

CONFLUENCE

Winter 2013

News from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

Vol.2, No.1



FROM THE ALLIANCE

A New Phase of Collaboration

BY WILL STAPP, ALLIANCE PRESIDENT

Attending our annual conference at Rudolf Steiner College is a public Waldorf ritual that I find rewarding and reinvigorating. The lectures and workshops are often top notch and I can always count on a few belly laughs. The chance to catch up with old friends and colleagues is heartwarming, and the opportunity to meet enthusiastic school developers from fledgling initiatives is deeply gratifying. I always come away with some psychic gift that keeps me burning brighter for months to come.

The theme of this year's conference, "Towards the Deepening of Public Waldorf Education," is one that I have pondered over and over. While a committed advocate of public Waldorf education, I know that staying true to Steiner's developmental vision in the public sphere is not easy and has its own specific set of challenges. I take to heart much of the critique and concern regarding public Waldorf education offered by our colleagues in the independent Waldorf school movement. It is because of this shared concern that the Alliance has entered a new phase of conversation and proposed collaboration with the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA).

Bringing depth to public Waldorf education requires that our communities commit to the cultivation of an experiential understanding of Steiner's developmental framework and educational approach within the faculty, governing, and parent bodies of a school. The leadership for such a commitment can be initiated in any realm of the school, and has a synergistic impact when a healthy practice of deepening lives in all realms simultaneously.

Might I suggest making it a priority to ensure regular doses of the emotional, intellectual and spiritual nutrient so often found in artistic or group anthrop-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education held its annual national conference at Rudolf Steiner College from February 18-20, 2013. 250 teachers, administrators, board members, parents and friends of Waldorf education were in attendance.

The focus of the conference was "Toward the Deepening of Public Waldorf Education" and toward that end, the conference included three outstanding keynote addresses by Liz Bevens, Ph.D., Bonnie River, M.Ed., and Betty Staley, M.A. Participants experienced morning eurythmy, choral singing, spacial dynamics and storytelling. There were eight workshops on a variety of subjects, and nine breakout conversation groups took place, along with a pre- and a post-conference training.

The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend was a time of renewal, exploration, collaboration and networking. In this edition of CONFLUENCE we share elements of the conference experience with our readers around the world.

FOCUS OF THE WINTER ISSUE
DEEPENING



Participants sang together on Friday night at the opening session of the 2013 Alliance for Public Waldorf Education National Conference at Rudolf Steiner College.

CONFLUENCE

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A New Phase of Collaboration

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 sophical study activity? Need I underline making investment in ongoing faculty training and professional development a priority? Board, faculty and parent committee agendas are out of balance if there is not space to nourish the inner development from which springs the stamina to maintain the extraordinary effort of growing a public Waldorf school. And, while having Waldorf trained teachers cannot finally assure depth, it is a giant step in that direction.

Our times have a highly individualizing quality about them. I find this true of organizations, such as schools, as well as human beings. Even within the Alliance, multi-level ongoing relationships between neighboring schools are the exception rather than the rule. Balancing this necessary but often anti-social gesture of individuation with the harmonizing quality of social understanding is at the heart of Steiner's design for Waldorf education. Can we do better within the Alliance to promote depth in public Waldorf education and social understanding inter-organizationally as well?

Perhaps the MacArthur fellow, Lewis Hyde, has a present for us in this regard. In his widely acclaimed, "The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World," Hyde suggests that gifts, or a gift economy, builds lasting ties and cultivates binding relationships and communities while the cash or fee for service approach is relationship poor and typically offers just a one time, impersonal exchange.

In these times when budgets are so tight and so many important functions can be diminished or disappear with the stroke of a key, what if our schools made a regular practice of giving the gift of our precious human expertise to each other? Certainly, at this point in the movement's overall developmental stage, we have achieved significant human expertise. Such gifts could easily include non-binding peer review via site visits, teacher exchanges, in-service offerings, classroom observation, parent education sessions. The list goes on!

In such a system, givers also receive. It can be very rewarding and reassuring to visit other schools and take in both the unique and familiar expression of public Waldorf education living there. When I have visited other schools, I've found good ideas and practices to take back home and I have made new friends as well.

