

CONFLUENCE

Fall 2012

News from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

Vol 2, No.1

FROM THE FIELD



Traversing the Arizona Terrain

BY WILL STAPP

In May, I took an invigorating weeklong road trip across the southwest to visit the five charters inspired by Waldorf education that call Arizona home. Arizona geography looms large and is quite diverse, ranging from austere, cactus-dotted deserts and canyon lands to pine-covered volcanic peaks. How fitting that the schools all draw their names from this remarkable landscape: Pine Forest in Flagstaff, Desert Star just outside of Sedona, Mountain Oak in Prescott, Desert Marigold in Phoenix and Tucson's Desert Sky.

The week was packed. I had the chance to sit in on a lot of classes across the grades, go through at least a hundred main lesson books, listen to an outstanding choir and even take in the laurel ceremony at the statewide fifth grade pentathlon in Flagstaff. I spoke with teachers, administrators, parents and elders of the Arizona effort.

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FROM THE ALLIANCE

This Harvest Season

Heading into fall, the *Confluence* editorial board thought it would be worthwhile to address an archetypal theme that appears in abundance during the harvest season. While we can't claim to have mastered the territory, we hope you will enjoy our efforts to begin to explore it.

Its fairly common knowledge that early European agrarian cultures often lived with a four-fold imagination of the turn of the year in which the unique quality of each season was embodied by a particular god or archetype. The fall equinox, or harvest time, was often seen as the domain of a cosmic warrior, armed in iron or steel, with the heroic task of subduing a sulfurous dragon set on devouring the entire countryside, or at least a beautiful maiden or two. How do we make sense of this warrior—called Wotan by the German tribes in pagan times, St. Michael or St. George the Dragon Slayer in the Middle Ages—in 2012? Why does this archetypal struggle still speak to us after all these centuries? Why do the children delight when so many of our schools bring this image of the larger-than-life warrior, overcoming an often sly and potent beast via a Harvest or Michaelmas Festival?

As one who keeps his hands in the soil and pays close attention to the change of the seasons, I always find that the turn of the summer towards fall has a wash of melancholy. Where I live, as the days shorten, the daylight takes on a reddish hue as the green growth of my garden yellows towards decay, foreshadowing the death-like stillness of winter. In this stillness, I am left pondering the fruits of my labors and the qualities of seed I have helped produce for the next season. Does it have vitality, or is it sterile or already laced with fungus or rot?

Rudolf Steiner thought that during this seasonal time "nature leaves man alone with himself." He suggests that autumn bubbling up into consciousness of the archetypal "picture of the fight of Michael with the dragon expresses a strong awareness that man himself must give to his inner life of soul the direction that nature cannot give."

This is the time of the year in which it seems most fitting to ask who are these dragons within ourselves and facing our communities? How



FOCUS OF THE
FALL ISSUE
TAMING
DRAGONS

many dragons have we seeded ourselves, either by omission or commission? Which ones appear to threaten from larger social or economic forces outside of our more immediate control? How do we muster the heroic spirit within ourselves to slay them, or at least take a politically correct approach and tame a few?

To use a few words of a much-loved verse that many of the children know from fall festivals: *They mix, they mess, they musk, they muddle, till white appears as black. Shape changing, double headed, fire-breathing brow. What's a dragon, who's the dragon, where's the dragon now?**

This is rich, and challenging, territory. Rather than pretend or presume we can offer answers, we hope you enjoy these articles that begin to name some of the scaly beasts facing our communities, and to reveal how our colleagues are standing up to them. — Will Stapp, President of the Alliance

*[Click here for a complete version of the verse.](#)

Traversing the Arizona Terrain

BY WILL STAPP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 There is a strong anthroposophical tradition in the state, from which the schools track their origins and which inspires an ethos of collaboration between the independent and public school streams. There are some vigorous dragons as well!

In order to do justice the schools and the ongoing efforts to bring the gifts of Steiner's

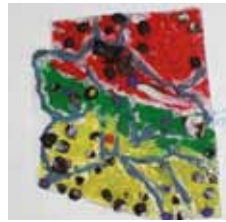
educational vision to Arizona children and families, I couldn't begin to contain my words to a newsletter format. Take the trip into the field along with me, and discover both unique and universal ways the education is unfolding in the Grand Canyon state. [Click here](#) for the online magazine-length feature. I hope it offers some of the depth and context for which the Arizona movement deserves to be appreciated.



