

CONFLUENCE

Spring 2012

News from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

Vol.1, No.1



FROM THE FIELD

Dornach 2012: A Window into Global Waldorf Education

BY WILL STAPP

This April, a thousand Waldorf educators from some 50 countries gathered at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, for the Ninth World Teachers' Conference. The global conference, with plenary sessions instantly translated into six languages, happens only every four years. It was a testament to the vitality and global scope of Rudolf Steiner's educational vision. I found it deeply renewing across the entirety of my being...heart, head and hands.

The Goetheanum is a magnificent, multi-story concrete structure designed by Steiner after his first wooden architectural masterpiece burned down. It sits on a grassy and wooded hillside overlooking Dornach. One approaches the site via narrow roads that wind through quaint, 600-year-old farming villages reincarnated as upscale suburbs of Basil, which is just a 15-minute tram ride away. Swiss cowbells clang from nearby pastures, and stone ruins of medieval castles and hermitages peer from the wooded ridges above.

Throughout the week, spring showers washed the air and gave way to grey-violet spectrum clouds with an occasional patch of blue through which a gentle sun lit up the blossoming apple trees, multi-hued tulips and yellow dandelions that danced across the grassy slope leading up to the main building. Walking paths wound past workshops and biodynamic farming fields, and linked houses and buildings designed by Steiner in what has come to be known as his dynamic "Dornach Style."

The Goetheanum's main hall is a 1000-seat theater with towering sculpted columns, rainbow colored-stained glass windows, and topped by a domed ceiling covered with fabulous murals. The rest of the building includes galleries, meeting rooms, a cafeteria and bookstore, and houses the various departments of the General Anthroposophical Society, including the Pedagogical Section, which in turn shepherds the worldwide Waldorf movement and produces the conference.

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FROM THE ALLIANCE Introducing Confluence

WELCOME to the first issue of *Confluence*, a bulletin of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education. Why "Confluence?" It embodies who we are, the meeting point and flowing together of two great streams: American public education with its ideal of accessibility and the enlivening, universal current of human development found in Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf education.

Somewhere around a bend or two, or maybe down an invigorating run of rapids, I can imagine that "Confluence" could report a more formal joining of a third stream, that of the independent American Waldorf movement as represented by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). To be sure, our origins are in the same headwaters. While the work may have taken different forks down the mountain, the ridges between us now are not so great. They are being traversed on a regular basis by full-hearted educators and school communities in both directions.

SOMETHING immensely effervescent was in the air at our January Conference this year. Palatable, lively, one could see it shining in the countenance of both presenters and participants.

Was it just the joy of being together again in common purpose, or perhaps a collective flicker of inspiration gathered over the holidays? Had we reached some type of developmental threshold? Were we waking up to a glimmer of the collective destiny of our efforts in the public arena and having a premonition of vital spring growth for our movement? Maybe it was all of the above, but what I can tell you for sure is that the spring is bringing a rush of positive growth to the Alliance.

Our ranks are growing. There are now 25 schools and school initiatives that have come together as members of the Alliance to stand for high-quality public Waldorf education. We are reaching critical mass. There are another 39 public schools and initiatives we have yet to bring into the Alliance fold, which gives our Outreach Committee a clear directive for the next year!

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FOCUS OF THE SPRING ISSUE GROWTH

CONFLUENCE

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 The theme for 2012 was "Teaching: When the Future is Now—How the Self Finds its Way." Essentially, the conference explored the mechanisms by which Waldorf educators can support the part of the human being that identifies itself as "I" develop into a mature, individuated, yet socially conscious, adult. It pointed directly to the how and why of Steiner's assertion that the way the teacher brings and balances his or her lessons has a direct impact on the health of the students.

See "Child Growth and Education" by Tomas Zdrzil, for a thought-provoking treatment of this subject, which was preparatory reading material. An excellent piece for faculty study, this article can be found at *Padagogische Sektion, World Conference 2012, Preparatory Reading*.

The conference plenary sessions featured both educators and scientists who approached the theme from various perspectives. While they were all mind-expanding, one whom I found particularly interesting was Maximilian Moser, who is the head of the Institute for Non-Invasive Diagnosis, in Austria. Dr. Moser did his post doctorate work at the University of Virginia and is a specialist in what he calls chrono-biology, which Waldorf educators might call—you guessed it—rhythm. His basic conclusion? Outer rhythm supports healthy inner rhythm, and disturbances in rhythm have a measurable negative impact on health.