It has been my experience that our public Waldorf schools would be very hard-pressed without such a gift economy already existing along side the cash one. Perhaps parents have taken the lead in this area at our schools, but teachers and administrators also give gifts that go far beyond efforts remunerated by a paycheck.

The current economy and the chronic revenue shortfall so many of our schools face pose a real challenge to manifesting quality Waldorf education in the public sphere. But we can't let that detour us. While our communities have to be careful not to let any one person or any one sector of the school do an inordinate amount of the giving, a well-conceived and well-executed gift economy between our schools would go a long way towards strengthening our overall movement. I say let's give the gift economy its proper due and let it shine in our ongoing effort to evolve in the life-affirming gesture of social renewal that public Waldorf education provides to children and families from varied walks of life across this land.



Participants in the "Chalk Board Drawing" conference workshop taught by Jamie Lloyd had plenty of time to hone their skills.

FROM THE FIELD

January Conference Highlights

BY HELLENE BRODSKY BLAKE, MA

The 2013 conference made space for something new: Breakout Sessions, held after lunch for kindergarten and grades teachers, administrators, board members, parents and other leaders. These working sessions, which will be honed for 2014 based on feedback from this year's participants, provided the opportunity for networking, resource sharing, discussion and question asking. Some of the groups are continuing their work online in the months to come.

With over 20 colleagues and a limited amount of time, we conquered a wealth and depth of topics. Following brief introductions and leading questions, we broke into World Café-style groups.

[Click here](#) to see the key themes, questions, and needs expressed by our kindergarten teachers. The text on our website provides a summary of the issues identified that warrant further discussion and exploration.



Overview of the Early Childhood Breakout Session

Samples at the "Plant Dying" workshop led by Jennifer Tan.

Translating Anthroposophy

BY RAINBOW ROSENBLOOM

Our packed breakout session entitled “Translating Anthroposophy” reminded me of just how important this topic has become in the public Waldorf world. Virtually everyone present had at least some confusion regarding both the meaning and appropriateness of certain Anthroposophical concepts in our schools. Can we use the term “etheric body”? And how would we explain it to a new parent? How can spiritual beings/world be discussed with new teachers? We found the list of possible topics quite expansive!

We began by creating first a list of jargon and concepts in Anthroposophy that befuddle us. Many were confronted with language that had little or no meaning to them. We then created another list of concepts we understood, but felt uncertain as to how to articulate the meaning to a teacher or parent. The soul faculties (thinking, feeling, and willing), the four sheathes of human beings, Lucifer and Ahriman, elemental beings, Old Saturn, reincarnation, as well as many more all ended up on one list or another. There was great enthusiasm regarding understanding central concepts that we could translate into accessible language.

The Anthroposophical view of the human being and the world informs much of what is so inspiring in Waldorf education. But if we cannot translate such inspiration into accessible language, we are limiting both the depth and growth of the movement. If we as practitioners find Anthroposophy both practical and inspiring, it is incumbent upon us to explain how and why...to newcomers, colleagues, parents, and to ourselves. The bridges we build with such activity will create the social fabric that gives the needed strength to our school communities.



Betty Staley's keynote address “The Three Castles: The Esoteric Life of the Teacher” was alive with personal story telling and inspired wisdom.



Participants enjoy the “Integrative Movement: Kindergarten through the Grades” workshop taught by eurythmist Alice Stamm.

When to Include Whom

a systemic workshop that popped

BY LESLIE LOY

Following the 2013 Alliance Conference, some 25 participants stuck around Rudolf Steiner College for Jane Lorand's two-day intensive workshop on applying systemic principles to the complex issues in Waldorf charter schools. Participants represented parent, faculty, staff, and board bodies. The hands-on workshop was designed to teach and simultaneously practice tools that could be taken back and directly apply to school communities' issues. The workshop's contents were intended to explore the complex issues facing charter schools across the movement; teams also had the opportunity to look collectively at some of the issues plaguing their own schools and to find new ways through those problems.

Alliance Board President Will Stapp likened some of the principles he learned in the workshop to those of tending to the whole organism through biodynamic farming. An exercise in coherence mapping wherein different sections, groups, or individuals articulate their needs of others in order to be more effective was especially illuminating. It was obvious, but also exciting to figure out how to ensure that every part needs to work well in order for the whole to function healthily.

