

# CONFLUENCE

Winter 2015

News from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

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## FROM THE ALLIANCE

### Record Attendance at Annual Conference

BY SHANNA MALL, BOARD PRESIDENT

This year's Alliance conference at Steiner College enjoyed record attendance and a buzz of highly positive reviews. The theme of educating the will for the 21st century spoke to the needs of our children, our schools and our movement with precision and inspiration.

I speak for all attendees when I express my great appreciation to Conference Chair Marianne Kennedy, to Victoria Temple and Conference Committee members Liz Beaven, Edmund Knighton and Stephanie Skinner.



Marianne reviews the conference below, and included in this issue are practical and philosophical articles by 2015 conference presenters Bente Goldstein, Cynthia Hoven, Edmund Knighton and Betty Staley — each a great example of inspired will in action. *Enjoy this issue!*

### We Have the Will to Work

BY MARIANNE KENNEDY

Over 300 conference attendees were treated to a winter weekend feast this year at the Annual Conference of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education held at Rudolf Steiner College. Of course, Shiloh's meals were wonderful, but I am referring to the feast of collegial sharing of a wealth of knowledge and experience brought to us by our esteemed keynote speaker, Bente Goldstein.

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## FOCUS OF THE WINTER ISSUE THE WILL TO WORK



Conference participants experience a Spatial Dynamics exercise.

### The Sevenfold Will

BY EDMUND KNIGHTON, PHD

A desired outcome of education is that students impart purpose and direction to their lives through right use of moral will. Foundational to human experience is the theory of sevenfold will, which situates the student between three "animalic" and three "angelic" influences and agents of change. What practical applications in the classroom will aid teachers in testing the hypothesis that sevenfold will exists?

Imagine a student standing before you. Immediately beneath her feet exists Desire, which can rise to the level of Ideas. The layer beneath Desire is Impulse. And the core beneath that is Instinct. The three layers above our student are, first, Wish, then Intention, and finally Resolve.

The three layers below are composed of sedimented or crystallized intellect from the past. The layers above are composed of right-brain-mediated fluid intelligence from the future that is both artistic and creative in na-

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#### Seven Levels of Will



Bente, herself a Waldorf school graduate, shared with us her observations of the development of will and its importance to each of us individually and globally. Over three days of lectures and the Sunday plenum, Bente led us through Rudolf Steiner's theories of will and the importance of strong will development; and she offered advice to teachers on how to develop and strengthen the will of our students.

Bente's presentations were rich in theoretical, philosophical and practical content. Her personal warmth and lively talks led the way for the exciting workshops and breakout sessions held on Saturday. Eleven workshops led by teachers and administrators in Waldorf education ranged from Digital Media Literacy to Handwork, Painting and Understanding Children with Attention, Learning and Behavioral Challenges. Twelve breakout sessions ranged from meetings with teachers in the same grades to an Anthroposophical study of the Seven Levels of Will. The rooms were filled to capacity with energy and enthusiasm.

The conference offered morning eurythmy with Cynthia Hoven and daily singing with Eva Cranstoun. On Friday evening, the attendees were treated to a folk dance led by Donna Burgess. Saturday evening began with a beautiful student eurythmy performance by the Credo Rose Eurythmy Group from Credo High School. This was followed by a fireside chat with Betty Staley and Joan Almon. The evening ended with a hilarious Waldorf Password game led by members of the Alliance Board and Advisory Board.

It was a wonderful weekend to meet teachers from many states and experience levels. For some teachers, this conference came at the beginning of the Waldorf Teacher Training while for many experienced Waldorf teachers, this conference offered an opportunity to be refreshed halfway through the school year with new songs, games and ideas for our classrooms.

I enjoyed hearing from many of you during the weekend about how you were enjoying the conference. It is always designed with the teachers in mind. As Victoria Temple and I and the rest of the Conference Committee begin our planning for January 2016, we will keep in mind your conference evaluation comments and suggestions. Even more importantly, I will retain the image of us standing in a large circle around Stegman Hall singing "To Wonder At Beauty," with tears in many eyes and warmth in our hearts for each other and the valuable work that we have the honor and ability to do.