Among other things, Dr. Moser detailed the optimal, restorative 4-to-1 heart-to-breath ratio that is achieved in deep sleep. He has done research into the impact of lifestyle, including screen time, on disrupting such sleep patterns. Moser cited a Minnesota school study (Wahlstrom, 2002) with the finding that later starting times for school days had a positive effect on wakefulness and decreased depressiveness and discipline problems in the students. However, it did not establish an impact on academic performance.



Ninth grade dancers from the Taiwanese Mittwoch School

Moser's web site is <http://www.humanresearch.at>. It has some 30 translated articles including "How Homer Helps Your Heart," which establishes the restorative quality of hexameter verse on health and breath rates, again the optimal 4-to-1 ratio. Teachers and administrators could dig deeper into these studies for parent education materials that back up the health-inducing mechanisms at play in the Waldorf approach.

Besides the plenary sessions, there were also daily working groups and artistic sessions. I participated in a working group that began—and I do mean only began—to address what is universal and what is local or culturally specific in Waldorf education. This session was facilitated by Martyn Rawson, one of the editors of "The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum," a tome in the field and one that would benefit any public school Waldorf educator. Twelve years after its initial publication, Martyn is revisiting this book's essential questions, with the goal of a revised edition.

One eye-opener in this arena was a question pertaining to festivals. In the U.S. and Europe, we have a tradition of festivals aligned with the

cardinal points of the seasons as they manifest in the northern hemisphere. But in Australia, New Zealand, South America and much of Africa, the seasons are reversed. Should they stick with the European festival calendar in which the children's visceral experience of the seasonal/planetary orientation of a festival is the opposite of what was experienced half a world away, such as a festival of light in the middle of summer or a harvest festival during the rush of spring? Many of the downunders think not, but not all of them, so you can imagine there is a bit of a row in faculty meetings over this one.

One thing we could all agree on is that Waldorf education is artistic and includes involvement with the transformational and expressive qualities of the arts for both the students and the teachers (not to mention parents and administrators). Consequently, the afternoon sessions included many options from which I chose speech work. Steiner and his wife, Marie, who was highly trained in the theater arts, collaborated on the development of these speech exercises. Initially, the exercises were designed for the actors of the plays they co-produced in Munich. Later, the exercises were introduced to the teachers of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart.

My experience with speech work is limited. I found it quite invigorating and can only speculate that some of our public-school teachers have also only had cursory exposure to it. I imagine that our school students would benefit greatly from the teachers' further study and/or regular faculty practice in this area. It is extremely valuable for bringing the oral tradition to life in the classroom, and staying away from the drone of uninspired recitation. Plus, it's fun! I would not hesitate to recommend the workshop leader, Sibylle Eichstaedt, as a resource. I know she is working on a new translation of the exercises, does continuing education work on the U.S. West Coast in the summer, and has speech resources available. You can email her at creativespeech@mac.org.

Of course, the artistic highlights of the daily schedules were the evening performances by Waldorf students from around the world. The twelfth grade from Summerfield Waldorf High School in Santa Rosa, California put on an outstanding production of Thornton Wilder's "By the Skin of Our Teeth." A *joie de vivre* and breezy lightness filled the hall as the Brazilian TerraNova students, 18-23 year olds, took to the stage with their Verbo Fundamental (the fundamental logos) eurythmy performance. They stretched the boundaries of what many may have come to view as the eurythmy art form, using humor, grace and agility to interpret the literary and musical works of a host of South American writers and composers.

Who could believe the rhythmic stamina of the Taiwanese Mittwoch School ninth graders as they performed the sacred tribal line dances of their island's aboriginal Amis, as taught to them and led by a tribal elder, Asaw Palaf Langasan? Word has it that the class was a bit scratchy and anti-social at the beginning of the year, but that the work on the dances and the time spent on sewing the fantastic traditional costumes brought the class into a deep unity. The pure will of the chanting and dancing was mesmerizing, and even the concrete columns of the great hall seemed to undulate along with them. It was easy to imagine the troupe transported into archetypal realms beyond the senses by dancing all night alongside a fire, under the stars. The audience rushed to the stage at the end of an hour and a half of this remarkable, trance-inducing performance, and we danced together until finally being shooed away by the ushers.