Based on the testimonials received, both the Center for Systemic Leadership and the Alliance hope to offer more of these co-sponsored workshops in the future. They are designed to engage and empower individu-

als in communities to discern issues and understand different methods to approach them, and to recognize that no complex issue will ever be solved—only improved. When some participants realized this, they expressed profound relief, as though just recognizing this unburdened them of some their worries. Participants learned that we can only continually improve complex issues, and we can only do so together.

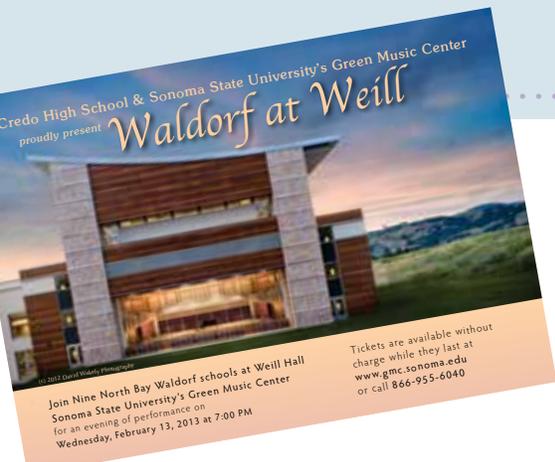
FEEDBACK

“I really loved learning about ‘designing time.’” Jennifer Medaris, Waldorf Kindergarten Teacher, Stonebridge School

“At one point in the workshop, I realized that if I let go of the issues I was thinking about, I would learn the process for any issue. Thank you.” Brandy Rucker, Parent Board President, Green Valley Charter School

“I have been involved in many leadership/team-building, strategic planning, activities... This was by far and away the most useful; the tools (once presented) are intuitive and easily implemented across circumstances. I will be using this on our board, as well as in my business and likely family. Thanks!” Pete Houston, APC Acting Chair, Birchtree Charter School

“I enjoyed the balance of lecture and activity. I am coming away with practical ideas to utilize with the faculty, parents and greater community.” Wensdae Davis, Woodland Charter School



Waldorf at Weill Hall

BY RAINBOW ROSENBLUM

I was so fortunate to be invited to attend this wonderful February 13 concert in Weill Hall at Sonoma State University's new Green Music Center. Nine Waldorf schools participated by sending a group to perform a musical piece or two. Over 1,400 people had tickets to witness over 240 student performers, from third grade to twelfth grades. The collaboration of seven public and two private Waldorf schools was beautiful. Credo High School conceived of the program and presented it in partnership with Sonoma State; Credo director Chip Romer opened the event masterfully, inviting the audience to regard the evening as a family reunion, and three Credo students introduced each performance with panache.

The \$150M concert hall is fabulous. The acoustics were superb, and the seating allowed everyone present to feel a part of each performance. As Chip remarked in his opening address, this was an opportunity for students to perform in a professional venue, almost as a prelude to a career some will most likely seek. Every student looked in sharp formal attire and seemed to appreciate the warm reception all received from peers, parents, and teachers. Chip suggested that this was to become an annual event; if so, I would advise getting tickets early!

PERFORMERS (1) Sebastopol Independent Charter School 7th & 8th Grade Orchestra, (2) SunRidge Charter School 6th Grade Chorus, (3) Summerfield Waldorf High School Orchestra, (4) Marin Waldorf School 7th & 8th Grade Orchestra, (5) Novato Charter School Fiddle Club, (6) Live Oak Charter School 5th Grade Strings Ensemble, (7) Stone Bridge School 5th Grade Play, (8) Woodland Star Charter School Mexican Dance Troup.



Waldorf at Weill Hall CONTINUED



The lobby of the Green Music Center began to fill up early with performers, parents and friends from the nine schools located in three North Bay counties: Sonoma, Napa and Marin.



Three students from Credo High School (from left: Eli Torres, Angelica Ingham and Jackson Love) were hosts for the evening, introducing each school. Chip Romer, Credo High School's Executive Director, envisioned and produced the event, with co-producer Victoria Temple.



Credo High School's Amercian Music Ensemble waits backstage before closing the show with their performance of Marvin Gaye's "What's Goin' On." Plans are already in the works for next year's "Waldorf at Weill" concert.



