher's chairs and listen as elves tell about what adventures they had when the children were gone. Sometimes they go out the magic door and play with the water

fairies if it is raining, or go and play with the owls. This is a great opportunity to bring in seasonal pictures or an image about being kind or co-operative.

Then the children hear what their jobs are. They have the same job for three weeks. Many tasks require two people so this is an opportunity I have to pair up children for social or organizational interaction. I also have the time to teach them how to do a task. The chores include pouring water from a pitcher (by an older child) and the cup placed in front of each chair by a younger child. The older child then goes around with a towel to clean up spills and the younger child puts a napkin beside or under the cup. What wonderful opportunities to learn to work together! Other tasks are putting the blocks away, ordering the puppets, rolling up the scarves, ordering the sandbox and sweeping the cubbies. After about four days I sing, "If you know your job, you may go to it!" Most of them remember easily and I help those who are not sure.

As the room begins to come into order, they come and ask what else they can do. I will send them to help their friends if there is something that needs more helping hands. The younger ones soon are sent off to wash their hands and lie down on the red rug for a bit of a rest. The older ones love to be "scouts" and go around and find something that is not in place. I soon join those on the rug and sing, "I'm looking to see, who's quiet as can be." They know that if they are quiet and still they may have a turn playing the kinderharp. My colleague is helping the last children settle down and then I sing a lullaby for them. The clean-up time has gone smoothly into a rest time and we all take a long breath and rest for a quiet moment before snack.

Barbara Klocek *has been teaching a mixed-age kindergarten for many years at the Sacramento Waldorf School.*

The Importance of Touch

• Laurie Clark

In my work as a Waldorf kindergarten teacher, I have tried to conscientiously strengthen and enhance the four foundational senses for the children in my care. In many of the classroom activities I try to make sure to incorporate movement, balance, and provide warmth and security for a sense of well-being. I have begun to question whether I have given the children enough opportunities in the sense of touch. The children knead dough, and they touch and play with various natural materials inside and outside, but is this enough? Are the children touched in an authentic, loving way each day by the teachers? I have tried to review the morning and find appropriate times where I could be affectionate in an authentic way, which can be very different for each child considering the needs and sensitivities that they bring. For one child it is enough to hold her hand when coming inside from play, while another child might need me to hold him on my lap with my arms around him in a gentle but firm touch.

Often the touch between children is aggressive, or because of various touch sensitivities could be perceived as unpleasant even though that intention was not there. I have begun to wonder if the children are given enough opportunities to gently touch one another. I decided to compose a circle that consciously promotes healthy touch through imaginations that require cooperation. Following this article, I offer this Circle Adventure called “Spring Cleaning” that provides and invites opportunities for healthy movement and touch between children.

In a book called *Essential Touch, Meeting the Needs of Young Children* by Frances Carlson, I found this quote: “For the past twenty years, the trend toward abstaining from touch in schools has been growing in direct response to the growth in sensitivity toward the problems of sexual harassment, molestation, and abuse. In an effort to keep one step ahead of sexual offenders, more and more schools are sending the message to adults—hands off! . . . Touching children in schools has

become virtually taboo” (Carlson, p. 3, quoted from Del Prete 1997).

This is a terrifying declaration in light of the needs of young children. Touch is a nurturing and necessary element in the life of the young child and brings with it a sense of security and emotional and social competence.

Touch begins in the birthing process when the contractions of labor “massage” the child as the journey down the birth canal is occurring. This experience wakes up the touch system in the baby. Cesarean births, which are becoming more and more common these days for various reasons, lack this vital process and can cause (in some cases) touch sensitivities later on. The closeness with the mother following the birth, the caressing and nursing next to the warmth of the skin-to-skin contact is a welcoming experience into the world. The warmth and shelter of being in the safe peaceful womb has come to an end. Karl König brings a unique perspective to the experience of birth by comparing it to the event described in Genesis when Adam and Eve are driven out of paradise. “The newborn baby is a deeply wounded being: it is shocked and shaken and can only adjust itself if a great deal of care is given to it. The child needs the comfort which only the mother, with her milk, her love and her nearness can provide” (König, p. 37). This “nearness” which König so beautifully describes is the tender touch of the mother, that lives in her hands and in her heart and creates a second womb that surrounds the child on earth. Infants in orphanages and institutional environments often have a condition called, “failure to thrive.” Even though they receive the necessary nutrition and body care, the lack of touch can cause a child to sicken or even die.

In *The Oxytocin Factor: Tapping the Hormone of Calm, Love and Healing* by Kerstin Unvas Moberg, the sense of touch is researched through physiological patterns and neurochemical reactions. Moberg describes how common the overload of

sense impressions in our modern Western culture has become for adults and children. The author then relates how the stress-related fight-or-flight system in most of us has been activated to a very high degree because of so much over-stimulation. Moberg then goes on to say “the same brain and nervous system that produces the fight-or-flight mechanism sometimes generate entirely opposite responses when oxytocin, a hormone, is involved.” The release of oxytocin is an antidote to the fight-or-flight response and it is one of the strongest sources of input that involve the responses of calming, relaxing, and connecting. The warming caress of the sun, a soothing warm bath, and pleasant, rhythmic touch are some of the activities that “trigger the brain’s release of oxytocin, which plays a key role in promoting the body’s calming response.” We respond naturally to a baby who is distressed through rhythmic rocking, cuddling and walking the baby. We gently and rhythmically rub the back of a child who is distressed as we hold and soothe them. We use touch instinctively in the ways described by Moberg so that the child will experience a calming effect and a sense of restored well-being can be promoted (Moberg, p. 4 and 22).



When we touch an object it gives us the inner sense of boundary, “where I end and the outer world begins.” Rudolf Steiner relates the sense of touch to what he calls “God Sensing.” “With every experience of touch there rays into the soul a feeling profoundly stirred by the creative power that underlies all material existence and accounts for the wide range of differentiation in the phenomenal universe” (quoted in Kohler, p. 47). When a healthy sense of touch is experienced freely by the child and becomes a strong foundation, later in life this experience will carry the possibility of turning inward. Steiner speaks of the relationship of the sense of touch transforming into the sense of experiencing the ego or “I” of the other person. We may say, “I was touched to the core of my being but what you just said,” or “What you did touched my heart.” We inwardly touch the very essence of another person and allow ourselves to be touched while holding a sensitive boundary of response. This extraordinary human social capacity to experience one another in this way is truly a creative bridge that helps us cross into meaningful and deep relationships.

References

- Carlson, Frances M. *Essential Touch: Meeting the Needs of Young Children* (NAEYC, 2006).
- Del Prete, T. “Hands Off? The Touchy Subject of Touching.” *The Education Digest* 62 (1997).
- Kohler, Henning. *Working with Anxious, Nervous and Depressed Children* (AWSNA, 2000).
- König, Karl. *Eternal Childhood* (TWT Publications LTD., on behalf of the Camphill Movement 1994).
- Moberg, Kerstin Unvas. *The Oxytocin Factor- Tapping the Hormone of Calm, Love and Healing* (Da Capo Press, 2003).

Laurie Clark has been a Waldorf kindergarten teacher for over 25 years and currently works at the Denver Waldorf School. She is also a conference presenter, a teacher trainer, and a mentor. She has coauthored a book of original “movement journeys” with Nancy Blanning entitled *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures* (available from WECAN).

SPRING CLEANING CIRCLE

composed by Laurie Clark

Spring Song

D E D B D B B A B D

We skip and we sing, to welcome the spring

B A G A B B B A G A G

And we will help mother to clean everything.

Mother wants to clean the house, she needs help from me and you
So that the house can shine like the fresh new spring, it can sparkle too.
Our hands shall do good work this day
Let us name our fingers, I will show you the way.

Fingerplay (source unknown)

Little Penny

Penny Roo

Roo Whistle

Mary Josell

And Old Man Bumbabala!

Mother says we must sweep
Sweep and sweep and sweep the floor
From wall to wall, the dirt goes, right out the door.

“Crawl under the bed,” that is what mother has said.
To get the dust bunnies, get each one
Blow them in the air, it is so much fun!
We will put them into the basket
And now that job is done!

We slide and we sing to welcome the spring
And we will help mother to clean everything.

Mother asks us to fold the laundry
Fold the laundry, stack each piece, it is a pile high sitting
Will the pile reach all the way to the sky?

Now wash the dishes, wipe them, and put them away
Stack them on the shelf, “Be careful”, is what mother does say.

Our dog named Shaggy is dirty and does not smell too good
Shall we gently wash him? Mother says we should.
Baths are not what our dog likes and he is running away
“Come back here, Shaggy, we are spring cleaning today.”
We caught Shaggy, now we can wash and scrub
Scrubba, dub dub, gently wash the dog in the tub.

Sing a few times, skip around room

Sit down

Point me/you

Hold hands up, wiggle fingers

Hold up pinky finger

Hold up ring finger

Hold up middle finger

Hold up pointer finger

Hold up thumb

Sweeping gesture

Big sweep gesture

Put wool pieces in middle of the circle

Blow pieces of wool in air

Into a basket

Slide sideways in circle, singing

Alternate one hand on top of the
other moving from sitting to standing

Gesture of washing, wiping and stacking

Hold nose

Crawling

Repeat

One child is on all fours like a dog,
another child gently ‘washes’ the back
of the child who is on all fours – then
trade –washer becomes the dog

Shall we wash our kitty too?
No, no, says mother—this is what you can do.
Clean kitty's bowl, make it shiny and bright

Then pour milk into it, now that is right.

“Go to the barn,” mother says, to your pony sweet.
“Take the pick, and clean the mud off the pony's feet.”
One, two, three, now this one's clean.
Four, five, six, don't play tricks.
Seven, eight, nine, this one looks fine.
Ten, eleven, twelve, now all is well.

Back into the barn dear pony, here is some hay so sweet
Now please try to keep the mud from going in between your feet.

*We gallop and sing, to welcome the spring
And we will help mother to clean everything.*

Find fresh flowers, mother says, to decorate the table
Please bring as many flowers as you are able
Snowdrops and crocuses please do bring
For these are the very first flowers of spring
Here are beautiful spring flowers, I will sit down on the ground.
I pick the flowers for the table
But I feel raindrops and hear their lovely sound
Here come the spring showers
The raindrops are spring cleaning mother earth too and giving a drink
to the flowers.

Pitter patter pitter patter—here come the spring showers
Pitter patter pitter patter giving a drink to the flowers
Pitter patter pitter patter I am getting wet right here
Pitter patter pitter patter—I better go home, oh dear!

*We run and we sing, to welcome the spring
And we will help mother to make the house clean.*

The flowers are on the table
I have done as much as I am able
Mother thanks me for helping her,
She hugs me, I have done my very best
But now I am tired and I will lay down and rest.

**Left hand forms “bowl” while right
“washes” it
Open right hand “pours” with thumb
separated as spout**

**Scrape lifted foot with hand
Right foot in front
Left foot in front
Right foot in back
Left foot in back**

Gallop and sing

Open flower hand gesture

**Children sit in a circle facing the back
of the child in front of them- when the
raindrops fall they gently tap the back
of the child from the shoulders down**

Run in circle or in path around room

Children hug each other

**Sing lullaby or play lyre or
glockenspiel. Children can rub each
other's backs during rest.**

Awakening to Child Health

• Reviewed by Stephen Spitalny

Awakening to Child Health, Vol. I by Raoul Goldberg, MD (Hawthorn Press, 2009).

Awakening to Child Health articulates Dr. Goldberg's research into the sources of children's well-being. In this thoughtful approach to children Goldberg begins by connecting the reader with the wonder of childhood by hearkening back to one's own experience as a child, while examples from Dr. Goldberg's years of experience are found throughout the book. (Dr. Goldberg has been a Waldorf school doctor in South Africa for many years. He has a pediatric clinic and directs the Syringa Health Centre in Capetown, a holistic health clinic with a wide range of complementary therapies.)

This in-depth guide to the physical, soul and spiritual development of children from birth through adolescence combines the doctor's own research and

experience with the insights of Rudolf Steiner. It is a highly accessible book, informed by embryology and spiritual psychology, and creates a broad and deep look into human development. The contents of the 428-page volume, the first of three, include: an in-depth look at prenatal development and experience, a chapter on birth experiences, an expanded picture of the first three years, and a wide-ranging overview of the first seven years; all important topics for readers of *Gateways*!

This is a descriptive and warmth-filled book that details the effects of relating to children in loving, attentive ways. It is not a medical textbook, nor a home health care guide, but a guide to being nurturing and awake as a support to the development of the children in our care. It is valuable resource for teachers, doctors, parents and anyone interested in children, one you will refer back to again and again over the years.

Other Recommended Resources

We are experiencing a mushrooming epidemic of childhood obesity and childhood onset (Type 2) diabetes. Attention on children's nutrition is becoming more and more fashionable in North America, even Mrs. Obama is speaking out on this subject. I recently watched a film entitled *Two Angry Moms* about the sorry state of school food programs and the will efforts of a small but growing number of concerned adults. It seems that once again the needs of children have taken a backseat to corporate profit. I have become an angry mom, and you can too for the sake of all the schoolchildren in the US. Go to their website and see how you can participate: angrymoms.org

Another organization working on behalf of children is the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood whose aim is reclaiming childhood from corporate marketers. They are working on various issues including violence, sexualizing of children, obesity and play. Their website is: www.commercialexploitation.org. More than ever, it is important to stand up in defense of children's true needs for health, nutrition, and a childhood that supports physical/soul/spiritual development. And it means we have to stand against the entrenched corporate culture of greed and power that has infected our political system. Our future depends on it!

I highly recommend the book *Weapons of Mass Instruction*, by John Taylor Gatto, for understanding another aspect of the system that is working against the needs of children. In it, Gatto chronicles the history of compulsory education in the US. This book is highly readable, fascinating, and chilling. It is a strong reminder of why we are involved in Waldorf education!

—Stephen Spitalny

Workshops and Short Courses

June 20–25, School of Eurythmy, Chestnut Ridge, NY: **Summer Eurythmy Week**, with Annelies Davidson and Barbara Schneider-Serio. Contact Lura Jacobs, 845-352-5020, ext. 13, info@eurythmy.org

June 21–25, Boulder, CO: **Walkabout Tales** with Suzanne Down. Info: suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com, junipertreepuppets.com/events/

June 21–25, San Francisco Bay Area, CA: **Waldorf Early Childhood: What? Why? How?** with Marianne Alsop and Kate Hammond. Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training 2010 Summer Arts Festival. Contact Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training at 415-332-2133 or visit www.bacwtt.org

June 28–July 2, Sunbridge Institute, Chestnut Ridge, NY: **Cultivating the Healing Will in Waldorf Early Childhood Education** with Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark. Contact Sarah Hearn 845-425-0055 x22, summer@sunbridge.edu, www.sunbridge.edu

June 28–July 2, Chicago Waldorf School, IL: **Civilization at a Crossroads**, Arcturus Summer Intensive Week with Rick Spalding, Jeff Spade, Elena Baba, Frances Vig, Marianne Fieber, Jim Kotz, David Dozier. Information: http://arcturus.info/summer.htm, arcturus23@hotmail.com, 773-761-3026

June 28–July 2, Boulder, CO: **The Art of Solo Marionette Theater** with Suzanne Down, Info: suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com, junipertreepuppets.com/events/

July 5–9, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH: **An In-depth Study of the Twelve Senses from the Inside Out**, with Jane Swain. Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 5–9, Boulder, CO: **Therapeutic Insights from Womb to Three Years** with Nancy Blanning and Suzanne Down, Contact suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com, junipertreepuppets.com/events

July 5–9, San Francisco Bay Area, CA: **Deepening the Understanding of Waldorf Education through Study and Art** with Dorit Winter and Dave Alsop. Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training 2010 Summer Arts Festival. For individuals who have prior engagement with Anthroposophy. Contact Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training at 415-332-2133 or visit www.bacwtt.org

July 5–9 and/or 12–16, Vancouver Island, Canada: **Receiving the Child: Creating a Home in Body, Soul**

and Spirit, an Infant and Toddler Caregiver Program with Bernadette Raichle. One- or two-week course. Information: www.westcoastinstitute.org, info@westcoastinstitute.org, 604-740-0539. Course Planner - Marjorie Thatcher 604-985-3569

July 7–16, Chestnut Ridge, NY: **Spinning Threads of Color**, with Mikae Toma and Renate Hiller. Eight days of immersion in the healing processes of fiber preparation, spinning, and plant dyeing. Contact the Fiber Craft Studio, 845.425.2891 / information@fibercraftstudio.org / www.fibercraftstudio.org

July 11–17, Rudolf Steiner Institute, Stonehill College, Easton, MA: **Pedagogical Puppetry – A Path for Social and Emotional Learning** with Janene Ping. One of over 20 one-and two-week courses. Financial assistance and Waldorf teacher grants available. Family-friendly, programs for children. Full information at steinerinstitute.org. Contact: Lynn Bufano, 410-358-0050, reg@steinerinstitute.org.

July 12-14, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH: **Creating Programs for Parents and Infants**, with Nancy Macalaster. Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 12–16, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH: **Cycles and Rhythms for Working with Young Children**, with Andrea Gambardella. Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 12–16, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH: **Nurturing the Child in the First Three Years**, with Susan Weber and Jane Swain. Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 12–16, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH: **Nurturing the Child in the First Three Years, Part One**, with Susan Weber and Jane Swain. Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 12–16, Sound Circle Center, Seattle: Anne-Marie Fryer, Holly Koteen-Soule. Johanna Steegmans and others. **Working with Angels and Elementals: Nourishment for the Inner Life of the Early Childhood Educator.** A summer intensive for practicing teachers. www.soundcircle.org Contact: Holly Koteen-Soule: 206-528-1702, hollysgarden@qwest.net

July 12–16, San Francisco Bay Area, CA: Waldorf Seminar – **The Study of Man** with Christof Wiechert. Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training 2010 Summer Arts Festival. For Waldorf professionals. Contact 415-332-2133 or visit www.bacwtt.org

July 18–24, Rudolf Steiner Institute, Stonehill College, Easton, MA: **The Imaginative Language of Fairy Tales—An Artistic Exploration** with Ephrat Angress-Ewald. Contact Lynn Bufano, 410-358-0050, reg@steinerinstitute.org.

July 19–23, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH: **Nurturing the Child in the First Three Years, Part Two**, with Susan Weber and Jane Swain. Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 19–23, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH: **Creating an Outdoor Environment for the Young Child and Imbuing it with Life**, with Carol Nasr. Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 19–23 Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH, **Puppetry For Very Young Children**, with Libby Haddock. . Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 19–23, Waldorf School of San Diego, CA: **Changing Times - Changing Music: The New Music and Its Natural Place in Waldorf Pedagogy** with Manfred Bleffert & Andrea Lyman. A week-long workshop for Waldorf class, early childhood, & specialty music teachers. Register at biancadlara@hotmail.com or 760-722-8487

July 30–31, Santa Cruz, CA: **The Therapeutic Rod Puppet, Speech Development and Nursery Rhymes**, with Suzanne Down, suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com, junipertreepuppets.com/events/

August 2–6, Sunbridge Institute, Chestnut Ridge, NY: **Introduction to Waldorf Early Childhood Education** with Patricia Rubano, Leslie- Burchell-Fox, and Connie Manson. A week-long immersion in the world of early childhood with handwork, puppetry, music, presentations and discussions with the first-hand accounts of three experienced teachers intent on sharing their love and appreciation for working with young children. Contact Sarah Hearn 845.425.0055 x22, summer@sunbridge.edu, www.sunbridge.edu

August 2–6, Sacramento, CA: **The Art of Solo Marionette Theater** with Suzanne Down. suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com, junipertreepuppets.com/events/

October 16, New England Location: **The Protection Story** with Suzanne Down. suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com, junipertreepuppets.com/events/

Conferences

June 21–25, Denver, CO: **Offering the Child a Handful of Stars: From Inner Work to Outer Devotion** with Dr. Adam Blanning, Nancy Blanning, Laurie Clark, and Marielle Levin. Experiencing spiritual archetype through meditative practice for EC educators. Brochure and registration form at www.denvertherapies.com/resources.html.

July 22–25, Chestnut Ridge, NY: **Forging a Path II: Working with Children's Destinies**, a onference for teachers, therapists and physicians. With Keynote Speakers Bruno Callegaro, MD and Gerald Karnow, MD, Inner Work with Patrice Maynard, Singing with George V. Rose, and Speech with Michael Steinrueck. Contact Jeanette Rodriguez at ottospechtRSFF@gmail.com, (917) 923-4958. For a printable form see www.threefold.org/forgingapath

October 23, Emerson Waldorf School, Chapel Hill, NC: **SE Regional WECAN Conference**; topic TBA; contact Nancy Foster, 202-829-2909, nfoster@speakeasy.net

Ongoing Trainings

June 2010, Sunbridge Institute, Chestnut Ridge, NY: New group begins, **Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education** with program director Susan Howard, a 25-month, part-time program for early childhood educators. Contact Anna Claire Novotny 845.425.0055 x18, info@sunbridge.edu, www.sunbridge.edu

June 26–July 3, 2010, Boulder, CO: **LifeWays Early Childhood and Human Development Training** with Cynthia Aldinger, Rahima Baldwin Dancy, Suzanne Down, and others. Part One of a 4-part training for parents and professionals. Contact Rahima at 303-546-0070, Rahima@informedfamilylife.org.

June 27–July 16, 2010, Toronto, ON, Canada: New at Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto, **Early Childhood Part-Time Education Program**. The two-year program continues in October/November 2010 (1 week); March 2011 (1 week). Same cycle in year two, dates TBA. Contact info@rsct.ca or 905-764-7570, or visit www.rsct.ca.

July 8, San Francisco Bay Area, CA: **Become a Waldorf Teacher Open House/Visitors Day**. Contact Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training at 415-332-2133 or visit www.bacwtt.org

July 12–22, 2010, Lincolnville, ME: **LifeWays Early Childhood and Human Development Training** with Susan Silverio, Rachel Ross, Suzanne Down, Cynthia Aldinger, and others. Part One of a 4-part training for parents and professionals. Contact Susan Silverio, 207-763-4652, silverio@tidewater.net.