There was much, much more at the conference, including a
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Allegra Alessandri Waldorf High School Pioneer

BY EUGENE SCHWARTZ

As a student at the Sacramento Waldorf High School in the 1980s, Allegra Alessandri was taught by a number of dynamic teachers. She went on to graduate from Pomona College, and moved to Washington, D.C. for a management-training program at the Smithsonian Institution. In 1987 Allegra became the youngest Waldorf high school teacher in America at the recently founded Washington Waldorf High School, where she taught English and history for two years. Recognizing that she needed more life experience, Allegra travelled, improved her Spanish, and taught for a while at the American School in Venezuela before returning to the United States to earn a Masters in English Literature at Georgetown University. Allegra's management studies and experiences within mainstream American intellectual achievement were to prove essential for her next steps in pioneering Waldorf education.

In December 1994, the San Francisco Waldorf School recruited Allegra to teach its seventh grade, which the school hoped would become the first ninth grade of its new high school. Utilizing her foundation in management and her broad educational background, Allegra was able to help found the San Francisco Waldorf High School in 1997.

A decade passed while Allegra administered the school and taught humanities. The San Francisco Waldorf High School's remarkable trajectory, satisfying as it was, served to heighten another dilemma faced by Allegra—and, indeed, by the entire Waldorf movement. The San Francisco Waldorf High School, like every well-enrolled and established independent Waldorf school, must depend on the largesse of well-endowed families; it provides a unique education to children who, by and large, are privileged—but what about the great majority of students in California and North America who suffer in high schools that treat them like so many ciphers? Allegra felt called to support the availability of Waldorf education for all students, regardless of financial means. She began researching the fertile public Waldorf movement in the North Bay Area and collaborated in the early visioning of what eventually became Credo High School in Rohnert Park.

Allegra was completing a doctorate in educational leadership at the University of California at Davis when she was invited to help found the first public Waldorf high school in the United States. It would go far beyond the scope of this short introduction to

describe the lengthy, legalistic, politically charged, and often thankless task of bringing Waldorf education into the American public school system. (That story is told in Allegra's dissertation, "Parent Leaders as Agents of Change.") Suffice it to say, however, that Allegra succeeded. In 2008, the George Washington Carver High School of Arts and Sciences opened in Sacramento, the city where Allegra had her own first experiences as a Waldorf student.

Allegra and the intrepid group of teachers she assembled were not allowed to start with a clean slate. Indeed, they were given the mandate to "take over" a failing high school in which gang issues, drug problems, and episodes of violence were the order of the day. Not only were these Waldorf educators expected to bring order into chaos in the qualitative sense, but also as public school teachers they were accountable to quickly demonstrate quantitative success as well by raising student scores on California state tests from depressing lows to acceptable highs.

Although Carver High School was given a beautiful facility, the collapse of California's economy cut school funding and left the school with little support for its operating budget. And although Carver High
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THE INTERVIEW

Jonathan Raymond

Superintendent of
Sacramento City
Unified School District

INTERVIEWED BY CHIP ROMER

CR: When you came to Sac City in 2009 the district was already the U.S. district with the most public Waldorf schools—two! What is it about Alice Birney (formerly John Morse) and George Washington Carver that has made you a supporter of Waldorf education?

JR: When I first arrived, Alice Birney was still called John Morse. In my first 100 days as superintendent, I visited every school site, trying to see three sites a day for about 45 minutes each. When I got to John Morse, there was such a sweetness—there was a garden, there were mud boots outside of the door, children were singing, and I was taken by that. I visited every classroom and ended up staying for two-and-a-half hours. I was impressed by the physical set up of the classrooms, the calm demeanor of the teachers and the students, the children's respectful attitudes; by eurythmy, music, violin. This was a school where students, staff and parents were happy. I liked that.

CR: Would you share your personal story of enrolling your own children in Alice Birney? What was it that attracted you to their program?

JR: I moved here from North Carolina in advance of my family. I had told my wife about John Morse, and she then read about Waldorf education, but you can't know Waldorf education by just reading about it. Both of my kids are pretty advanced academically, but they were bored in the school where we placed them. After we were here for eighteen months, we looked at other schools for my daughter, at the GATE program, even

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Allegra Alessandri

Waldorf High School Pioneer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3 School had several faculty members with years of experience in Waldorf high schools, the opposition of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America to public education deprived Carver of the broad collegial support that a new Waldorf initiative might expect.