Mountain Phoenix
community school

Waldorf in the 21st Century

BY RAINBOW ROSENBLOOM

From February 16-20, Mountain Phoenix Community School, in Wheat Ridge, CO, near Denver, hosted a conference entitled "Waldorf in the 21st Century" for Waldorf charter developers, administrators, teachers, and friends. The conference was attended by over 100 enthusiastic public Waldorf advocates. Eugene Schwartz gave the evening keynotes, and Rainbow Rosenbloom spoke each morning. There were breakout sessions in the later mornings and afternoons, covering everything from math in grades 1-8 to homeschooling, from reading and writing in grades 1-8 to middle school main lesson. Raine Springer brought singing and movement, and Thesa Kallinikos presented main lesson artistic work as well as watercolor painting sessions.

Mountain Phoenix is one of the larger K-8 Waldorf charters, with over 400 students. Three other Colorado charter schools attended, all slated to open in August, 2013: Juniper Ridge in Grand Junction, Mountain Sage in Fort Collins, and Mountain Song in Colorado Springs. The interest in public Waldorf in Colorado is growing rapidly!



Participants from four Colorado Waldorf charter schools attended the regional conference held at Mountain Phoenix school in February.

Collaborative Communication

Dear friends and colleagues: Please print, read and share with your school's leadership this paramount letter, reprinted in full on the following page. It was collaboratively crafted by representatives of both the Alliance and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). This is the anticipated second and more elucidated letter which comes out of the ongoing, renewed dialogue between our two organizations as together, yet in our own ways, we strive to bring the gifts of Waldorf education to children and families across the nation.

In spirited partnership, The Alliance Board and Staff



Winter 2012-13

Communication from mediated meetings of September 28, 2012, of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

As we reported in our last message in October, the conversations in late September between representatives of AWSNA and the Alliance were conducted in the spirit that informs the central principles of Waldorf Education. Through that deeply respectful, multi-hour dialogue, a consensus emerged on several important points. The purpose of this message is to capture those points in a form that will serve as the foundation for continuing conversations, animated by the same spirit, that will produce the details for a formal agreement – a roadmap for the route forward and an affirmation of commitments towards common goals.

The people who met on September 28th share two essential and bridging goals: to protect, deepen, and enrich Waldorf Education, and to make genuine Waldorf Education accessible to as many young people as possible.

Education that is true to the spirit and core principles that define and distinguish Waldorf Education is precious. There are many challenges in today's world to maintaining its integrity. Some of these challenges confront Waldorf educators in both the public and the private sector, while some confront one sector or the other more directly. At the most elemental level, there is a risk that individuals or organizations not associated with the Alliance and AWSNA will, inadvertently or advertently, dilute and distort Waldorf Education. Such a development could undermine our shared goals and could make access to true Waldorf Education, in either the public or the private sector, much more difficult. Securing adequate funding to support our schools also remains an ongoing concern. Challenges like these make it paramount for AWSNA and the Alliance to develop a jointly crafted and fully coordinated strategy for collaborating in pursuit of shared goals.

The following are areas of work that we agreed to take up together:

Both organizations recognize that preserving and strengthening the meaning of the term Waldorf in the realm of education is essential to protecting the viability of Waldorf Education. It follows that both organizations are committed to developing a coordinated strategy to achieve this end. This strategy will include a plan for identifying and responding to potential distortions of Waldorf Education, whether in the independent or in the public sector, and agreeing on how a service mark can be managed to protect the strength and the meaning of Waldorf Education.

In order to nurture supportive and mutually enriching relationships within the total Waldorf community, we also propose to develop more vehicles for collaboration between Waldorf educators in the independent and public sectors who are committed to Dr. Steiner's vision.

We will work on refining criteria that can be used to distinguish initiatives that honor the fundamental principles of Waldorf Education from those that do not. We will be able to use the requirements that each organization has developed for admitting new members (with staged movement toward full Waldorf status) as foundations for the work of developing the refined, jointly endorsed criteria that we envision.

Once mutually articulated, such criteria could be used to identify and support new educational programs or institutions that want to associate themselves with Waldorf Education, and to hold accountable those that fail in significant ways to conform to its animating ideas and ideals. The contemplated agreement between AWSNA and the Alliance would spell out how and by whom initially such programs would be approached.

