

September 2017 Awaken Wonder - Reflect



The Anchorage
Waldorf School
Awakening Wonder

Why We Celebrate Michaelmas

Just as the year is punctuated by four seasons, annual cycles are often commemorated with four festivals. These festivals celebrate the earth's rhythms at four nodal points: winter and summer solstice, and the equinoxes of spring and fall. Rooted in ancient, historical, and cultural traditions, these seasonal celebrations are associated with four archangels. The winter solstice, around Christmas, harkens the memory of Gabriel. Summer solstice is connected to the archangel Uriel. The vernal equinox is linked to Raphael, and the autumnal equinox is related to Michael.

Michael's feast day, known as Michaelmas, is September 29, just after the beginning of fall. Historically, this date represented a time of reckoning. The summer's harvest was to be completed by Michaelmas; farmland was to be ploughed under; lands could be exchanged; new hands could be hired; and debts required payment. New leaders were often appointed during this season, and university terms begun. In many ways, autumn was recognized as a time of preparation for something new.

The idea of preparing for winter has carried this festival through centuries. Laying new ground does not only apply to physical ground, however, for Michael is most often described as a heavenly warrior, fighting against evil. This is why the archetypal picture of Michael places a sword of light in his hand, pointed at an evil dragon. He subdues the dragon, countering its advances with good deeds and love. This is why in Waldorf schools around the world, teachers tell the story of St. George and the dragon. St. George, who receives a sword from St. Michael, overpowers the dragon, restoring hope, light, and love to villagers who have lived in the dragon's shadow.

The dragon, representation of both inner and outer darkness, has also carried its presence through the ages. We are continually faced with evil thoughts and deeds to overcome. As all of nature turns inward during the fall season, so does human thinking. Just as we harvest our gardens, we also take inventory of our thought lives. We put up food, clothe ourselves with warmer layers, and heat our homes. Inwardly, our tasks turn toward reflecting, finding ways to help others, and being a presence that warms the hearts of loved ones.

We can rest assured that summer's harvest will sustain us through fall and impending winter. Our challenge lies in whether we can recognize Michael's gifts, to see us through the dark and cold times ahead. The true gifts of the Michaelmas season include the courage to stave off fear and anxiety, the strength to choose what is right, the will to act upon moral convictions, and love to spread to others, regardless of circumstances. That is why we celebrate.

Donna Levesque
Pedagogical Director



Donna is on the AWS campus Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please say hello and feel free to ask her a question.



Fireweed Preschool

Michaelmas is upon us!

As the days grow short, our hearts grow bright

St. Michael with his sword shines out against the night

We had a wonderful day outside dyeing capes red for Michaelmas with Miss Susan's class!

Way out in the orchard there is a tall tree
with the loveiest of apples that you ever did see
those apples are ripe and ready to fall
and here is a basket to gather them all
Tra la la Tra la la Tra la la la la
Tra la la Tra la la Tra la la la la

We are busy bees in the Fireweed Preschool getting ready for the fall season! If you see us we're probably preparing apples for drying, searching for the hidden star inside all our apples or making applesauce:

"Take it home, quick! Mother will make applesauce of it. Applesauce, applesauce, yum, yum!"

Miss Michele



Sunflower Kindergarten

Brave and true will I be,
Each good deed sets me free.
Each kind word makes me strong,
I will fight for the right.
I will conquer the wrong

Michaelmas time! We are enjoying hearing the story of the 'Michaelmas and the Star Children' and practicing our knight skills in circle. Today we dyed our red capes to wear for Michaelmas with Miss Michele's class! Michaelmas is the time we gather our courage to fight our own inner dragons, 'to fight for the right and conquer the wrong'. Every day is a new day to remember our kind ways and to treat others as we would wish to be treated, to care for everyone in our kindergarten family! See you at Michaelmas, Sat Sep 30th at I IAM, remember to wear red for courage!

All is well in Sunflower Kindergarten,

Miss Susan



Grade 1

Paddy the Beaver is very busy. As this delightful story unfolds in our weekly form drawing class, something strange is going on. The waters of the Laughing Brook and Smiling Pool have become a mere trickle, causing alarm among the creatures of the Green Forest.

It seems Jerry Muskrat's cousin, Paddy the Beaver, has come south to make himself a new home. That means he had to stop the waters that flowed in the Laughing Brook and Smiling Pool to make a fine new pond for himself and a comfortable home of sticks and mud.

The adventures of Paddy stories continue throughout the year in our Form Drawing class in First Grade. There are many sound reasons for this class. The simplest and perhaps most straight-forward reason is that it helps develop fine motor skills to support the development of penmanship. It strengthens eye-hand coordination, giving the eye practice at being coachman for the horses.... the hands. Form drawing works with directional changes that help educate the brain. Furthermore, it is part of the evolution of art and, as such, develops the aesthetic sense and a feeling for form.

Ms. Smith



Grade 2/3

This month we have been immersed in Lives of Saints. Saint Moling and the Fox started this study blending saintly ways with a fable-like rascally fox character.

In preparation for the Michaelmas Festival, we have visited stories of the Archangel Michael. After he cast the dragon out of heaven, the dragon still wished to conquer Michael. Saint Michael and the dragon challenged each other to build shelters that would last the winter.

In a nutshell, the dragon built a castle of rock and Saint Michael built a castle of ice. There was jealousy. They traded castles. The dragon was very angry when his new ice castle melted come spring. The dragon sank into the depths of Michael's stone mount, never to be seen again. (If only that was so.) We constructed a model of Saint Michael's Mount with Homer beach rocks, as an introduction to building shelter. The illustrations of both castles were constructed as if building from the ground up.



Next, in preparation for the Michaelmas Festival, I brought the story of the life of Saint George. Please remember to join us for the Michaelmas Festival on Saturday! The enthusiasm and excitement in Grade 2/3 is boundless around this event. They easily conquered the challenge of memorizing their fifty lines for the play!

A mini-study we have accomplished came to us in the form of our Wilderness Day at the Bog with Klaus, Laura, Ryan and Riley. So much of what they offered resonated in me as how we should conduct nature studies for our young ones. We heard stories of what can happen in quiet sit spots. We played a strenuous game of 'tail tag'. We honored the quiet by walking with wolf steps, so the animals that are about might come to visit us. We built debris shelters and unsuccessfully tried to make fire.

Meg Eggleston



Grade 4/5

We began our year sweeping over the vast continent of North America, zooming in and out, like an eagle rising and falling in the thermals. It was a busy first month filled with learning states, getting a feeling for different parts of the country, and outrageous tall tales that gently stretched the truth. We made our final garden harvest before passing the care of the garden on to Grade 2/3. Finally, we had our first overnight camping trip of the year, up to Trapper Creek to become more capable out in the woods.

Mr. Jensen



Handwork - Ms. Margaret



Grade 1. The knitting fairies brought wood balls to their needles they made.



Grade 2/3. Lions roar as they learn how to knit forms.



Grade 4/5. River of Life. Rainbows in the round.



Grade 6/7. They are knitting their socks, mittens and slippers in time for Winter

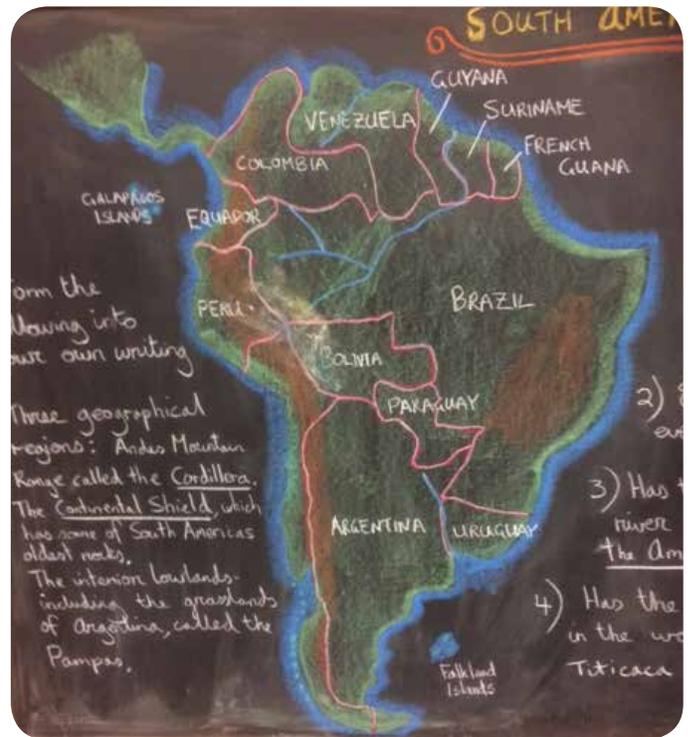
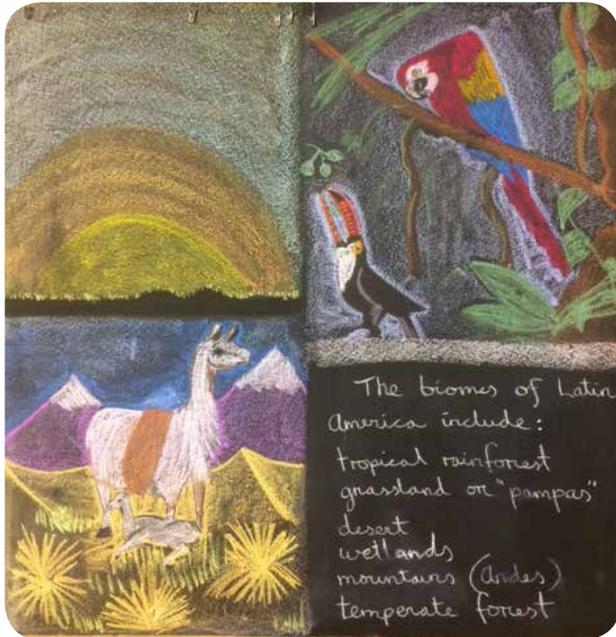