I look forward to seeing you again next January. ■



*Stephen Spitalny leads a workshop on resolving conflicts among young children without shame or blame.*

ture. When this intelligence influences Desire, Desire is raised to the level of Idea; we have grown beyond our limbic brain. Ideas grow toward ideals if we raise them toward the level of imagination and then release them to be informed by something greater than our ordinary intellect from the past.

### 1. INSTINCT

The first level of will is expressed physically as instinctual, primal, base. Without primal instincts we would not survive. Instinct is the bedrock and represents core genetic material. Instinct is forced upon us from the outside, although less strongly than it imprints animals. We can override instinctual responses, but the result is often trauma, which animals do not experience in their natural habitat.

Healthy instinct is akin to common sense. In Waldorf education, we distinguish twelve senses. Common sense could be the thirteenth sense, required before undertaking self-development. Our feet remain firmly on the ground, and no matter what comes toward us, we feel centered, calm and collected. We cultivate common sense through protocol or process in order to develop pedagogical instinct.

One example is the use of a verse. We quiet ourselves, unruffled by external events. We take a moment to expand space and time between students' actions and our reactions. In this space, pedagogical instinct can root itself. Goethe grounded himself through walking recitation, which enabled him to empty his thinking, feeling and willing in order to be imagined through inspired through, and intuited through from the future. Pedagogical instinct accumulates bi-directionally from constant integration of bottom-up and top-down processes, layer by layer.

Instinctual pedagogy requires proper nutrition, adequate sleep, engaged relationships and 20 minutes of daily cardiothoracic exercise. Will flows more slowly through a stagnant body fluid or medium of muscle. When we integrate moral ideals into our simple instincts, then pedagogical instinct becomes the capacity of the wisdom of the body to guide us to moral action based on those ideals.

### 2. IMPULSE

The second level of will expresses itself through the habit-life as Impulse. Impulses may be both desired and undesired habits. Impulses are invisible, inward, unified and uniform throughout life. When the habit-life begins to control instinct, then instinctual will becomes a drive. Our habit-life lives in our body, completely forming and permeating it, imperceptible to external senses. Unseen habits urge us toward visible behavior.

### 3. DESIRE

The third level of will, Desire, is the last level shared with animals. When we semi-consciously grasp an instinct-impulse with Desire, this Desire can evolve into the will of social relationships. Unlike the lawful consistency of Instinct and Impulse, which lies largely outside volitional control, we can create and abandon Desires from moment-to-moment.

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EDMUND  
KNIGHTON,  
PHD



Sixth graders in the garden at Desert Marigold School in Phoenix, AZ

## From the Field—Literally!

BY AMY BIRD

The January Alliance Conference, “We Have the Will to Work!”, featured a series of dynamic keynote presentations by Bente Goldstein, who runs a youth farm program in Wisconsin. As a way of continuing the conversation, *Confluence* asked three staff members at Desert Marigold School in Phoenix to talk about why their school has made weekly garden classes a regular part of the curriculum. Bobi Harshfield is the Garden Coordinator, Pax Piper is the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Amy Bird is the Development Director and a member of the board of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education.

**Amy Bird:** There’s a lot going on in the garden right now. Students have recently harvested a field of gourds, the strawberry starts that were planted last month are already flowering, the lettuce and peas are ready to be harvested. It’s busy and it’s beautiful... But how do you really know the garden program is having a positive impact on the will development of students?

**Bobi Harshfield:** What tells me we’re doing something right is that I see more and more students who are now willing to try things that they were afraid to try when I first started working with them. Using sharp tools. Using heavy tools. Even just getting dirty. These are things many of them aren’t willing—or even allowed—to do anywhere else, including in their own homes.