In spite of these considerable limitations, under the inspired leadership of Allegra Alessandri, Carver High School has had extraordinary success. Within three years, the school had the highest increase in both standardized test scores and in attendance of all schools in the Sacramento City Unified School District. But test scores and attendance records are only the quantifiable tip of the iceberg. Anyone visiting the school grounds is immediately impressed with the social harmony of the students (in a city known for its ethnic, racial, and gang discord), by their interest in one another, by the beauty of their creations and by their obvious joy in learning. And through it all, when you speak to Allegra about the school and the profound challenges implementing Waldorf methods in the public high school, you feel her passion and enthusiasm and pure joy in the process. She remains positive—even jubilant—about the future. The challenge has not broken her spirit; rather it has strengthened her knowledge that Waldorf education can renew society. Her work at Carver is instrumental in changing the way the district leadership views success, accountability, teaching and learning, and even what school looks like.

“In the first couple months on the job,” Allegra recounted, “a student asked me, ‘Why are you always smiling?’ I nearly burst into tears because I was so miserable and frustrated and fearful that this whole project would fail. I managed to maintain my smile and tell myself that I had to answer this person truly. To say, ‘I love my job!’ would have been a blatant lie. It might have been closer to the truth to say, ‘I am so happy to have moved my family, uprooted my husband and his successful design business, and left one of the finest schools in the country for this misery!’ But sarcasm was not the medicine I needed to deliver. I thought, smiled, and desperately searched for the truth, which eventually came to me: ‘I love working with teenagers. I have committed my career to working with high school students.’ While my answer was partly an evasion of the truth, the girl seemed to relax. She seemed to realize that I would not leave or abandon her and the school. She seemed to hear the deeper truth, which was: I will not give up on you.

“To give up then, in the depth of despair, would have been to give up on the promise of Waldorf education to transform public education. To give up would have meant that Waldorf methods ‘don’t work’ in underserved neighborhoods. To give up would have been saying: Waldorf does not have the power to transform our society.

“Within a couple of months, major transformations began happening. I stood in the school’s main quad—as I did every break time or passing period, on guard, alert, preventing the next fight or theft. And I felt the whole school spinning and spiraling. I thought, ‘This is the astral. It is so powerful here that I feel as if I am on a very small boat on a turbulent sea, in the middle of a hurricane. What, I wondered, am I doing here? I reflected back on my conversation with the girl about my smile, and I knew then that what we were doing was adding homeopathic drops of love—truth, beauty and goodness—and the astral gyrations of the high school where the astrolabe, spiraling and spinning that potent medicine.

“In this homeopathic way, Waldorf education provided us the wisdom and practice that has transformed a culture of failure into one of success, achievement and above all: truth beauty and goodness.”

Time will tell, but a visit with Allegra Alessandri at Carver High School can give one the feeling that this school has come of age in what the scholar Ida Oberman has called the “American Crucible.” And perhaps the staggering needs of American public schools may serve as an alembic, extracting by degrees the essence of the Waldorf high school. The Sacramento City Unified School District, which currently educates 700 Waldorf students each year in grades K-12, is currently studying how to grow the Waldorf methods throughout the 45,000-student school district. ■

In his 25 years as a class teacher at Green Meadow Waldorf School in New York, Eugene Schwartz frequently crossed the aisle to teach humanities at Green Meadow Waldorf High School and at the Shining Mountain Waldorf High School in Colorado. He presently serves as an international Waldorf consultant, working in North America, Europe, South America, and China. The author of several books and the producer of several videos about Waldorf education, he has pioneered a series of online teacher conferences and courses in Anthroposophy. Eugene can be contacted at <http://www.millennialchild.com>



Musically inspired recess at Credo High School in Rohnert Park, CA

To give up would have meant that Waldorf methods “don’t work” in underserved neighborhoods.

To give up would have been saying: Waldorf does not have the power to transform our society.

Jonathan Raymond . . .

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3 thought about advancing her a grade. In a casual conversation with the principal at Alice Birney, I learned that a family had just left and there were openings, coincidentally in the grades of both of my children. My daughter visited for a half-day and came home intrigued and interested, saying she had done more singing in that half-day than she had done in the whole time of being at her other school, so my son said he'd like to visit too. When my wife arrived to pick him up after his visiting day, he was eating homemade pumpkin pie. He said, "I want to go to this school and I want to start tomorrow." Now he eats broccoli, makes his own hummus, knits. He looks forward to school every day. I'm kind of envious of what my children are getting.

CR: George Washington Carver High School is the district school with the best increases in attendance and API scores—quantifiable measures. What about the culture of this school sets it apart?