DESERT SKY COMMUNITY SCHOOL in Tucson has just acquired a new school facility.



DESERT MARIGOLD SCHOOL in Phoenix is in its 11th year with 300+ students in grades K-11.



DESERT STAR, near Sedona, recently moved to a new property on the edge of a national forest.



PINE FOREST SCHOOL was established in 1995 and is the oldest, currently with students in K-8.



MOUNTAIN OAK SCHOOL in Prescott also recently acquired a new school facility through creative financing.





Mountain Oak staff using an “emergence” planning process.

Facing the Start-Up Dragons

BY AMY BIRD

Every few weeks I get an email or phone message that says: “I’m starting a charter school. Does someone at your school have time to answer a few questions?”

Although I’m not one of Desert Marigold’s original founders, I’ve been here long enough to remember when this Pre-K–12 school of 300+ students had barely a dozen kindergarteners. Each time I talk with people who are starting schools—especially those doing it for the first time—it instantly brings back the intense joys and agonies of the start-up years.

Conversations about start-ups usually begin with very practical, detailed questions. Founders want to get things done. They have lists. Long ones. They read through them, asking about everything from lesson plan formats and standardized tests to fire alarm systems and the use of candles in classrooms. Charter laws are so different from state to state that what’s true in Arizona may not be so in Idaho or Florida. I do my best.

Once we get beyond the list, two things always strike me: The first is the absolute passion that Waldorf education inspires; the second is the incredible courage it takes to found a school. The moment you take up your sword and declare for the good, all manner of dragons emerge from the shadows, spewing flames.

I recently asked a few charter school founders around the country to share the challenges they have faced—or are facing—as well as some of their hard-won wisdom. True to the nature of this work, my requests arrived either during the busy first week of school or the even busier week before the start of school.

I reached Phil Arnold at a particularly arresting moment: late in the evening, just one day after his local school board in eastern Pennsylvania denied the approval of his charter petition. He sounded remarkably upbeat. Arnold is the founder of Circle of Seasons Charter School, still scheduled to open fall 2013 despite the recent setback. One fact that keeps Arnold positive as he determines his next steps is that more than 300 students are already pre-enrolled for Circle of Season’s initial 110 K-2 seats. “There’s no point in being down,” he says. “I just feel children deserve to have this education. The families have made it clear



that the school is needed. It has to happen, and I’m ready to do what it takes. It’s that simple.” He says he puts things into perspective by remembering that “worthwhile things often take time.”

The promise of Waldorf education—both for today’s children and for the future of humanity—is at the heart of what motivates many of us. Over-reliance on that powerful ideal, though, can bring its own kind of danger. Shelly Adrian, Administrative Director of Desert Sky Charter School in Tucson, Arizona and one of its founders, puts it this way: “When Desert Sky started seven years ago, we thought that if we just put up a sign that said ‘tuition-free Waldorf education’ that would be enough; people would know who we were, and they would come. It’s true that people came, but they didn’t know what we were really about. That was because we didn’t really know. I like to say we knew what Waldorf was, but we didn’t know who we were.” Adrian says that Desert Sky got on the right track when school leaders started spending time together clarifying their values instead of only focusing on broader community participation. “We have a cohesive core now, and that makes all the difference.”

Chip Romer, Director of Credo High School in Sonoma County, California agrees that creating a strong organizational culture is paramount. “The first time I was part of founding a school, we didn’t do that; we focused on all the practical needs. Fortunately, we had strong values-based pedagogical leadership as soon as we opened, so that dragon didn’t hurt us badly. But it could have.” With Credo, which opened in Fall 2011, Romer took a different approach. “I brought in someone to help us identify core values three years before we were up and running. I knew we needed to learn how to become a community, not just a school.” Now he says the big challenge is balancing the budget while Credo grows toward full enrollment. His practical advice to leaders in similar situations is to “find the people who stand to gain from the success of your school—housing developers, city leaders—and make them your allies.”

As this new school year begins, it is important to acknowledge the school founders in our midst and to thank them for their courage and sacrifice. We would also do well to stay mindful that we are all founders in our own right. Each and every encounter we have with the colleagues, parents, children and neighbors of our schools makes a difference; each one is a deed for the future.