**Pax Piper:** It’s true that what happens in the garden is so much more than simply participation in a visible and beneficial community project. One of the most important things going on is that it’s a place where students are actively working with the four lower senses, what Rudolf Steiner called the sense of life, the sense of self-movement, the sense of balance and the sense of touch. These senses are all developed from infancy, through childhood and into adulthood, and they all play a critical role in developing the will. Trying new and different things like Bobi described is a great example of the sense of life. Another example of the sense of life in action is that wonderful moment

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Desire is subject to the whims of the individual. Repeated Desires may become characteristics of a student’s personality, but other Desires that arise and fade may not. This is why it is essential to observe students without judgment—which is a challenge, because students’ Desires often contain strong feelings, and those feelings draw teachers away from observation and into feeling-judgment. Desire arises as I metabolize Instinct and Impulse, and initiate an incentive to inwardly understand a motive.

### 4. MOTIVE

The fourth level of will is Motive. Animals do not have motives. Motives are Instincts, Impulses and Desires that we approach in full consciousness. More on Motive will be said in connection with Wish, below.

### 5. WISH

The fifth level is Wish. We become aware of Wishes when we do something that arises out of a Motive and then think about it and say to ourselves, “I could have done that much better.” In contrast to concepts, which arise out of past memory and antipathy, Wishes arise from imagination. This imaginative cognition resulting from Motive must not be confused with the mental representations arising from past cognitions at the level of Desire. Such mental images are sometimes called imaginations, but the opposite is the case: they are only the shadowy husks of will. The conscious person at the Motive level stands midway between these two “imaginings” and mediates between them. At the level of Desire, imagination is our intellected reflection of the will; it is our idea of the will rather than the actual activity of the will. It is the will stamped into the past, into memory. When we regret an enacted Desire and Wish it had been different, we only weaken our capacity to be led by the future. This is egotistical and selfish: I only want to do something better in order to become a better person. But when we regret an enacted Desire and Wish to do it differently in the future, we move toward strengthened intentions and resolves. Now, I Wish to be different in order to increase my ability to serve others.

The way to maintain a living feeling of will at the Desire level is to refuse to allow yourself to fulfill a particular Desire, and then observe the results. You will notice the strong Desire moving toward a subtle Wish—but for something quite different than you had imagined. In contrast, imagination at the Wish level streams toward us from the future. We open ourselves to ambiguity; and when we do this in front of a class, we face the natural terror that no Inspiration may come. Inspiration arises in the teacher only when a solid foundation in imagination has been established at the level of Wishing to do better. It goes without saying that the teacher has also painstakingly prepared a lesson plan and is willing to let it go. We ask what it is that resounds in us as a Wish. And we wait for an answer. If all goes well, then we establish a relationship with Intention, and its accompanying Inspiration.

### 6. INTENTION

The sixth level is Intention. It arises in us when we elevate a subtle Wish based on past regrets into a Wish that is cogent, clear and concrete. Intention occurs when I do not allow myself to be self-satisfied; my intention to do better is ever alive in me. If I can raise this intention away from my twelve senses and free it from sensory-bound perception—even for a moment—then Intention rises to Resolve.

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when a student digging in the garden, planting seeds or weeding, suddenly pauses, sits up, breathes in deeply and take a self-satisfied look around.

BH: I do think that for some of our students, the garden is one of the few places they can actually be quiet and connect with themselves.

AB: Say a little more about the many ways different students respond to the work they do in the garden.

BH: I'm thinking about one of our newer students. He was having the hardest time getting any work done in a large group. So I set him out in a row of his own. Very quickly he was able to connect with the work. Now when he finishes something he has been working on, he comes right over to me and asks, "Should I weed the carrot bed now or thin the beets?" Not only is he learning to take initiative, it's clear he wants to make sure his work is serving the garden the best it can. Another student who comes to mind absolutely loves to put his hands in the mud. He'd rub it all over himself if I let him.

PP: That's a perfect example of the sense of touch. The garden affords an amazing variety of touch experiences. Some plants are prickly, some are sticky, some are soft. The students use wood and metal tools, and need to wear gloves for some jobs. Likewise, the sense of self-movement is fully engaged when a student pushes a heavy wheelbarrow piled high with compost and needs to make sure it doesn't tip from side to side. The will is educated and strengthened by every one of these different activities.

BH: And the students find it very satisfying. They are always proud of what they've done, even after a tough day. They leave the garden singing. I also want to bring up the importance of our animals. We have chickens, sheep, goats and a pig. Some of the children who still have a hard time focusing in the garden always contribute fully when it's their turn to work with the animals because of the deep connection they make.

AB: What's next for your garden program? What more do your students need?

BH: One of my biggest challenges is working with large class sizes. Some of things I'd like to have the students learn need more individual supervision. We are fortunate to have college interns and some parent volunteers in the garden, but I'm still looking for ways to reduce group size. Also, we are working hard to create an outdoor garden kitchen. Our students need that next step of sharing their harvest and passing the plate with the whole community.

PP: Ideally, we want all students to know that they are an invaluable part of something bigger than themselves. And they are! They are needed in our garden and they are needed in the world. ■



Catching up with far flung colleagues is a conference highlight.

## 7. RESOLVE

The seventh level of will is Resolve. Conscious repetition of any activity cultivates the will of Resolve. Unconscious repetition cultivates feeling. Teachers must bring both to students in the form of art, chores, a disciplined feeling and thinking life, etc. But only when Intention is freed from the body does it become a Resolution. What is the process for freeing Intention from the body? The answer lies in the philosophy of freedom (i.e., intuitive thinking). When we free our thinking from the body, intent becomes decision. Freedom respects autonomy in others; the will always lives in freedom, which is sense-free thinking.

Because one cannot directly make students learn to use their wills, the teacher models the separation of feeling from willing in herself for her students. If successful, then as adults her students will be able to freely choose to connect affect to cognition, instead of being impelled to action based on sentiment. Lastly, the teacher consciously links her will to her thought life in order to invite the student into taking initiative in life.

In sum, we educate the will in a manner opposite to the way we educate the intellect. Will education is largely nonverbal, right-brain-to-right-brain attuned, practiced through conscious movement and arts-based activities. Wordlessness, conceptlessness and even senselessness are necessary. The teacher practices emptying herself of all sensory reaction, inwardly and outwardly, while standing before her students. Such whole-body listening opens the path to the first step in the mutually fructifying experience of being led from the future by the wills of the students who stand before you. ■

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EDMUND KNIGHTON, PHD, Educator for 25 years at early childhood, primary, secondary, graduate levels. Edmund is Department Chair of Rudolf Steiner College's Masters in Education and advises 80 thesis students. Since 1989, he has served on the faculty and administration of seven graduate institutes and four Waldorf Schools. He interned in neuropsychology at UC-Davis Medical Center in Physical Medicine, with a Postdoctoral Fellowship in family systems and advanced training in Hakomi Mindfulness Somatic Psychotherapy. He is a Clinical Psychologist, founding member and core faculty of Anthroposophic Psychology Associates of North America and co-author of "The Counselor...As If Soul and Spirit Matter" (2015). Certified in conflict management, ropes course, yoga, outdoor education, Spatial Dynamics, and Waldorf High School, he has been an educational consultant for 60 Waldorf schools. Current research interests: Artistic Child Study, Mindful Conversation for Faculties, and Classroom Application of 7- & 12-fold Models. Edmund recently spoke on Waldorf Education and Parenting at the Body Intelligence Summit to 8,000 participants from over 100 countries.



*Bente's compassionate candor and clear insights about the nature of the will, and how it is helped or hindered in children, resonated with her audience.*

## Developing the Will to Meet the World in the 21st Century

### INTRODUCING BENTE GOLDSTEIN

Bente Goldstein is a Waldorf school graduate from Norway who comes from a long line of teachers. Her grandmother pioneered kindergartens in Norway and her mother was a Waldorf School teacher. Though she lives in Wisconsin on an organic farm, she spent most of her childhood attending Steiner schools both in Oslo and Bergen, Norway, intermittent with living in Lapland above the Arctic Circle.

She did her Waldorf training at Emerson College where she met her husband, a biodynamic researcher. After taking the first class through Prairie Hill Waldorf School in Wisconsin, she started teaching farm programs on her own farm and has been teaching them for 15 years.

Her work in the classroom and observations of children working in farm activities has helped her form her theories of what will education is really about. She feels our educational task is to determine how to give the right amount of real work at the right age and for the right temperament...to make children grounded in the healthiest way for the present and future. She is presently writing a book called, *Childhood is a Verb!*

**BENTE'S SLIDE SHOW** from the conference is posted on our website at:

<http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/bente-slide-show.pdf>

Visit **BENTE'S WEBSITE** for her farm camp at:

<http://www.farmwiseeducation.com>

### THE WILL EDUCATOR'S CHECKLIST

1. Who was active in the lesson? (Child, teacher, or device)
2. Which part of the child was active? (Head, heart, hands)
3. To what extent did the children live outside themselves in their senses? (Senses need to be used in order to develop)
4. Which aspects of their surroundings did they notice and appropriately respond to? (Building wherewithal)
5. Did they practice feeling the viewpoint of someone else? (Human, animal, plant, stone — growing other-centeredness?)
6. Was there room for the children to take any initiatives today? (Practicing initiative in play and work)
7. Did I help someone stick to a task longer than he/she felt was natural today? (Drawing out the will)
8. Did I give appropriate consequences for an inappropriate event that will help the child stay within boundaries next time? (Finding a harmonious social relationship to surroundings)
9. Did I help someone finish a task today? (Building the 'I-can-do-it' self-image)
10. Where did I 'steady' or 'believe-in' a kid today? (Children need to be seen)
11. Which habits did I work on today in the children? (Children's habits of doing are the only thing an educator can work on)
12. Which of those habits are now becoming capacities? (Building a 'carpet' of good habits forges motivation for life)
13. Where in the child were those capacities being developed; head, heart, or body? (Capacities develop where the child is active)
14. In which instances did I draw forth something in a child to balance him or her? (Make them not just be good at one thing)
15. Which things did the children succeed at today? (Motivation and self-confidence building)
16. Was I able to be flexible in goal-setting in order to optimize the children's experience of 'I can do it'? (Children's sense of accomplishment builds their sense of self-motivation)
17. Which of my colleagues did I support today? (Concretely building 'the Village' for the children)
18. How did I show that support for another grown-up? (Did I make myself heard by that person)
19. You fill in with more.....



## To Parents and Guardians of Children

### FIVE REASONS WHY

#### CHILDREN NEED CHORES

1. To teach them “other-centeredness.”
2. To turn their “attention-arrow” outwards.
3. Because tending to needs in the world pulls them “out of themselves” and in the long run makes them happier.
4. To give them good habits for life.
5. To practice being responsible, so they become responsible.

### FIVE REASONS WHY

#### CHILDREN NEED TO BE BORED, NOT ENTERTAINED

1. So they can find their inner fount of creativity. (It takes about three days of complaining, usually, that’s all.)
2. Since everything is more fun when the kids invent it themselves!
3. So they can get a chance to find out who they are.
4. So they can practice being the directors of their own lives.
5. Because it is only by practicing taking initiative, that they develop a strong capacity to take initiative.

### EDUCATING THE SENSES IN A TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD

## Some Reflections on Then & Now

BY BENTE GOLDSTEIN

We live in a new world, a “removed” world, out of sync with millennia of adaptations of our bodies and minds. It is a screen world removed from the sensory world of the three dimensions of space. Even the fourth dimension of time has been removed in the way it is compressed and altered in our life on our screens.

We have expressions like “he’s coming back to his senses,” indicating that someone got lost in his inner world of the mind, and the sense world of touch, smell and taste, of sight and hearing, brought him back here with us again. The senses that we all share in our individual bodies connect us to the same reality here on

the planet. In our minds, we can each be in our own private world.

Traditionally, childhood is a time for learning “the ropes” of the planet’s laws. How thick does a tree branch need to be in order to hold my body at 5 years old versus 12 years old? How do I control a flock of sheep that suddenly wants to go in the wrong direction? How do I get along with other humans?

Few of us have daily or immediate issues of survival like getting a crop in on time or facing starvation, and so we do not learn to collaborate in the same way as before. That need was the big educator of previous generations. The

need dictated what everyone had to focus on. It was strict and merciless.

Education means to draw forth. Plain survival used to draw forth the will to do things. The will to do, at its most essential, meant providing food, shelter and clothing. There was a “sensory learning” and a will imperative of how to do these things and do them well, lest death hunt you down.

As educators today we have to ask: How can we provide meaningful, firsthand sensory experiences of the real world in which we live for our students? Otherwise, how will they be able to live their own lives?

## The Rudi Talks



PHIL ARNOLD, Circle of Seasons School success in Allentown, PA



CHIP ROMER: Credo High School’s Community Service Program



OLIVER CHENEY, the Meristen Venture for Autistic Teens

Rudi Talks are a Sunday morning tradition at the Alliance’s annual conference. In concise seven minute presentations, this year’s talks featured inspiring speakers who shed light on the maturation and diversification of our movement.

## AWENA: An idea whose time has come?

### CHIP ROMER INTERVIEWS BETTY STALEY

Chip Romer: At the Alliance conference, you and Joan Almon had a fireside chat in which Joan asked you to recount your early involvement in the public Waldorf movement. You spoke about the Milwaukee school, and then Joan asked you about AWENA. What does AWENA stand for?

Betty Staley: The Association for Waldorf Education in North America.

CR: Can you review the story of that impulse?

BS: It developed in 1994-95 at a Harlemville, N.Y. retreat between the Coordinating Committee of AWSNA\* and the Pedagogical Section Council of the Anthroposophical Society. A consultant, Aaron Stern, asked the group to imagine where we wanted Waldorf education to be in fifteen years. Included in people's responses was having Waldorf education accessible to all.

CR: So AWSNA was initially supporting accessibility?

BS: Yes. AWSNA had established a public school task force to figure out how to include the public school initiatives in AWSNA. The AWENA impulse came out of a recognition that while AWSNA had a specific role as an organization of Waldorf schools, there were still other organizations working with Rudolf Steiner's indications related to child and adolescent development—such as WECAN (Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America) and Spacial Dynamics training. At the heart of our commonality was a wish for the renewal of education in North America.

CR: What was the group's motivation in imagining AWENA?

BS: The AWENA impulse recognized that Rudolf Steiner's indications could be applied to many initiatives working with children, initiatives beyond the private Waldorf schools. We hoped such an organization could stimulate major shifts in American education as well as offer comradeship among people working in these Steiner initiatives. The motivation was to solidify the working of the various initiatives, find and support common goals, and recognize the common source of this work.

CR: Was there a specific plan to make this come about?

BS: Since AWSNA was the largest group at that time, it was felt that the lead would have to come

\* Association of Waldorf Schools of North America

from it. The concept was reported to the AWSNA delegates, but I think that in the midst of all the changes AWSNA was going through at that time and the public school work, AWENA went to the back burner.

CR: Which individuals were involved?

BS: The Chair of AWSNA at the time, Dave Alsop, and members of the various regional committees. I was on the Coordinating Committee and the Pedagogical Section Council. Henry Barnes, Patti Livingston, James Pewtherer, Francis Vig, Joan Almon and others were involved. Aaron Stern working as a consultant and Linda Pritzker, who was supporting AWSNA at that time.

CR: What organizations were represented in the imagining?

BS: It was mainly the Waldorf schools, through AWSNA; the Pedagogical Section Council of the Anthroposophical Society; the early childhood work, through WECAN; and the Spacial Dynamics training.

CR: Which organizations did the visioning group imagine fitting under the AWENA umbrella?

BS: The Teacher Education Network was already represented in AWSNA, but other training initiatives could also be included. The umbrella could include the public Waldorf schools, the Waldorf homeschooling movement, pedagogical eurythmy, parent education groups, administrative trainings, parent associations, Waldorf alumni groups, school farms, gap year programs based on Waldorf education, and summer camps. We thought it could also include other organizations that were not specifically Waldorf—but we never got that far.

CR: Did you imagine that AWENA would have activities that it would perform on behalf of its member organizations, like research and lobbying, for example?

BS: Yes, all of that. The Alliance for Childhood is a good example of such an organization. It is not only made up of Waldorf early childhood teachers or groups, but with broader like-minded organizations.

CR: When I heard you and Joan speak about AWENA at the Alliance conference, it struck me, hopefully, that maybe the time has finally come for this idea. What do you think?

BS: I think it would be wonderful to reconceive AWENA. It could harness the energy and com-



Betty Staley (above) and Joan Almon shared insights from their combined 50+ year history in Waldorf education.

mon goals of many people in North America.

CR: Do you think some of the original people might still be interested?

BS: I know that Joan Almon and I are still interested.

CR: What would you recommend as next steps to birth an organization such as AWENA that would ensure communication and collaboration among all the organizations operating out of Steiner's indications on behalf of children and youth?

BS: I think it would be important for two or three key people from AWSNA, from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, and from the Pedagogical Section Council to come together. This could be the spark that grows into our vision of a large collaborative organization.

**Betty Staley** directs the Waldorf High School Teacher Education Program at Rudolf Steiner College, as well as programs for public school teachers. 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 serves on the Alliance Advisory Board.



BY CYNTHIA HOVEN

## Eurythmy in Waldorf Schools

The art of Eurythmy is taught in the Waldorf schools throughout the world as a core specialty subject, serving as an integral part of the Waldorf curriculum from pre-kindergarten through high school. It is one of the ways in which Waldorf education can be said to be a multi-modal learning experience. Eurythmy addresses the core value of strengthening the will and addressing a sense for beauty and esthetics in countless and manifold ways

Above all, eurythmy is an art form. Eurythmy takes its place alongside painting and music as an artistic experience for the child. What is unique about eurythmy, however, is that the medium for the art is the body itself, and our gestures. It is thus one of the most powerful tools of Waldorf approach, and Rudolf Steiner counseled that no school should be without it.

In eurythmy, we experience that with our gestures we can be artists and express the inner dynamic of poetry, with its wonderful cadences and its play with sound. With our gestures we can also express the inner life of music: its beat, rhythm, and pitch, its phrasing and dynamic, the musical tones and intervals. We work with dramatic, lyric and epic content, as well as with color and form.

From the very first days of the Waldorf school movement, Rudolf Steiner asked and expected that eurythmy be an integral part of the curriculum. Eurythmy is intended to be offered to the children one period a week through grade 3, and twice a week from then on through 12th grade. There is a specific learning journey in eurythmy that accompanies the developmental stages of the growing child, paralleling with elegance the curriculum carried by the class teacher. By the time the children are in high school, they can perform eurythmy to complex music compositions and exquisite poetry. Along the way, however, there are many profound and complex learning experiences that the children must pass through.

Eurythmy supports the development of an extraordinarily healthy relationship to the body. The children learn to feel in their bodies:

- Spatial orientation and profound coordination
- Geometric forms and the logic inherent in them
- Rhythm and proportion
- Polarities of all kinds: lightness and heaviness; contraction and expansion; large and small
- Agility in the feet and expressivity in the hands
- Social collaboration and coordination
- Sensitivity to where they are and to where others are in space
- A real sense of the liveliness of language
- An experience of the non-verbal wisdom of music.

Eurythmists have learned through their training how to develop fun, engaging exercises that help the children develop these skills, individually modified and developed according to the needs of the class.

**What does it take to be a eurythmist?** A eurythmy training is a 4-year, full-time training.

**What movement exercises can a class teacher do?** A class teacher doesn't have the width and breadth of insight into the etheric experiences of eurythmy to bring formal eurythmy exercises to the children. However, if you don't have a eurythmist in your school, you can learn from a eurythmist some important elements that you can modify for your class. For instance, you can learn to do exercises to help with body geography, spatial orientation, mirroring exercises, moving the forms of form drawing, concentration exercises and the like. However, the



*Conference participants began each morning with eurythmy.*

exercises built on doing eurythmy gestures for sounds and for music are not advised. Instead, you can work instead on learning to do wonderful, eloquent, ensouled movements as they teach poems and story.