JR: Carver is a calm place. Kids aren't afraid. There is an air of respect, a sense of individuality. It is a place of opportunity for kids to explore who they are. I go whitewater rafting, and we talk about the negative ions in the air. There is a similar energy in the air at Carver, a sweetness.

CR: How much do you attribute this to Allegra Alessandri's leadership?

JR: All of it. Great schools start with great leaders.

CR: Allegra is the first Waldorf graduate in the U.S. to be administering a public Waldorf

school. Do you see unique qualities in her management that you attribute to her own Waldorf education?

JR: I didn't know that. Allegra is a model. She is respectful. She's knowledgeable. She cares deeply about her students. By becoming a principal, Allegra spreads the wealth of her own Waldorf education, two, three-fold. There is a multiplier effect. We need more of this.

CR: What other ideas do you have about increasing the accessibility of Waldorf education and Waldorf methods in your district?

JR: We're contemplating creating our own Waldorf training pipeline. We're looking at developing a Waldorf-based transitional kindergarten, where we give young children the "gift of time," not rushing them into academics. We may create another Waldorf elementary school. Our district is in a network of eight districts that focuses on social-emotional learning; we have a grant to develop programs that foster respect, a sense of purpose, perseverance, self-confidence. There are the same qualities I see supported in Waldorf schools.

CR: What arguments would you make in support of public Waldorf education to superintendents in other districts around the country?

JR: I'd tell them we're really missing the boat if we're not teaching to the whole child. Waldorf schools are preparing children for the test of a lifetime—not a lifetime of tests. They create in students a passion for finding their passion. I see Waldorf education as a hidden gem—it ripens people from the inside. I'd tell my colleagues to be okay with a school that's different. At the end of the day it's about building capacities of leaders and teachers already within your school or district. We need to value who we have. At Sac City we're investing in training our teachers in Waldorf methods and then standing behind

Waldorf schools are preparing children for the test of a lifetime—not a lifetime of tests.

them—now Waldorf teachers are skipped from annual layoffs; this gives a very loud message about how much we value trained Waldorf educators. I am really proud of our district Waldorf schools; bringing Waldorf methods into existing schools is how we get to scale. The more Waldorf students and graduates we have, the better off we all are. Our society will greatly benefit from more Waldorf-educated young people. Having a Waldorf school should be a critical piece of every district's portfolio. ■

Jonathan Raymond is superintendent of Sacramento City Unified School District. Raymond previously served as the chief accountability officer for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Prior to his career in education, he served as president and CEO of the Boston-based Commonwealth Corporation, a non-profit organization focused on building stronger communities through innovative education and workforce development programs. Raymond has also served as deputy director in the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Raymond has a bachelor's degree in history from Tufts University, a master's degree in law and diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and a law degree from the George Mason Law School. Raymond is a graduate of the 2006 class of The Broad Superintendents Academy.

FROM THE ALLIANCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 Speaking of committees...the Alliance has successfully navigated a transition to a new board governance model in which the board is comprised of officers and standing committee chairs. The standing committees are: Executive, Outreach, Membership, Conference and the newly formed Pedagogical Committee. It is also the board's intention to establish a Development Committee. Volunteers?

The Outreach Committee will work with the growth of the website, our ongoing communication with members, and "Confluence." The Membership Committee is refining criteria for the levels of developing, sustaining and leading schools; the Conference

Introducing Confluence . . .

Committee will continue its outstanding efforts in bringing us together for annual inspiration and renewal; and the Pedagogical Committee will work with questions that keep us true to the primary focus of our work—the healthy development of the children in our care.

The Alliance's ability to support our member schools is also growing: We have seeded a Mini-Grants program with \$5,000 and are seeking matching money to double it. The focus of the first round of mini-grants will be pedagogical deepening. We will send out RFPs in the not-too-distant future and expect the first round to be granted when the children return from summer vacation.

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Alliance President Will Stapp in Dornach



Growth and Development

BY BETTY STALEY

Spring has arrived. As I walk around my garden I notice plants at different stages. The newly planted gardenia is fragile and needs attention. The azalea has deep roots and its cluster of coral blossoms attracts my eye. The lilacs are in their rhythm—just beginning to open their buds; they are like reliable friends, steady, not too flashy, predictable, and always welcome. As I think about the member schools in the Alliance, the garden metaphor makes sense. Some of the schools are deeply grounded; their roots are firm; they are strong and well planted. Other schools are more fragile. They are growing and they need love and care and attention so that they will bear fruit in the experiences they will offer their children.

As we reflect on the theme of this issue, Growth, it seems appropriate to dwell further on this metaphor. A child grows in his or her physical body, adding inches and pounds, muscles and bones. We expect that to happen with each additional year of a child's life. Changes in proportion occur. Boys and girls in a class grow at different rates. We can see differences especially if we compare first and third graders, fourth and sixth graders. A school grows by adding students or grades. As it increases, new challenges arise to meet these changes. Is the classroom large enough? Does the school have enough teachers for the number of grades?

The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education has grown in membership. More schools are joining to become part of our organization. This kind of growth will help the Alliance create avenues of support for its members and make Waldorf education more well known. It is heartwarming to feel this growth.

However, there is another word that is used when speaking about growth that has greater complexity and meaning. That word is development. Development is more than adding inches to a child's height or numbers of classrooms to a school. It describes expanding or bringing out potentialities or capabilities. Development has to do with revealing or unfolding gradually; evolving. In considering development we are getting closer to our work as Waldorf educators.

Both growth and development rely on the mystery of time. If we watch time-lapse photography of a plant, we can wonder at the beauty of the seed moving through stages to blossom and to seed again in seconds. Yet what we are seeing is not true because time and rhythm are eclipsed. As each stage is reached, the plant arrives at a new capacity of life—verticality, sprouting, budding, dropping seed. It is not only a matter of increasing in size. Time is needed for each stage to come to its fullness before a new one is expressed. At each stage something new is revealed.

It is similar with children. We observe them at different times of the year, and we can measure their growth. Yet we cannot see them growing. As they pass through particular challenges, such as the nine-year change, we experience their development. When children come through this stage, they are different. They see the world differently. They have new capacities for understanding themselves and others. Thus we educate them in a different way than we did earlier.

It is this mystery of development that characterizes Waldorf education. The way we teach depends on where the child is in his or her stage of development. The child needs time to develop at her own pace, and adults need to be patient and honor the time that is needed. In horticulture, the term forcing refers to inducing a plant to produce its shoot, leaf, and flower ahead of its natural schedule and out of its natural environment; this yields the quick beauty of a narcissus blooming in December, but it

makes for weak plants. Forcing children's learning before they are ready, pretending they are at a different stage than they are, is dangerous. It robs them of the time needed for healthy, strong development. We cannot force knowledge; we can only awaken capacities for knowing.

We also need to honor the mystery of time and development within ourselves as teachers. We do not become Waldorf teachers overnight, or even in a few years. By patiently observing and contemplating, awakening our feelings, stimulating our will, and bringing living thoughts on how to meet an individual child, we teachers develop new capacities. These changes unfold gradually, subtly, and then one day we realize we are understanding the child in a different way than we did in the past. We begin to grasp what Rudolf Steiner meant when he said that education is an art. We cannot go back to the way we were before we understood these things. Even when we try to explain it to others we stumble over our words. Yet the experience within our souls is deep and sure.

Time is the mystery in everything alive. The Alliance of Public Waldorf Education is entering a new phase. Membership is increasing, and something else is happening that has to do with development.

The Pedagogical Committee of the Alliance is newly formed. Its task is to pay attention to the nurturing of capacities, with the unfolding of Waldorf pedagogy. We hope to be able to work on several levels. As we find our way, we need to pay attention to the different needs that schools have. Some of the tasks we are contemplating include: providing access to a deepening understanding of the educational indications of Rudolf Steiner; providing opportunities for mutual sharing on pedagogical issues; broadening pedagogical contributions at conferences; holding dialogues on specific educational questions that arise in public schools; and serving as a clearing house for various training opportunities, workshops, and meetings.

As we find our way, we need to pay attention to the different needs that teachers and schools have. We want to be true to the spirit of Waldorf education and to the children who are in the classrooms. We reach out to those who would like to join us in this work. Let us know how you can help. ■

Betty Staley, Pedagogical Chair of the Alliance Board, directs Waldorf High School Teacher Education as well as programs for public school teachers at Rudolf Steiner College. A Waldorf educator for over thirty years at the kindergarten, elementary, high school and teacher training levels, she is a founder of the Sacramento Waldorf High School where she taught history and literature for nineteen years. Betty is the author of Between Form and Freedom: A Practical Guide to the Teenage Years; Hear the Voice of the Griot!: A Guide to the History, Geography and Culture of Africa; Tapestries: Weaving Life's Journey and Adolescence: The Sacred Passage Inspired by the Legend of Parzival.



Woodland Star Charter School English Learners class, in Sonoma, CA



BY STEPHANIE
SKINNER

THE GROWTH OF U.S. PUBLIC SCHOOLS Inspired by Waldorf Education is Exponential!

Alliance Member Schools in 2011: **12**

Alliance Member Schools in 2012: **25**

Total number of schools inspired by
Waldorf education in 2000: **14**

Total number of schools inspired by
Waldorf education in 2010: **52**

Total number of schools inspired by
Waldorf education in 2012: **64**

FOUR NEW INITIATIVES Sprouted/ Announced Since February 1st of This Year!

TAOS, NM Taos Waldorf School is putting
in the charter application this June! We wish
them well with the charter writing process.

KAUAI, HI Kauai Waldorf
Public Charter School
<http://ww.wix.com/kickawitte/kauaiwaldorf>

RENO, NV Heart to Hand Waldorf-
inspired Initiative, serving families birth to
kindergarten and looking towards a future
charter school.

AMHERST, WI The Tomorrow River
Community Charter School, Wisconsin's first
charter school inspired by Waldorf education
is being developed in a progressive com-
munity that is very enthusiastic. The school
will be opening its doors for the 2013-2014
school year, spanning Pre-K to sixth grade.
[http://tomorrowrivercommunityschool.org/
index.html](http://tomorrowrivercommunityschool.org/index.html)

SAVE THE DATE!

The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education Annual
Conference, Rudolf Steiner College, January 11-13, 2013.

Towards the Deepening of Public Waldorf Education is
the first in a series of conferences that will deepen our re-
lationship to the foundations of Waldorf pedagogy. In this
spirited education, what is essential? How do we bring
these essentials forth in a contemporary context? Crafted
in response to your feedback and our member calls, this
event promises to renew, inspire and enliven in practical
and profound ways.

ALLIANCE GRANT PROGRAM

Our silent auction, held at this year's January Conference,
coupled with increased member revenue, has birthed the
brand new **Alliance Member Grants Program!** Admittedly,
this program will begin small, and will certainly grow in
both size and scope.

Alliance Mini-Grants, totaling upwards of \$5,000, will be
awarded through a peer-review process in order to sup-
port our member schools and initiatives in their efforts
towards Pedagogical Deepening.

The grant application process is being developed by
The Alliance Grant Committee lead by **Chris Hecht** and
Shanna Mall in collaboration with The Alliance Board of
Directors. Details will be found in our Summer Newsletter
and on our website. Stay tuned!

THE USDA IS OFFERING GRANTS for planing
and implementation of farm-to-school programs that con-
nect schools with local or regional producers in order to
serve local or regionally produced foods in school cafeter-
rias. Letter of Intent due 5/18, grant proposals due 6/15.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/>

FROM THE ALLIANCE Introducing Confluence . . .



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5 We will need
volunteers to do peer reviews of the proposals.

OUR COMMUNICATION capacity
obviously has some new shoots, including
"Confluence." Other bulbs are stirring under-
ground and are not yet quite visible, such as
work underway to upgrade the utility of our
website.

I know that this is not an easy time for many
of you. Economic forces are in some instances
requiring radical and heart-wrenching prun-
ing. Yet, our schools still prosper thanks to the
hard work, creativity and generous sacrifice
of staff and volunteers alike. Thank you for
your efforts with your school communities

and for your ongoing commitment to dedicate time and
resources to the Alliance. This will ensure a collective
voice and afford a high-quality public Waldorf education
available to even more children.

LIFE FORCES are miraculous. They laugh in the face
of entropy and reach for the sun, even in the harshest
of conditions. This year, these life forces are highly vis-
ible in the results of the dedicated work of our volunteer
board and committee members and with the ongoing
support of our staff person, Stephanie Skinner. To find
out more about how you can help the Alliance bear fruit
for the children of the public Waldorf school movement,
contact Stephanie or check the website for committee
information.

Will Stapp, President



Transformed through Collaboration

BY STEPHANIE SKINNER

At its foundation, the grassroots movement that is bringing public schools inspired by Waldorf education to communities across our country is a collaborative endeavor. Visionary parents are often the first to take initiative and organize with community leaders and educators in order to found and grow the schools their children, and the children of tomorrow, need. In this process, it is not just the educational landscape that is transformed. Whether founding, attending, or sustaining our schools, parents, and all who work with them, are also transformed through this ongoing collaboration.