July 12–23, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene NH: First session of new cycle of 13-month part-time training course, **The Child and Family in the First Three Years**, with Susan Weber and Jane Swain. For childcare providers working with infants, toddlers and young children; early childhood professionals wishing to deepen their understanding of these early years as a foundation for their work with nursery and kindergarten children; parent-

infant and parent-toddler group facilitating teachers; and those who work with expectant parents. Contact Bonnie Chamberlin, 603 357-3755, bonnie@sophiashearth.org

July 15–27, Santa Cruz, CA, **Part Three of the Certificate Puppetry Training**. This session focuses on the Fairy Tale and Marionette Theater. Only for current students or those from other trainings who need to complete their course. suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com, junipertreepuppets.com/events/

September, 2010 – June, 2011, Chestnut Ridge, NY: **One-year Part-time Training in Biodynamics**. Learn the basics of biodynamics for your home or school garden! Leads to a certificate of completion. Contact 845-352-5020 x20, info@pfeiffercenter.org, www.pfeiffercenter.org.

September, 2010, Boulder, CO: New group starting, **SouthWest Regional Year-Round Puppetry Training**, Working with the first pedagogical focus of the three part puppet training and meeting six weekends during the year. Info: suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com, junipertreepuppets.com/school/

Mid-Sept, 2010, San Francisco/CA Coast: **LifeWays Early Childhood and Human Development Training** for parents and professionals with Marianne Alsop, Heather Lanier,

Suzanne Down, Susan Johnson, MD and others. Sessions meet for fifteen weekends over ten months, including four long-weekend sessions at Big Sur. Contact Marianne Alsop, 415-453-9122, alsop@sbcglobal.net

Fall 2010, School of Eurythmy, Chestnut Ridge, NY: New group begins, **Frontier Eurythmy Training**. For those who live at a distance, Frontier Eurythmy Training offers the convenient alternative of attending the School of Eurythmy for four two-week training blocks during the year. Contact Lura Jacobs, 845-352-5020, ext. 13, info@eurythmy.org

Oct. 17–24, 2010, Milwaukee, WI: **LifeWays Early Childhood and Human Development Training** with Cynthia Aldinger, Suzanne Down, Mary O'Connell, Mary Ruud, Trish McPhee, RN and others. Part One of a 4-part training for parents and professionals. Contact Mary O'Connell, 414-218-8558, lifewayschildcare@gmail.com

Please submit calendar items for Nov. 2010 through spring 2011 by September 15 to Lory Widmer, publications@waldorfearlychildhood.org.



New WECAN E-News

To help keep our members better informed, the Waldorf Early Childhood Association has begun sending an email newsletter that includes links to articles, reports, international and regional news, upcoming conferences and much more. We have already sent two issues (Fall 2009 and Spring 2010) and expect to continue sending them at least twice a year.

IMPORTANT!

If you have not yet received the e-newsletter, we either do not have your correct email address, or your email program is blocking the newsletter. Please send a message including your preferred email address to Lory Widmer at publications@waldorfearlychildhood.org if you would like to be put on the list.

Start Moving

with Eurythmy
Spring Valley

To learn about our
Part-Time & Full-Time Training,
Educational Training,
Public Courses and more:

info@eurythmy.org www.eurythmy.org
845-352-5020, ext. 13
260 Hungry Hollow Road, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977

Summer 2010 at Sunbridge Institute



June 18 – July 2:

Cultivating the Healing Will - Waldorf Early Childhood Education with Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark

How do we develop a healing will within ourselves as early childhood educators?

How can we provide incarnational support to the children in our care?

This five-day intensive course includes the study of research indications by Rudolf Steiner, movement activities, and the sharing of experiences from our educational and therapeutic work with young children.

August 2 – 6:

Introduction to Waldorf Early Childhood Education with Leslie Burchell-Fox, Connie Manson, and Patricia Rubano

This five-day immersion into the world of Waldorf early childhood education offers an excellent introduction to the rhythms and activities of the nursery-kindergarten including puppetry, handwork, music, and much more!

Learn from three master Waldorf early childhood educators and share in their love and appreciation for working with the child before school-entrance age.

Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education Program

Susan Howard, Program Director

New Cycle begins this summer on June 14 – Now enrolling!

This diploma program includes courses in child development, practical activities, arts and crafts, and the inner foundations of Waldorf education, together with mentored teaching. This two-year course includes three-week summer sessions and five-day intensives in fall and spring.

The program is fully endorsed by the Association of Waldorf Schools and the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America.

Register for summer courses online: www.Sunbridge.edu

Information on travel, food, and housing available online.

Questions? Anna Claire Novotny, 845.425.0055 x18 or info@sunbridge.edu

Sunbridge Institute *Inspiring Education!*

285 Hungry Hollow Rd., Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977



Part-Time Trainings, Seminars, Workshops and Consulting

Rocky Mountain Region—Colorado-late June 2010- **Rahima Baldwin 303-546-0030**

Northeast—Maine- July 2010- **Susan Silverio 207-763-4652**

Midwest—Wisconsin— October 2010- **Mary O’Connell 414-462-0818**

California Coast—San Francisco Bay Area & Big Sur—September 2010- **Marianne Alsop 415-453-9122**

Rudolf Steiner College- Sacramento, California - **916-961-8727**

Spanish-speaking—San Francisco – **Rosario Villasana-Ruiz 415-587-0802**

Vancouver, BC— TBA- **Margo Running 604-904-4198**

www.lifewaysnorthamerica.org

405-579-0999

Coming Soon! – Our new book:

Home Away From Home

LifeWays Care for Children and Families

“We shall not get anywhere in any direction without

enthusiasm and inner mobility”

– Rudolf Steiner

***A 3 year part-time program offering an internationally
recognized Waldorf Teaching Certificate.***

Visit us at www.bacwtt.org or call 415.332.2133



BAY AREA CENTER
FOR WALDORF
TEACHER
TRAINING

SUMMER ARTS FESTIVAL 4 SESSIONS JUNE 21-JULY 16, 2010

Early Childhood Summer Institute and Teacher Training Program



The Child and Family in the First Three Years

New cycle begins July 12-23, 2010

A 13-month part-time training course
for early childhood teachers,
parent-toddler, parent-infant, and
parent-child group facilitators, and
childcare providers in all settings.

**SOPHIA'S
HEARTH
FAMILY CENTER**

sophiashearth.org 603.357.3755 700 Court St., Keene, NH 03431

Summer Institute 2010, Five-Day Courses

July 5-9

An In-Depth Study of the Twelve
Senses From the Inside Out

JANE SWAIN

July 12-16

Cycles and Rhythms for Working
with Young Children

ANDREA GAMBARDELLA

Nurturing the Child in the First
Three Years (first week)

SUSAN WEBER AND JANE SWAIN

Creating Programs for Parents
and Infants

NANCY MACALASTER

July 19-23

Nurturing the Child in the First Three
Years (second week)

SUSAN WEBER AND JANE SWAIN

Puppetry For Very Young Children

LIBBY HADDOCK

Creating an Outdoor Environment for
the Young Child and Imbuing It With Life

CAROL NASR

*Join us in beautiful southern New Hampshire,
land of lakes and mountains, as part of a
joyous learning community that will inspire
and transform your work!*

See our website for full details.

**Call or email us for a full
professional course brochure.**



Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

Receiving the Child - Creating a Home for Body, Soul and Spirit an Infant-Toddler Caregiver Course, July 4-16, 2010

with Bernadette & Gerrit Raichle, Directors of Awhina Day Nursery, New Zealand

The Day Nursery provides the possibility of surrounding the child with the therapeutic qualities of the archetypal home. Bernadette and Gerrit will bring in-depth insights and practices from the indications of Waldorf pedagogy, based on an understanding of the developing child from pre-birth, with an emphasis on the first three years.

The course will include Music, Eurythmy, Spatial Dynamics, Wilma Ellersiek Games, Nutrition, Biodynamic Gardening, Doll Making, Celebrating Festivals and use of Weleda Preparations.

We invite all who are interested in deepening their knowledge and practices of care of young children to participate. Child-care providers, parents and grandparents, preschool and parent and child care teachers are all welcome.

Waldorf Teacher Education - Early Childhood Training

The next two year cycle begins July 2011

email: info@westcoastinstitute.org or phone Marjorie Thatcher 604-985-3569 or Administrator 604-740-0539

Visit our website at: www.westcoastinstitute.org

Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education

Part-time & Full-time

Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto • www.rsct.ca • 905-764-7570

Sound Circle Center FOR ARTS & ANTHROPOLOGY

• EARLY CHILDHOOD INTENSIVE •

Working with Angels and Elementals

*Nourishment for the Inner Life
of the Early Childhood Educator*

Featuring Anne-Marie Fryer,
with Holly Koteen-Soule,
Johanna Steegmans and others.

July 12-16, Seattle, WA

Understanding and connecting with the angelic
and elemental realms can help the early childhood
educator gain inner confidence and insight and be
more effective in guiding the young child.

For registration and more information visit our website

www.soundcircle.org

or information@soundcircle.org

Seattle Waldorf School • 2728 NE 100th St. • Seattle



Handcrafted for Happy, Healthy Feet!

Classroom shoes that are easy to put on,
secure & comfortable. Our barefoot like designs
enhance flexibility & balance. Handmade in our
Oregon workshop for Waldorf students worldwide.

All Classroom shoes have soft,
sheepskin innersoles - Call for
School Discounts or School Orders!

www.SoftStarShoes.com

1-866-763-2525

Bob & Nancy's Book Shop

Serving

- Waldorf Education
- Families
- and the Human Spirit

Worldwide

(541) 929-2359

www.waldorfbooks.com

The Puppenstube



www.thepuppenstube.com

*Exquisite hand crafted dolls
and charming forest folk of every kind
Cozy natural Fiber hand knits,
and from Germany,
precious wooden Buntspecht figures.*

Christine Schreier

christinespuppenstube@gmail.com

Briggs Little

WOOLEN MILLS LTD

Makers of Pure Wool Yarns Since 1857
for Hand Knitting and Hand Weaving

3500 Route #635, Harvey, York County,
New Brunswick, Canada E6K 1J8

Phone 506-366-5438 Fax 506-366-3034

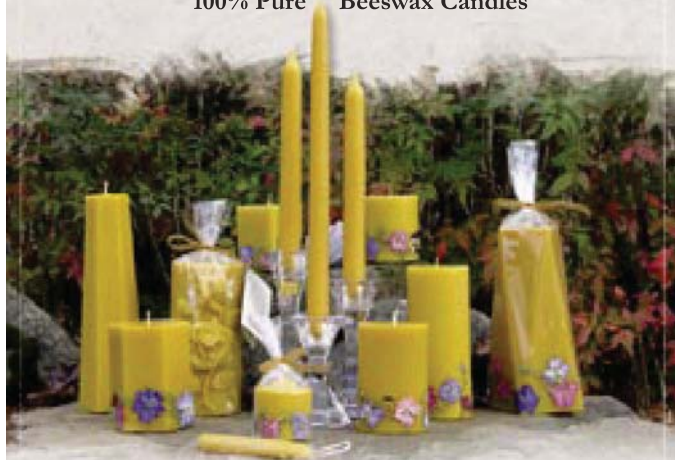
Email woolyarn@nb.sympatico.ca

Order Desk 1-800-561-YARN

*Your time
deserves quality*

Hinode Farm, LLC

100% Pure Beeswax Candles



Enjoy the beauty of our 100% pure beeswax candles, which are naturally scented with the sweetness of honey and burn cleanly with a warm golden flame. Beeswax candles are the ideal gift from nature for their luxurious beauty, aroma, and elegance.

www.hinodefarm.com

phone: 1.888.855.1932 fax: 1.541.855.2065

FREE shipping on orders over \$50

EARTH GUILD

Tools • Materials • Books for Handcrafts

BASKETRY • BEADS • CANDLEMAKING
DESIGN BOOKS • DYES • FELTING
FIBERS • KNITTING & CROCHET
PAPERMAKING • SCREEN-PRINTING
SPINNING • WEAVING • YARNS



Automatic item & volume discount schedules
33 Haywood Street • Asheville NC 28801
1-800-327-8448 • www.earthguild.com

Central Shippee

46 Star Lake Road, Bloomingdale, NJ 07403-0135

Phone: 973-838-1100 Fax: 973-838-8273

Toll-free: 800-631-8968

www.centralshippee.com

Lucy Babcock

National Sales Coordinator

Felt • Fabric • Fixtures

Gateways

A Newsletter of the
Waldorf Early Childhood Association
of North America



SPRING/SUMMER 2010
ISSUE 58

Editor: Stephen Spitalny
Editorial Advisor: Susan Howard
Managing Editor: Lory Widmer
Administrator: Melissa Lyons
Cover Art: Michael Howard

Special Thanks

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue.

Photos from Wawa Munakuy Nursery/Kindergarten on pages 11, 18, 26 and 29
courtesy of JoAnne Dennee.

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.
 - *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 \$40.
Deadlines for articles and advertisements are **September 15** and **March 15**.
It is preferable that articles be emailed as an attachment to
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
info@waldorfearlychildhood.org.