### Can a school do without a eurythmy program?

Surely it is possible, but if a school is fortunate enough to have an inspired and competent eurythmist who can relate to children, faculty and staff, everyone will agree that they would never wish to be without a full eurythmy program!

For more insights into the background and philosophy of eurythmy, and video recordings that show how to develop your own personal eurythmy practice, you can visit Cynthia's website and <http://eurythmyonline.com/>, or contact me at [info@eurythmyonline.com](mailto:info@eurythmyonline.com).

**Cynthia Hoven** received her eurythmy diploma from the Goldridge Eurythmy School in 1979, and then traveled to the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, where she joined the stage group for two seasons. In 1982, she received her diploma in Therapeutic Eurythmy from Stuttgart, Germany, and has worked since then in hospitals, clinics and private practices. In 1992, she became the director of the Weekend Foundation Studies program at Rudolf Steiner College, and assumed responsibility for teaching all the eurythmy classes at RSC in 1994.



*The Credo Rose Eurythmy Ensemble offered a powerful presentation on Saturday night.*

## HAPPENINGS



BY VICTORIA  
TEMPLE

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

#### NEW MEMBER SCHOOLS

- **The Catalpa School**, Louisville, KY, a project of the Milburn T. Maupin Institute for Creativity and Innovation
- **Syringa Mountain School**, Hailey, ID

#### NEW MEMBER INITIATIVES

- **Boreal Sun Charter School**, Fairbanks, AK
- **Cairn Hill**, Arlington, MA

#### NEW FRIENDS

- **RSF SOCIAL FINANCE**, San Francisco, CA



### 2014 MINI-GRANTS AWARDED

**Woodland Charter School**, Murphy, OR, and **Green Valley Charter School**, Los Banos, CA, were recipients of the Alliance's 2014 Mini-Grants. This year, grants were open to new initiative and developing member schools. They were awarded to support classroom-based arts activities, helping fill gaps in a school's existing program and bring it more into line with the Waldorf arts curriculum. Woodland Charter received \$500 to purchase nine used violins for its 3-8 Grade strings program, and Green Valley Charter received \$500 to support its fourth and fifth grade class plays. *Congratulations!*

### JOIN A STUDY ON THE LEARNING ENCOUNTER



Patrick Wakeford is conducting a research project as the centerpiece of his doctoral dissertation with California Institute of Integral Studies. The study is entitled "Peak Experiences in the Learning Encounter with Children." He is seeking input from public Waldorf charter school and independent Waldorf school teachers. All input will be confidential.

Patrick is the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Rudolf Steiner College. Please consider supporting this research initiative, it's important to our movement. Here's the link to learn more:

[https://www.taskstream.com/ts/manager61/pwe\\_phd](https://www.taskstream.com/ts/manager61/pwe_phd)

### SYRINGA MOUNTAIN SCHOOL PROVIDES FARM TO LUNCH PROGRAM

Still in its first year of operation, the Syringa Mountain School in Hailey, ID, has forged a new community partnership that seeks to restore the traditional values of wholesome, locally grown, home cooked foods as an everyday component of a quality and affordable "school lunch" program. As school director Dr. Mary Gervase writes: "It has never been more critical or timely to teach children about the importance of fresh, local food – for their physical health, the health of our community, and the future of our planet."

Not only is the lunch program utilizing sustainably produced food, the Syringa students bring their own reusable containers and utensils on school lunch days that they then take home to wash. Additionally, any food scraps are composted right on site. To learn more:

<http://www.syringamountainschool.org/>

### HELP YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS SUBSCRIBE TO CONFLUENCE!

Share this link and let your staff, teachers and parents know how easy it is to stay connected, informed and inspired. We'll drop **Confluence** in their email box three times a year and never share an email address!

<http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/sign-up/>

### AN ENLIGHTENED ALIGNMENT

*The Waldorf and Common Core Alignment and Handbook* is available for free download on the Alliance website.

<http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/research-and-resources/>



*A colorful scene from Jennifer Tan's popular handwork workshop.*