Amy Bird is the Development Director at Desert Marigold School in Phoenix and has been a part of that community since 1995. She completed the Waldorf Administrative Certification Program at Rudolf Steiner College in 2000. www.arizonawaldorf.org/DMS/

THE INTERVIEW

Nicole Abaté Ducarroz Taming Our Authorizers

INTERVIEWED BY CHIP ROMER

In the late 1990’s I served on the development team of Woodland Star Charter School in Sonoma, California. Our outreach chair was a tenacious and highly social woman named Nicole Abaté Ducarroz. Our petition faced fierce opposition from the local superintendent, determined not to lose district ADA to an independent charter, and from the school board, which at that time was dominated by a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Nicole Abaté Ducarroz

Taming Our Authorizers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 California Teachers Association union lobbyist, a professional opponent of charter schools. Our petition was denied, but we won an appeal at the county office and eventually found a friendly home at Twin Ridges Unified School District (back when a California charter could be authorized by any district in the state). Time passed. By 2004 I had become Woodland Star's administrator, and the law had changed, requiring charter schools to renew their charters with their home districts. I thought the school needed an advocate on the local board in order to defend itself. I considered which of our parents might be strong enough and resilient enough and generous enough to put herself on the line for our students—and recruited my colleague Nicole to run. She was elected in 2004, reelected in 2008 and recently secured a third term when no one opposed her for a 2012 race. www.woodlandstarschool.org

CR: Why did you run?

NAD: Because you asked me to! Because I have a very strong commitment to ensure the opportunity of high quality education, including Waldorf, for all children.

CR: You knew you were stepping into an adversarial situation in a school district that had a long history of being very contentious. Where did you find the courage?

NAD: It was hard. The teachers union endorsed my opponent, who disliked charter schools. I spoke with a lot of people, including sitting board members, about what the job entailed. I relied on my family and on friends in the community who knew who I was and what I stood for. I gathered a campaign team and created a platform, advocating four things: putting students first, parental choice in public schools, parents and teachers as partners in education, and increasing district revenue. My campaign slogan was "Putting the 'unified' back in Sonoma Valley Unified School District." I made it clear that I intended to advocate for all children of the district. We had "Nicole" signs everywhere.

CR: How much did your campaign cost and how did you fund it?

NAD: This is a small district. It was about \$5,000. I put up about \$1,000 and the rest came in small donations.

CR: What was your biggest challenge once you were elected?

NAD: Learning how to be a public figure. Figuring out how to know what to say in public. Choosing my battles wisely.

CR: How did you work with the trustee who was the teachers' union lobbyist?

NAD: It was tenuous at first. We were both defensive. In time we learned that we voted similarly on a variety of issues. She was surprised by my consistent support of teachers, and by my commitment to all children of the district, not just the Waldorf kids. Trust happened.

CR: How did your Waldorf values and experience affect the larger district?

NAD: Our Woodland Star development team had been strongly committed to working through any conflicts. Our mission was bigger than our position. I brought this expectation with me to the district board. I meant it about restoring unity—and that meant between me and my board colleagues as well; we had to model the behavior we sought. At Woodland Star, I had learned I was most effective when working from the heart, and I continued this. I was authentic to my Waldorf values—and I had to honor the values of others.

CR: Any specific effects?

NAD: Sure. As charter schools, we are more free to innovate, and we have an obligation to share our successes. I think my commitment to parent choice helped support the Montessori charter in our district and helped to develop the district's dual immersion magnet school. At Woodland Star, we had installed solar electric, and recently the district passed a bond measure that has enabled the whole district to go solar. My Waldorf-developed interest for gardening helped to create a district-wide gardening program, where every school site has a garden that is supported financially and in some cases even integrated into the school's curriculum. My Waldorf values also informed the district's wellness policy that provides healthy school lunches, no sodas on campuses, more organics and local produce and products, and a commitment to composting and recycling.

CR: How has your position on the board affected Woodland Star?

NAD: I think the school has a higher profile and more respect in the community because I am on the school board. We are no longer seen as the black sheep. I think Woodland Star has taken its rightful place in the community of schools—as a generous contributor to the good of the whole district.

CR: What do you feel has been your biggest accomplishment?

NAD: It sounds like a sound bite, but I am really proud to have helped restore unity to the Sonoma Valley Unified School District. Today, I think the school district is seen as its students, with everyone else—administrators, teachers and parents—in a supporting role.

CR: You just signed on for four more years. Why?

NAD: I love the work and my colleagues! It took five years to see the seeds I had planted begin to mature into strong plants. There is so much more to do—especially continuing my advocacy for whole-child education.

CR: Do you have any advice for individuals considering a run, or for Waldorf schools that might consider backing a candidate for school board?

NAD: Run! Recruit candidates from your schools! We have a responsibility to share all the wonderful things we have learned from Waldorf education. The future depends on it! Truly care about all students—not just Waldorf students. Be authentic. Be welcoming and smile a lot. Be humble. Listen well and be open to learning from others. Identify your circle of support, delegate and depend on their expertise. Experience the courage that comes from knowing you are working for children in order to create a healthier, better educated, more resourceful and more compassionate future.



Ninth Grade students at Credo High School in an art class.



Reverence and the Inner Life of the Teacher

BY GEORGE HOFFECKER

As a consultant to many Waldorf schools in both the public and private sectors, I am often asked my opinion concerning the most pressing challenges I see in our movement. Some assume that effective response by the schools to external accountability pressures is foremost. Others commonly identify not having enough trained Waldorf teachers to meet the growing demand. For still others, the overarching concern is financial sustainability. My personal belief is that the most crucial aspect of our progress as a movement for educational renewal is the condition of the inner life of the teacher.

Reverence can be defined as living with an awareness that all life is precious. It may be just this awareness that urges us to seek to understand the deeper meaning of our lives. In the rush of daily life, especially the daily life of a public school teacher, we can find ourselves squeezing out the very experiences that can rejuvenate our souls. Actively cultivating an appreciation for wonder and the beauty of nature can too often fall by the wayside. A tragic consequence of spending too much time away from our inner selves is that we forget that we have been given the mysterious gift of choice. We can choose, for example, to demonstrate empathy and compassion to our students, their parents and our colleagues. On “autopilot,” we too often react out of “habit-mind” and preconceived judgments about another. How can we intentionally choose to see other human beings outside of the limitations of such preformed ideas?

In her book *Turning Towards Each Other*, Margaret Wheatley says, “It’s not our differences that divide us; it’s our judgments about each other.” How can we be truly present to one another, really seeing who stands before us, really hearing their need? In order to have effective connections with others and the world around us, we need to first cultivate connection with ourselves. When we take time at the end of each day, or at some point during the day, to reflect on our experiences and the gift it is to be human, we can experience deep restoration and find the golden thread back home.

The practice of getting to know ourselves from the inside out takes time. And it gives time. By cultivating the reflective life, we actually can experience the blessings of “slowing down to go fast”! We find new and effective ways to connect with and appreciate those around us—even those who deliver all too frequently “hard to hear messages,” to use Marshall Rosenberg’s term. Especially those people!

Rudolf Steiner has given us many exercises and contemplations to help build powerful capacities that can assist us along the path to living our values. As Steiner suggests, spending at least five minutes at the end of each day in a backward review of the day’s events—in an objective, nonjudgmental way—can lead to deepened cognitive capacities and renewed appreciation for being truly alive in the moment. Another example of going slow to go fast can be found in the practice of taking five minutes at the beginning of each day to become keenly aware of the sounds outside one’s home. By doing this, we can become more aware of our senses and therefore more

Spending at least five minutes at the end of each day in a backward review of the day’s events can lead to deepened cognitive capacities.

deeply sensitized to phenomena that presents itself throughout the day. Steiner’s exercises “For the Days of the Week” and the so-called “Subsidiary Exercises” (Six Month Exercises), both found in his book *Guidance in Esoteric Training*, offer practical and powerful approaches to mindful awareness that can strengthen thinking, clarify feeling, and focus impulses of will while also awakening capacities of empathy and compassion. Georg Kühlewind, in *From Normal to Healthy*, asserts that deeply observing selected objects from nature may seem insignificant at first but practiced over time can have truly remarkable benefits. As I travel to schools, I see the pervasive need to commit to this journey of inner development. I see it in myself most of all as I rush from terminal to terminal!

A favorite quote comes from Albert Schweitzer, who said, “Affirmation of life is the spiritual act by which man ceases to live unreflectively and begins to devote himself to his life with reverence, in order to raise it to its true value.” As we work to bring Waldorf education to public school children, I believe that, if they could, these children would request that we devote ourselves to our lives with reverence. This would prove a compelling example for them, in the words of Rudolf Steiner, “to wonder at beauty, stand guard over truth, look up to the noble, resolve on the good.” Let us raise ourselves to our true value on behalf of those we serve!

George Hoffecker was a class teacher at Live Oak Waldorf School for many years and then became principal of Yuba River Charter School, the first charter school in the nation inspired by Waldorf education. For the past ten years he has been an educational and organizational consultant in both the private and public sector and an adjunct faculty member at Rudolf Steiner College. George is a member of the Advisory Board for the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education. www.hoffeckerburgess.com



The fall season at Sebastopol Independent is a most exciting time.

Michaelmas in Public Waldorf Education

In public Waldorf education, the community of each school strives to connect to the seasons of nature through the celebration of festivals, and by such celebrations, to embrace seasonal changes in the inner being of individuals. Commonly, these festivals honor inspiring archetypes that exist in many cultures across humanity.

In September, as children leave summer behind and return to school, the leaves change to crimson and gold and the days grow shorter, darker and colder. The earth approaches the stillness and quiet that will come with winter, anticipating the season when the inner light of individuals' consciousness must combat the darkness. This shift from summer sun to inner light requires awareness, courage, bravery and fortitude.

Courage and bravery, especially, are highlighted in the tale of the knight, St. George, who slays the dragon. In Christian traditions, St. George was seen to be supported by St. Michael the Archangel, the administrator of cosmic intelligence and a protector against the dark of night. St. Michael's feast day, called Michaelmas, is September 29. Because of its proximity to the equinox, Michaelmas is associated in the northern hemisphere with the beginning of autumn and the shortening of days. Private Waldorf schools have traditionally celebrated Michaelmas as the feast day of St. Michael; as public schools, we use the archetypal story of overcoming the dragon to revitalize our confidence that we can overcome adversity through courage, strength and determination.

At Journey School in Southern California, on September 29 we celebrate the Festival of Courage. Throughout the month of September, students are immersed in song, verse and stories about courage, bravery and doing right. The image of knights conquering dragons reflects the desire to overcome one's own obstacles. In my kindergarten at this time of the year, practical work includes harvesting marigold seeds and plant-dyeing capes a golden yellow. Students stitch felt stars to create "shooting stars" with streaming silk tails. During the Festival of Courage, each child is knighted with a name that reflects her personality or a quality that the teacher hopes to empower within the individual student. For example, a kindergarten student who

is striving to not strike out and hit may be knighted "Knight of Gentle Hands," or one whom I hope to hear express herself more strongly may be knighted "Knight of Golden Voice." The children are knighted and led by Sir Courage, an administrator or teacher, to the arena of challenge. Each student is draped in his golden cape of courage and directed to send his star of golden light through the hoop of courage.

As nature moves towards a season of darkness, it is important for all students to be led in festivals that inspire them and unite the community. While darkness masks the outer world, the vitality of our autumnal festivals invites our light to shine from within. As the public Waldorf movement grows, it is essential to maintain the integrity of such festivals that strengthen us by honoring positive archetypes across humanity.

HELLENE BRODSKY BLAKE has fifteen years of teaching experience, eight of which have been spent at Journey School as a grades and kindergarten teacher. Hellene possesses the following qualifications: Master's in Waldorf Education, Waldorf Teaching Certification, California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, and a School Psychologist Credential. Hellene is an instructor at Rudolf Steiner College, a leader in the Early Childhood Department, and serves on the school's Pedagogical Council. www.journeyschool.net

RESOURCES

FOR THE HOME AND COMMUNITY

Waldorf Education: A Family Guide
by Pamela Johnson Fenner & Karen Rivers

[www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/
michaelmas-circle-story-resources](http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/michaelmas-circle-story-resources)

www.margarets-garden.org/2011/09/michaelmas-thoughts-on-the-festival-of-human-becoming/

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BY HELLENE
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BLAKE



Alliance

FOR PUBLIC
WALDORF
EDUCATION



BY STEPHANIE SKINNER

PLANS LAWSUIT VICTORY

"WE WON!" Fourteen years were wrapped up in those two words shared with George Hoffercker by lawyers defending the right to practice Waldorf education in public schools. The PLANS's lawsuit, in light of the extremely unlikely event of the U.S. Supreme Court hearing the case, is finally over. On June 7, 2012 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued a memorandum upholding the lower court's ruling that PLANS failed to meet its burden of showing that anthroposophy is a religion for the purposes of the establishment clause and that, contrary to the plaintiffs' claim, the lower court did not abuse its procedural discretion in its initial ruling against the plaintiffs. Deep gratitude is felt by all who worked for this outcome over the years, with special thanks to the Sacramento City Unified and Twin Ridges School Districts, the attorneys who believed in our cause, and those in the wider anthroposophical and Waldorf school movement, who were our valiant dragonslayers!

ALLIANCE GRANTS PROGRAM NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!

ANNOUNCING THE FIRST annual Alliance mini-grants program, open to 2012-13 Alliance member schools and initiatives, intended to deepen the theory and practice of Waldorf education in the public sector. Using proceeds from the Alliance conference silent auction, plus additional funds from member organizations, we will award two to four grants of \$500 to \$1,000 each. Grant applications are due November 1, and are available on the Alliance web site.

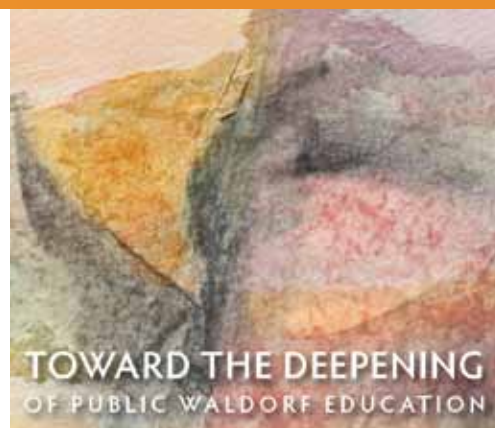
JOIN THE ALLIANCE!

MEMBERSHIP FOR THE 2012-13 school year is underway. Membership information has been sent to public schools by mail and email, and is posted on our website.

BECOME AN ALLIANCE MEMBER SCHOOL.

Through membership, Alliance schools express a living commitment to the principles and practices of Waldorf education, and join an Alliance that is strong in the face of challenge. As our member schools grow in number, the ability of our Alliance to create change also grows. Parents and community members seeking accessible, sustainable Waldorf education for their children look to Alliance member schools. These schools actively hold the integrity of Waldorf education as it comes to life in the public sector.

BECOME A FRIEND OF THE ALLIANCE. Social and financial support from individuals, businesses, organizations and corporations allows for the active growth of Waldorf education in the public sector. Only through our collective efforts will Waldorf education become accessible to all.



ALLIANCE ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

January 18-20, 2013 | Rudolf Steiner College

Toward the Deepening of Public Waldorf Education

IN THIS PEDAGOGICALLY focused conference, our esteemed presenters Liz Beaven, Ed.D., Bonnie River, M.Ed., and Betty Staley, M.A. will offer keynotes with follow-up workshops as we explore some of our most pressing questions: What is the underlying view of the developing human being that acts as the foundation for Waldorf pedagogy? How can this view be brought to light in a comparative context and with contemporary language? How do we reconcile the challenges of working within the public realm, yet stay true to the deepest intentions and principles of Waldorf education? What does it take to be a Waldorf teacher? Are who we are, and what we think, of greater significance than what we teach? What is the relationship between the grades' curriculum and the high school experience? What innovations are enlivening Waldorf education around the world? How can we develop our own inner lives so that we work most effectively as colleagues, teachers and leaders within our schools?

PLUS...

- Longer, in-depth workshop periods for Early Childhood, Grades, High School, Administration and Leadership, Artistic Development and "Waldorf 101."
- Working, break-out sessions for grade-specific cluster groups.
- Silent auction with live jazz and dessert! Proceeds will benefit the growing Alliance grants program.
- Conference fee discounts for member schools and their staffs.
- Updated information will be coming regularly.
- Registration begins in November. Find out more by visiting our website.



Student paintings from the Desert Sky school in Tucson, AZ





KONA PACIFIC CHARTER SCHOOL PARTNERS WITH USDA

On the Big Island of Hawai'i, **Kona Pacific Public Charter School** is partnering with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Community Facilities Program to serve the rural agricultural community of South Kona.

USDA's \$3 million direct loan has allowed Kona Pacific's supporting nonprofit to purchase a 38-acre parcel containing elementary school campus, a biodynamic farm (fallow), four residences, and eight acres of the ancient Kona Field System of agriculture. The loan also funds a million dollar construction project comprising two buildings totaling 6,000 square feet (tripling classroom space), additional restrooms, parking, and a ball field.

The USDA prioritizes serving impoverished rural communities. Community Facilities Loans are available to public entities to develop and revitalize essential community facilities in rural areas of up to 20,000 in population. Direct loans with terms of up to 40 years are available. Additional information is available at a Local USDA Rural Development Office, or at: www.rurdev.usda.gov

Kona Pacific offers a rigorous academic program inspired by Waldorf education and firmly rooted in the land and culture of Hawai'i. The educational program weaves together three strands: 1. Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy; 2. an educational program that embraces the values of Hawaiian culture, with particular focus on environmental education and community sustainability through understanding and respect for the people, land and sea of Hawai'i; and 3. a curriculum rich in the life-sustaining practices of farming and gardening that are a vital part of Hawai'i Island life. www.kppcs.org

JOURNEY SCHOOL WINS GRANT FOR COMPASSIONATE CAMPUS

The Compassionate Campus program at **Journey School** was a winner of the Townsend Press Prize and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Prize in the Akosha Changemakers Activating Empathy competition. Journey was recognized for its program's "outstanding demonstration of innovation, social impact, and sustainability." Compassionate Campus was born of Educational Director Bonnie River's vision of using student-to-student interactions to grow empathy. The program pairs upper grade mentors with lower grade buddies in bi-weekly meetings wherein they connect with each other, connect to their campus, and weave the social fabric of community. www.journeyschool.net

A teacher's painting from a 7th grade study of Athurian legends at the Mountain Oak School in Prescott, AZ (above) and a student's painting of cactus from the Desert Sky Community School in Tucson, AZ.



PUBLIC WALDORF COMES TO THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

Green Valley Charter School, a Foundations Public Schools and Alliance member located in Los Baños, CA, opened its doors on August 14th, serving kindergarten through third grade. The school will grow a grade each year until reaching eighth grade in 2017. Green Valley broke ground as the first independent charter school in Merced County and the first school working toward being inspired by Waldorf education throughout the San Joaquin Valley. GVC serves over 70 families—most of whom qualify for free and reduced lunch. To offer up this choice as a public school speaks volumes to the local community of Los Baños and the greater community of the valley. Green Valley's faculty and staff are thankful to be part of a wider community that will help us grow fully into our mission of being a Waldorf-inspired school. www-foundationspublicschools.org

ALSO NEWLY OPENED

Woodland Charter School, in Williams, Oregon
www.woodlandcharterschool.org

STILL STRIVING IN PENNSYLVANIA

Circle of Seasons Charter School received a denial to its charter application from the Northwestern Lehigh School District (PA) on August 15. Lead developer Phil Allen reports that this was the second denial overall, but the previous denial was through a different district. One of the primary reasons for the first denial was the lack of a clearly identified site. COS has since identified a very solid and legitimate property—slightly over the border into the neighboring school district, which is why they had to start the process over again and apply to the neighboring school district. The Northwestern Lehigh School District denied COS's charter application based on a shaky list of "deficiencies," particularly their perceptions that the COS curriculum fails to align with the Common Core Standards, and a perceived "lack of community support." Neither of these are the least bit accurate. With the advice of their lawyer, COS will resubmit in mid-September. If denied again, they will appeal to the Charter Appeals Board in Harrisburg. "All in all, COS is moving forward aggressively and very confidently. We are determined, committed, inspired, motivated and energized to make Circle of Seasons Charter School become a reality in 2013," reports Allen. www.circleofseasons.org

GOT HAPPENINGS?

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