We also agreed to cooperate on a new protocol for how governmental authorities will be notified regarding authorized use of the term "Waldorf". This step will be taken before the next set of general communications goes out from AWSNA to governmental authorities.

Everyone who participated in the extended conversations on September 28th understands that the commitments outlined in this message reflect a very significant movement forward by AWSNA and the Alliance. We also understand that we face a very challenging task as we undertake to develop the specific terms and spell out the detailed plans that will be necessary to make these commitments real in a time frame that can still capture the spirit of the conversations of September 28.

Much hard work and much sustained attention to detail will be required. But these efforts will not be without their own rewards. And despite the magnitude of the challenge, we will be successful --- in part because we will be guided by the principles of openness and respect that center our educational philosophy, and in part because we understand that moving forward together is essential to protecting the integrity of the education in which we so deeply believe.

In Service

Will Stapp

Alliance for Public
Waldorf Education

Frances Kane

Association of Waldorf
Schools of North America

ret Judge Wayne Brazil
JAMS



BY STEPHANIE
SKINNER

WELCOME NEW ALLIANCE MEMBERS!

Blue Oak Charter School, Chico, CA
Cairn Hill, Arlington, MA
Desert Marigold School, Phoenix, AZ
Desert Star Community School, Cornville, AZ
Heartwood Charter School, Santa Clarita Valley, CA
Juniper Ridge, Grand Junction, CO
Mountain Oak School, Prescott, AZ
Mountain Phoenix Community School, Wheatridge, CO
Mountain Song School, Colorado Springs, CO
Pine Forest Charter School, Flagstaff, AZ
Springs Mountain School, Hailey, ID
Tomorrow River Community School, Amherst, WI
Woodland Charter School, Williams, OR

Number of Alliance member schools and initiatives in January, 2012: **22**

Number of Alliance member schools and initiatives in January, 2013: **35**

CONGRATULATIONS

Alliance Mini-grants Winners!

Athena's Garden at **Woodland Star Charter School**, Sonoma, CA: Funding will allow for the development of a parent-child program that will serve the greater community.

Live Oak Charter School, Petaluma, CA: Grant funding will acquire parent resources and support to Live Oak's strings program.

Journey School, Aliso Viejo, CA: A parent resource library program is now underway thanks to grant funds.

NEXT ROUND OF MINI-GRANTS

At the 2013 Silent Auction, we raised mini-grant funds totaling \$1,300!

The next round of mini-grants is set to take place in the early fall of 2013 using the funds generated through this year's silent auction. Themes and guidelines will be announced in the next issue of Confluence.

Special thanks to our many auction contributors including Brian Gray and Friends, Adminservices, Eugene Schwartz, Will Stapp, Betty Staley, conference attendees, member schools and all who contributed the donations that made this auction a success.

GREEN RIBBON WINNER

Journey School, Aliso Viejo, CA, was nominated for U.S. Green Ribbon!

Find out more: <http://m.ocreger.com/news/school-496111-nominated-schools.html>

WOW-DAY 2013

Waldorf One World, or WOW-Day, September 26, 2013: Your Initiative Counts

On this day, through collective effort we will raise funds for worldwide Waldorf initiatives that are in need of support. Last year, for the fourth consecutive year, WOW-Day was a great success; 237 Waldorf schools in 32 countries collectively raised 300,000 Euros! The donations will again be transferred at 100% to projects that need help.

There are many ways for a class or school to organize a WOW-Day campaign: stage a play, organize a circus or music performance, sell crafts, have a bake sale; what counts is creativity and initiative. Information about WOW-Day 2013 is available for download at: <http://www.freunde-waldorf.de/en/wow-day.html>

WELCOME NEW ALLIANCE BOARD MEMBERS!

Thank you for stepping forward to serve in spirited partnership.

Amy Bird, Desert Sky Community School, Secretary of the Board

Allegra Alessandri, of George Washington Carver High School, Pedagogical Chair

NEW FOR MEMBERS

on the Alliance website: Job Openings page!

If you have a position open at your school and would like it listed on our new webpage please send us an email (alliance.public.waldorf@gmail.com) with the subject marked "job" and in the following format. We will post it for you.

Position:

School:

Brief description:

Closing date:

Link to school website/employment page:

Logo or image, highest quality available: