

CONFLUENCE

Spring 2013

News from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

Vol.2, No.3



FROM THE FIELD

14,000 square feet of wheat grows in the school garden at Desert Marigold School in Phoenix, Arizona.

What's Sprouting?

BY DANIEL BITTLESTON

Dedication, initiative and devotion are sprouting at Alliance schools' gardens and farms. Sonoma County's Credo High School, Sacramento's George Washington Carver High School, and Phoenix's Desert Marigold School are among the dozens of public Waldorf schools that have developed farms, gardens and a powerful and sustaining relationship with the land.

At **Credo High School** in agricultural Sonoma County, California, Farming and Food Literacy teacher Kelley McNeal told the story of how Credo's pioneering class reclaimed space for gardening in conjunction with a local community organization called Daily Acts, which donated 20,000 pounds of compost. "Last May, the students broke up concrete with jackhammers, took out endless patches of ivy, and created a worm box for vermicomposting. One year later we have four garden plots, four biodynamic compost piles, a small area of fruit trees, and our tenth grade Embryology class has just hatched chickens. We're harvesting potatoes, kale, chard, lettuce, endive and artichokes, and our new greenhouse is filled with starts. This year, [Alliance President] Will Stapp taught Introductory Biodynamics to our tenth graders; he brought us biodynamic preps and helped develop our composting system. The students are very enthusiastic, learning lots of new skills as we go, and—maybe best of all—our whole community is eating exceptionally well." For more information, visit www.credohigh.org.

George Washington Carver School of Arts and Sciences in Sacramento clearly articulates the life skills to be learned in their farming program: Patience: to wait from sowing to harvest. Care: to weed the crops. Empathy: to care for a baby lettuce plant. Joy: to collect the warm eggs. Satisfaction: to help something grow. Beauty: to help with spring lambing. Cooperation: to work together to get the job done. Planning: to calculate how long each crop grows until harvest. Leadership: to take turns being in charge of a crew. Service: to prepare school-grown meals for the needy in the community.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FROM THE ALLIANCE

Looking Forward, Looking Back

BY WILL STAPP, ALLIANCE PRESIDENT

The madness of May usually finds our school communities in a Herculean effort to tie up all the loose ends and clean out the Augean Stables of the current school year—while at the same time making sure that staff, budgets and new programs are all in place for a strong start in the fall. For the Alliance Board, this time of year seems like the two-faced god Janus, only a Janus teleported into May so that the wistful look backward and anticipatory look forward happen with the bloom of spring rather than the stillness of winter.

Looking back, 2012-13 has been a significant year of growth for our movement. Our numbers have expanded to 45 known schools and initiatives, and we've started to see the public impulse move from its spiritual home in the West towards its historical roots in the East...with a few stops in between: public Waldorf schools were granted charters in Colorado, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Idaho and Florida this year and are set to open in the fall.

This year also saw expanded service to the schools. The Alliance initiated a mini-grants program, started *Confluence*, upgraded resources on the website, provided staff time to pinpoint resources and guide initiatives, set in motion the creation of a support document that aligns the Common Core Standards to the Waldorf curriculum (due out this summer), and produced a well-received annual conference that saw record-breaking attendance. Whew!

This year, the Alliance also strengthened our contact with the Pedagogical Section in Dornach. One of the fruits of this connection was the Section's contribution of 200 copies of the proceedings of the 2012 World Teachers' Conference, which I had the real pleasure to attend. This special 100-page edition of the Journal is the verbatim transcription of the nine plenum sessions—an inspiring compilation that ranges from philosophy and educational theory to cutting edge science. Member schools and initiatives can expect three copies in the mail by mid-May. Many of the articles would be a great resource for class and school-wide parent education programs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 Carver's agriculture and science instructor, Aart DeWaal, is really happy with the school's 7,000-square-foot Sam Mazza Garden, which currently has fifteen beds growing carrots, beets, chard, kale, fava beans, leeks, tomatoes, onions and garlic. There is also a small orchard of mostly lemons and oranges, and an herb garden. "In the three-month summer break, the weeds can get a bit out of hand," says Aart, "because there are not enough summer farmers, but I try to have squash and pumpkins ready to harvest when the students return." Aart likes the sociability and responsibility that are developed through gardening, and he is particularly proud of the creative thinking that emerg-

es; for example, when the hens started attacking their own eggs, a group of students incorporated channels into the hen house that allow newly laid eggs to roll down to safety.

"Our school is named for a visionary botanist, scientist and educator," explained principal Allegra Alessandri. "George Washington Carver was born into slavery, earned a masters degree, and spent half a century as a college professor, transforming the South's mono-culture of cotton to include soybeans and sweet potatoes, and most notably peanuts, all of which fed farm families and greatly improved nutrition throughout the South. Our school garden is Carver's legacy." For more information, visit: <http://carverartsandscience.org>.

Desert Marigold School's community gardener, Tony Robson, explained the challenges of Arizona farming: "It is miraculous to grow anything in this arid setting. In summer, the soil is so hot that all organic material desiccates and disappears. The only way to create fertility is to add wheelbarrow loads of mulch, one to two feet deep, instead of one to two inches. It has been an uphill struggle, but after four years, the soil has reached an extraordinary level of fertility; it is now very vital and alive. You can see it in the responsiveness of plants. You can taste it in the flavor of the vegetables and fruit."

School parent and agriculture instructor Meghan Olesen shares Robson's enthusiasm: "We have cooked with every grade, from stir-fry to salad to bread-making. We have 14,000 square feet of wheat, now five feet tall—it's a great experience for the young children to walk through. We'll harvest it in a month, with second and third graders doing the threshing and winnowing. In the fall, third graders will use our homegrown wheat flour to make bread. Of course, we are also growing lots of other produce too. In the gardens of the southwest, the Three Sisters—corn, pole-beans and squash—are planted together in one hole; companion planting is an important part of our teaching, and we hope it will inspire in our students the extraordinary value of working together," said Olesen. For more information, visit www.arizonawaldorf.org.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 I also have four sets of ten Pedagogical Section Journals (\$75 a set) that will be sold on a first-come-first-served basis to member schools or initiatives. The proceeds will be sent to the Section as a contribution. You can stake your claim for one of the sets via Stephanie Skinner.

This was also a threshold year in that the Alliance re-entered a formal dialogue with our independent Waldorf school colleagues via AWSNA. I am hopeful that this dialogue will lead to a positive clarification of our similarities and differences and to bridge-building collaborations designed to strengthen the overall movement. Our second joint meeting is scheduled for Memorial Day weekend.

Every year around mid-April, the Alliance Board returns to Sonoma for its annual retreat. This year, the gathering at Chip Romer's house included the welcome participation of three new advisory board members: Daniel Bittleston, Cheryl Eining, and Liz Beaven. The Board was able to reflect on the past year, do some team building and set three overarching goals: 1. approve and enact the Steps to Membership; 2. fill in the gaps and well populate committee and governing board positions; 3. come to resolution with AWSNA. The Board also identified the "Social Mission of Waldorf Education" as the guiding theme for next January's conference. Time well spent, I would say.

Keeping these goals in focus, along with tending to the Alliance's expanding program services, suggests that the upcoming year will be a busy one. Perhaps there is a place for you on one of our committees? Check with Stephanie Skinner to discover where you might apply your talents.

I want to welcome Allegra Alessandri of California's George Washington Caver High School as chair of our Pedagogical Committee, and to introduce Marc Bruehl of Arizona's Desert Star as our new teacher representative. Let me also give a big thank you to Chris Hecht and Chip Romer for their many years of dedicated service; Chip and Chris both retired from the board this year. Luckily for the Alliance, they have not strayed too far and continue to serve in an Advisory Board capacity, and Chip remains integral to the editorial board of *Confluence*.

In closing, I wish you the best of luck in navigating the May madness and finding renewal over the summer. I'm looking forward to being in touch come fall, and to continuing to work together to further public Waldorf education for children and families across this country.



Kona Pacific School Feeds the Community

BY VICTORIA TEMPLE

Waldorf education is flourishing in extraordinary new ways on the big island of Hawaii. Stepping forward to meet an urgent community need when the only federally certified local food vendor recently closed down is the latest in a series of remarkable accomplishments at the Kona Pacific Public Charter School.

In its seventh year of operation, with 234 students enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade, the school is located in rural west Hawaii in the town of Kealahou, an agricultural area in which 70% of the student body qualifies for free or reduced lunch.

Executive Director Chris Hecht and the parents, teachers and community leaders who established the school in 2006 had a clear understanding from the outset of the needs of their student population and the types of programs required to enable Kealahou parents to choose the school. These included extended day programs, and nutritional support. The very first school budgets provided for these programs and the school has never waived on funding them—a commitment that has not been easy to maintain.

When the school opened, the before- and after-school programs included healthy meals, and the local USDA certified vendor (operated by the Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council) cooked and delivered hot lunches to the school. Then, last October, the food service vendor suddenly announced it would be closing its doors in just ten days. The reason given was a \$60,000 annual operating loss that could no longer be ignored.

Kona Pacific students were not the only impacted residents. Two hundred others were about to be without food, too, including recipients of the local Meals on Wheels program. “We couldn’t let impoverished children and elders go hungry,” Chris recalled. When research showed there was no replacement food service vendor available, and after the school district declined to consider ways it might include the Kona charter in its lunch program, Hecht went to the owners of the commercial kitchen to ask, “Since you’ve lost your tenant, would you like a new one?” Suddenly, the challenge began to look like an opportunity for service.

There were twists and turns in the unfolding story, but in short, the Kona school administration leased the kitchen facility, hired the existing cooks as school employees, and

The very first budgets provided for a full day program and nutritional needs that were required by the student population if Kealahou parents were to be able to choose the school.



restarted food service, taking over the program entirely. Initially it wasn’t much different. With service delivery in place, a flurry of fundraising began with a letter-writing campaign to individuals, foundations, and the donor-advised funds of the local community foundation. About three weeks into that process, the founder of a successful on-line business who had recently retired to Hawaii offered to cover one-half of the operating loss the first year. Simultaneously, the new housemate of a founding faculty member—an extraordinary chef and food service provider—offered to develop an all-scratch, no-sugar-or-processed-food menu. The staff was retrained, the kitchen facilities reworked, and a new food culture was born. One noticeable result was that food costs dropped by 35% due to abandoning processed foods and using locally grown produce, chipping away at the prior operating deficit.

Today the Kona Pacific Public Charter School operates an innovative food service program that provides healthy meals to members of its student body as well as other community organizations, while supporting the region’s agricultural economy. In addition, 375 other local residents continue to receive meals including: 80 low income elders served by Meals on Wheels, 45 young children in Head Start and Early Head Start, and 250 children served by Hawaii County Parks and Recreation.

“The next step in our food service strategy,” says Chris Hecht, “is to supply the kitchen from our school farm.” That’s another story, how the Kona Pacific’s campus includes a 20-acre biodynamic farm with excellent soil, which is no minor matter in Kona, known for its lava rock slopes. For more information visit www.kppcs.org.



Waldorf-Inspired Trauma-Informed Care

BY IDA OBERMAN, Ph.D.

In April, Oakland's Community School for Creative Education hosted a four-day seminar by Friends of Waldorf Education's Managing Director, Bernd Ruf, and Emergency Pedagogy Manager, Malte Landgraff, from Karlsruhe, Germany. On their way from Kenya, where they were offering Waldorf-inspired emergency care to children in one of the country's largest refugee camps, to help children in China's earthquake stricken Chengdu, they came to offer a four-day training in Oakland: "Trauma-informed Care—A Waldorf-inspired Approach."

Mr. Ruf and Mr. Landgraff worked with Community School's organizing team so this training could help deepen the work of the school and strengthen its bonds with its district, county, and Waldorf partners. Under Mr. Ruf's guidance, participants jumped rope, threw balls, played drums and sang. At the same time, in rich, two-hour lectures, Mr. Ruf took participants through Steiner's *Study of Man* in light of most recent brain, neurological and behavioral research, ably aligning one with the other and therefore equipping proponents of Waldorf education with a frame and language that holds meaning well beyond Waldorf circles.

The outcomes were quickly felt. Staff, parents, members of the local faith community, and local district and county educators came and stayed to learn more. Given Oakland Unified School District's current focus on trauma-informed care and caring school communities, and district, city and county grappling with the need to meet the children where they are emotionally and socially in

order to offer a pathway to academic success, the resonance was palpable. Here was a coherent strategy that had been tested for nearly 100 years. The work of Community School was deepened. Bonds with partners were strengthened. All participants joined in the shared task to embrace head, heart and hands in order to build schools as safe places to learn and flourish.

Bernd Ruf's recently released book on trauma-informed care (*Truemmer und Traumata 2012*) is forthcoming in English. And better yet: Mr. Ruf has offered to return to Oakland to offer further help. We hope that with more lead time more members of the public Waldorf community can participate. Stay tuned. For more information, visit www.communityschoolforcreativeeducation.org. There you will find a full power point presentation of the four-day seminar and three relevant articles by the presenters.



Ida Oberman attended a Waldorf School in Holland, earned her BA at Swarthmore College and her Ph.D. at Stanford. Her dissertation and later book is The Waldorf Movement in Education from European Cradle to American Crucible. Ida received her Waldorf teacher training in Stuttgart, Germany, then taught at Green Meadow Waldorf School and Trinity School in New York City. She co-led the founding of one of the first public Waldorf schools, on the border of Harlem in New York. She is Director of the Community School for Creative Education in Oakland, California. <http://www.communityschoolforcreativeeducation.org/>



Bonds between Oakland's Waldorf-inspired charter school and its district and county partners were strengthened at the conference.



Growing Waldorf Teachers

WITH **THOM SCHAEFER**

INTERVIEWED BY CHIP ROMER

This spring, 52 public school teachers graduated from Rudolf Steiner College's Hybrid Modality Waldorf Certification Programs centered in the Birchtree and Winterberry Schools in Alaska, and in the Golden Valley and Journey Schools in California. For two years, these colleagues studied together in the inaugural cycle of RSC's hybrid program, which includes five components: summer intensives at the college, grade-level webinars, philosophical webinars, practicums where RSC teachers visit hybrid teachers in their home schools, and field supervision by program mentors. The brain child of Bonnie River, the hybrid program is also led by early childhood educators Helene Brodsky Blake and Stephanie Skinner and by River's longtime friend and collaborator, Thom Schaefer. Schaefer has been teaching in private and public Waldorf classrooms for over 35 years, and in addition to currently serving as Education Director at Credo High School he is an adjunct professor at Rudolf Steiner College. Thom approached our interview at Credo with the same guileless enthusiasm that he invariably brings to students of all ages.

CR: Besides the convenience for teachers of receiving training in the schools or regions where they teach, what is unique about the hybrid program?

TS: What's unique is that this program is designed specifically for teachers working in public Waldorf schools. At the heart of all Waldorf teacher-training programs is the hope to initiate a process of transformation in teachers. A Waldorf teacher must look within and without—"know thyself and know the world." The hybrid program intends to guide these two parallel tracks of development, both the philosophical inquiry of "who am I" and the urgently practical question of "what am I going to do with my class on Monday?" The program's philosophical, contemplative and meditative components help public Waldorf teachers deepen their awareness of self as teacher, and the grade-level and practicum components strengthen teachers' ability to deliver Waldorf curriculum informed by their own creativity and imagination.

CR: It seems the admission requirements for the hybrid program are more stringent than for other RSC tracks—requiring a bachelor's degree and passing of the California Basic Educational Skills test. Why?

TS: Public Waldorf schools are more attentive to accountability and standards than their private school cousins, whose schools generally offer more individual latitude in teaching. Our hybrid candidates are already professionals with bachelor's degrees and state teaching credentials when they come to the program—so they arrive having already undertaken a significant study of educational philosophy and methods. We want to ensure that the program meets them with rigor.

CR: How does the classroom experience of hybrid-program teachers inform the training?

TS: Teachers come to us with considerable experience, which makes the practical aspects of the program more immediate and relevant. For example, teachers in grade-level sessions collaborate on aligning state and Waldorf standards, and there is focus given to the Common Core Standards and their application to Waldorf education. What might be seen as dry bureaucratic requirements are enlivened when addressed by a group of experienced teachers approaching them through the perspective of Waldorf education.

CR: In your recent graduating class were twelve teachers from Golden Valley Charter School. How does the shared training of colleagues affect the broader school culture?

TS: The sustained process of learning, growing and deepening together puts a strong imprint of Waldorf education on a school's culture. Camaraderie develops when colleagues have shared experiences, journeys, language and tools. The school's Waldorf focus is clarified and strengthened.

CR: How would you answer the argument that a faculty with a diversity of Waldorf -training backgrounds brings more perspectives, and the greater likelihood of healthy debate, to a school?

TS: I agree with this, and this is in fact what generally happens in schools. Colleagues are trained in different programs. The urgency is to ensure that public Waldorf teachers are trained. Without a majority of trained teachers—and I believe both the Alliance and AWSNA set the guideline at 80%—schools can lose their Waldorf inspiration, and sometimes even degenerate into some other mission. The survival of our Waldorf public school movement—and the Waldorf movement as a whole—depends on teachers who deeply understand the why and what of the Waldorf curriculum and who are continually working on their own inner development.

CR: I'd guess most public Waldorf schools would prefer that all of their teachers are trained, but find the cost prohibitive with dwindling state funding, particularly in California. How much does the hybrid program cost, and how have schools managed to fund it?

TS: The certificate program costs about \$17,500 for teachers who are part of a faculty of the same school doing the training together, and about \$19,000 for solo teachers. To earn a MA degree adds another \$3,000. For new schools, funding can come from federal implementation grants. Some established schools, like Golden Valley and Journey, have created foundations with the explicit purpose of raising funds for teacher training. Many schools provide significant salary increases for Waldorf certification—which would cover the entire cost of training in four or five years. I think having the teacher contribute some portion of the cost deepens their commitment to the program. Our schools need to share funding ideas and resources—this would be a valuable undertaking for the Alliance.

CR: What's next?

TS: Bonnie and I are in the planning stages with several prospective new cohorts—in Northern California, Southern California, Oregon and in Colorado, which is starting to mirror the North Bay region here around Credo as a hotbed of new public Waldorf schools. It seems the growth of public Waldorf schools is getting a second wind. I'm hoping to help ensure they can be schools that will make the Alliance—and the whole Waldorf movement—proud.

For more information, visit: www.steinercollege.edu/hybrid-modality



Independent or Public? An Exploration of Teacher Choice

BY LIZ BEAVEN, Ed.D.

From a seed planted in Milwaukee in 1991, public schools inspired by Waldorf education have sprouted—and continue to grow. This development has not been without controversy and has provoked concerns about allocation of resources, supply of teachers and students, acceptable levels of compromise or adaptation of practice, and questions of philosophy and First Amendment principles. Northern California, with a significant number of established independent schools, has been a focus in the development of public initiatives. It has been fascinating to witness this process over time and to observe movement of families and colleagues between the charter and independent sector in search of the best “fit.”

Positions have been taken, expressed, and changed over time. Rumors have abounded regarding topics such as the lure of higher pay, the impact of regulations, and variations in teacher preparation. Seeking to take a fresh look at the dynamics at work, I recently undertook a small qualitative study based on ten teachers, each with several years’ experience in both independent and public schools inspired by Waldorf education. I sought to explore differences between the two settings through the eyes and voices of teachers as they described their experience. The research was based on individual, semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Each participant took the lead during the interview, establishing personal priorities and “flow.” Interview transcripts were analyzed for recurring themes or significant differences between participants.

This article provides a brief overview of the major findings. A more thorough summary of the study process, key results, and a discussion of their possible implications for further research or practice will be published in two parts in the next two editions of the *Research Bulletin* www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org; the first edition is available in May with online access in November.

THREE MAJOR MOTIVATORS emerged for teachers to move between private and public schools:

1 Questions of social mission and access to education. This was the primary factor in moving from independent to public settings; teachers expressed concern about “unsustainable” increases in tuition and their impact on independent school access and demographics.

2 A desire to deepen one’s work. This emerged as a primary factor in movement from public to independent settings and was expressed as a perceived freedom of practice or a search for like-minded colleagues; a wish for deepening.

3 Financial considerations. With one exception, this was not the primary reason for making a move. However, teachers expressed concern about compensation in the independent schools with particular emphasis on retirement benefits. Tuition remission was noted as an attractive benefit in independent schools.

The study identified an additional **SIX SIGNIFICANT THEMES**:

1 Choices as parents. Every participant was currently or had been a parent in an independent school; two had paid tuition. Participants were “hooked on Waldorf” for their children and this had impacted career decisions. Three were grandparents and noted that their children, Waldorf alumni, could not afford an independent Waldorf education for their children.

2 Collegial and inner work. These were often reported as connected. Overall, participants felt that the independent environment was more conducive to inner work and study.

3 School structure and organization. The director model of the public school provided more support and protection for teachers but decreased feelings of ownership (and time spent in meetings).

4 Workload. Despite a comparable or greater number of class contact hours in the public setting, there was agreement that the independent school workload felt heavier. This was largely due to the collective “carrying” of the school, committee work, and numerous extra activities.

5 Student resources. There was universal agreement that public schools offered superior services for student assessment and support. One note of caution was sounded: the accountability requirements of the public sector could lead to over-early diagnosis and intervention.

6 Work with students and parents. Discussions often centered on the impact of socio-economics; public schools had more diverse populations. The independent schools’ freedom to select students was balanced against pressure to maintain enrollment and tuition revenue. Entitlement and high expectations were recurring themes in the independent schools; the gratitude of children and parents in public schools was frequently noted.

Throughout the research process, participant teachers generously and candidly shared their experience and observations. Whether they practiced in a public or independent setting, all spoke repeatedly and thoughtfully of a sincere love of children and commitment to bringing the gifts of Waldorf education more fully into the world. As we continue to grapple with the questions provoked by Waldorf’s expansion into ever-widening circles and the many opportunities for research that this offers, their voices offer an important source of lessons learned and new questions raised.

Liz Beavin has over 25 years’ experience in Waldorf education including 13 years as a class teacher and 11 years as an administrator. Her work with public schools spans many years, from early days of instruction in Sacramento City and Jefferson County, Kentucky, to workshops, classes, and lectures with Rudolf Steiner College’s Public Schools Institute. Liz has been involved in Waldorf education at the regional and national level. Her many questions about the form and future of this education took her back to school; in 2011, she completed a Doctorate in Education. She enjoys writing, researching, and speaking about Waldorf education.

BY STEPHANIE SKINNER

NEW ALLIANCE MEMBER!

Madrone Trail Public Charter School, Medford, OR

WELCOME new Alliance Advisory Board members! Liz Beaven, Ed.D., Daniel Bittleston, Chris Hecht and Chip Romer

And, a **CORRECTION** from last publication! Amy Bird, Alliance Board Secretary, joins us from Desert Marigold School in Phoenix, Arizona.

SAVE THE DATE**2014 ALLIANCE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Toward the Deepening of Public Waldorf Education:
The Social Mission of Public Waldorf Schools & Communities
January 17-19, 2014 Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, CA

Esteemed Keynoters: **Martyn Rawson**, An international guest and author of many books including *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*

Stephen Sagarin, Ph.D., author of *The Social Mission of Waldorf Education*, and master teacher at Great Barrington Waldorf High School. Visit Stephen Sagarin's blog WHAT IS EDUCATION!

<http://ssagarin.blogspot.com/>

A **Pre-conference Workshop** will take place on Friday afternoon with one of our conference keynote speakers.

A **Post-conference Workshop** is scheduled for Sunday afternoon and evening with **Eugene Schwartz**. Watch for more information on the Alliance website.

ATTENTION TEACHERS! Need help covering conference costs? Have a topic you'd like to present or network with? Consider submitting a proposal.

CALL FOR PRESENTERS

You are the expert in this pioneering work. Step forward and lead a session! Workshop and breakout leaders receive free conference attendance; lunch on Saturday, and in some cases a stipend. Rudi Talk presenters receive their five minutes of fame along with deep appreciation. Rudi Talks this year will focus on "The Next Twenty Years" and we invite you to send a proposal. These proposal forms are on the Alliance website:

- ▶ BREAKOUT SESSION INFO & PROPOSAL FORM
- ▶ WORKSHOP INFO & PROPOSAL FORM
- ▶ RUDI TALK INFO & PROPOSAL FORM

<http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/annual-conference/>

All proposals must be submitted by **June 15, 2013**, in order to be considered. Chosen proposals will be announced by **August 1, 2013**.

What themes and questions would you most like to see explored in the pre- and post-conference offerings?

Go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/23D5552> and offer your input.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2013!**

This spring, fifty-two public Waldorf teachers from Alliance member schools graduated from Rudolf Steiner College. Congratulations to the graduating cohorts from Birchtree, Winterberry, Golden Valley, and Journey Schools!

For two years, these colleagues studied together in the inaugural cycle of RSC's Hybrid Modality Waldorf Certification Program, which offers both foundation studies and teacher training through blend of site visits and mentoring, live classes both at the schools and at the college, philosophical webinars, and online kindergarten/grade specific classes. And they did this all while teaching full time!

Debi Lenny, principal of Golden Valley Charter School in Orangeville hosted the graduation ceremony and shared these words of gratitude: "As a former teacher and now administrator, I know that teachers are at the heart of all Waldorf schools. I appreciate their genuine concern for the welfare of our children's future. Teachers, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

▶ To learn more about Rudolf Steiner College Public School Institute <http://www.steinercollege.edu/public-school-institute>

EUGENE SCHWARTZ RELEASES NEW FILM

Eugene Schwartz, **Sam Russell** and **Hagens Studio** have released a new documentary film, *Considering Waldorf: New Perspectives in Education*, which provides a realistic and objective look at American Waldorf education as it stands at the threshold of its second century. The film includes three specific innovations: We hear from Waldorf critics; Anthroposophy is mentioned openly in relation to Waldorf education and explained; and Waldorf homeschoolers are presented on screen along with private and public schools. The filmmakers hope schools will want to arrange screenings—it would be a wonderful follow-up to *Race to Nowhere*. For more information, contact **Eugene Schwartz** at eschwartz1ster@gmail.com.