By simple definition, collaboration is a recursive process where two or more people work together out of deep, collective determination to realize shared goals. The active relationship between a child's family and teacher ideally exemplifies the spirit of collaboration. This collaboration is the foundation from which the success of Waldorf education in all its manifestations is built. Of course, such ideals take effort and striving in order to manifest.

Parents and families have taken on the role of collaborators in earnest by openly asking of the teachers, "How can we best support our children's educational experience?" They know that by supporting their teachers, they support the children, just as the teachers know that by supporting the parents, they support the children. In response to this

question, teachers have called upon the work of Larry and Victoria Temple, whose offerings provide a well-received, concise and potent answer.

Larry Temple, after serving as a private Waldorf educator and active Waldorf parent, found himself teaching in the public Waldorf setting. He wanted to support the parent community by offering guidance illuminated with the essence of Waldorf education in ways that were practical, profound and, above all, accessible. Here we find "**The 10 Needs for a Healthy Childhood and Educational Experience.**" (Email Victoria at newarts2@sonic.net for a PDF copy.) By practicing these values, our children and our communities thrive.

OTHER RESOURCES for growing healthy children:

Susan Johnson, MD, provides as a library of health information about raising children and creating healthier family life: <http://youandyourchildshealth.org/>

The Alliance for Childhood makes available research and resources for parents and educators while actively promoting policies and practices that support children's healthy development, love of learning, and joy in living: <http://www.allianceforchildhood.org>

The Children & Nature Network is leading a movement to connect all children, their families and communities to nature through innovative ideas, evidence-based resources and tools, broad-based collaboration and support of grassroots leadership: <http://www.childrensnatureinstitute.org/newsite/>

Online Library <http://www.waldorflibrary.org/>

10 NEEDS FOR A HEALTHY CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Proper Nutrition
- Adequate Sleep
- Minimal Media
- Quiet Time
- Time in Nature
- Chores at Home
- Appropriate Dress
- Cultivating Reverence
- Supporting Your Child's Education
- Supporting the Class Community

FROM THE FIELD Dornach 2012

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 heart-warming on-stage thank you to Christof Weichert, who led the Section from 2001-2010 and was a class teacher in Holland for 30 years. Christof was instrumental in the design of the conference as well as the Early Childhood Conference that preceded it the week before. He is known in some of the charters and independent schools in the U.S. for his work with teachers in reinvigorating child-study practices. Christof passed the tiller of the Section to Claus-Peter Roh and Florian Osswald. It is my understanding that a film about the conference is in the works.

One of my biggest take-aways was a renewed appreciation of Steiner as a committed, practicing artist. Evidence of his evolving and prolific architectural, sculptural, painting, performance and social artwork infuse the area, both inside and out. He set much in motion artistically, and much of it is still moving forward. This "aha" reminded me of the importance of consistently coming back to the full humanity we experience in artistic practice, both as children and adults.

Finally, an essential, but unstructured aspect of the conference was getting to know colleagues and comparing notes from around the world. This included the ongoing conversations about what was universal and what was local—between sessions, at mealtimes, and in the late-night cafes. One thing became more and more apparent as I spoke with colleagues from countries including South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Italy, Brazil,

the Czech Republic, England, Finland, China, Taiwan, and then some, is that state funding for Waldorf schools is typical around the world, and that the privately funded model, upon which the movement was founded in the U.S., tends to be more of an exception rather than the rule.

However, state funding does not always equate with state control. For instance, the German schools are publicly funded at about 60% of operating costs, but remain highly independent organizations. In Holland, what were originally highly independent but state-funded schools are now seeing more and more state intervention and standardization, including testing. As a public movement, we have more work to do to see ourselves in the context of a global effort, and to understand the challenges and accomplishments of our colleagues around the world.

As far as I know, only two American public school representatives attended: Kalen Wood, from SunRidge Charter School in Sebastopol, California, and yours truly, attending as President of the Alliance. Many of our global colleagues have questions about and critiques of our public school movement, but very little direct experience of it. Let's invite them here to see it for themselves, and then four years from now, let's make sure many more of us show up on the world scene. I can assure you of being deeply refreshed from a drought of this jewel-encrusted chalice, and a dance with friends with arms encircling the globe. ■