Grade 8. Learning to sew slippers and mittens. Look for their mittens at the Winter Craft Faire!

Grade 6/7

The beginning of our year is a time of excitement, wonder and joy - the leaves are golden and our class feels golden as well. Exploring the variety of Latin American landscapes, animals and amazing plant life that shows such variation. We are not able to define it in a single sentence. As a class we have sensed the wonder of ancient cultures that left behind traces of their life story. We have wondered what our life stories will leave behind and what others will feel is important when they look from afar at us? Our Wilderness Experience this year was more extensive than ever before and has given our children an incredible base to begin their year with. Onward we go - facing our fears and growing in strength together with St. Michaelmas as our guide!

Ms. Herda



Russian - Ms. Burton

"Унылая пора... Очей очарованье!..." ("A melancholy time... So charming to the eye!") as Aleksandr Pushkin described fall in one of his poems. This time of the year is truly charming to the eye but not melancholy in our Russian class. Everybody is very enthusiastic and busy. We've been learning new things and reviewing material we've learned. First Graders are working on greetings, colors and numbers. Grade 2/3 is making their own alphabet books, mastering counting 1-100, learning new verses and songs. Younger students enjoy story time. We've read some interesting stories and tales as well as poems. The most interesting part for the children is when we use puppets or wooden figurines to stage some of those tales. Grade 4/5 is working on their "Book of Poems" where they write down all the verses they've learned in younger grades. They also learned the differences in calendars, and reviewed days of the week and months. Older grades were introduced to the biographies and masterpieces of Aleksandr Pushkin and Sergey Esenin. Both poets created lots of famous beautiful poems about seasons that we have been reading and enjoying.



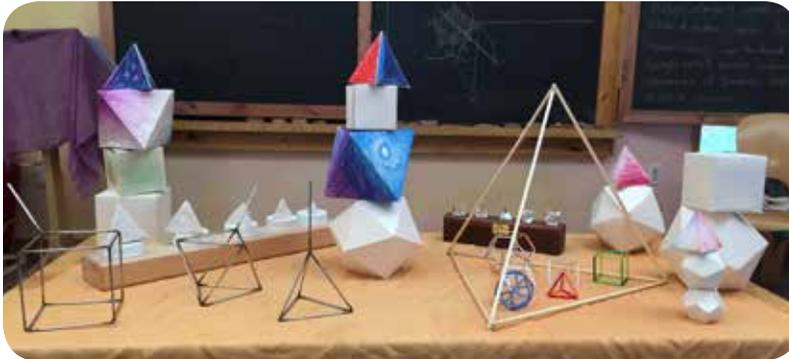
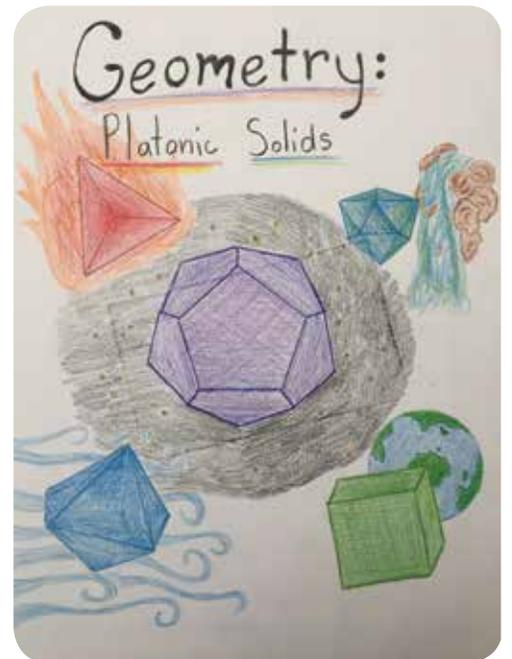
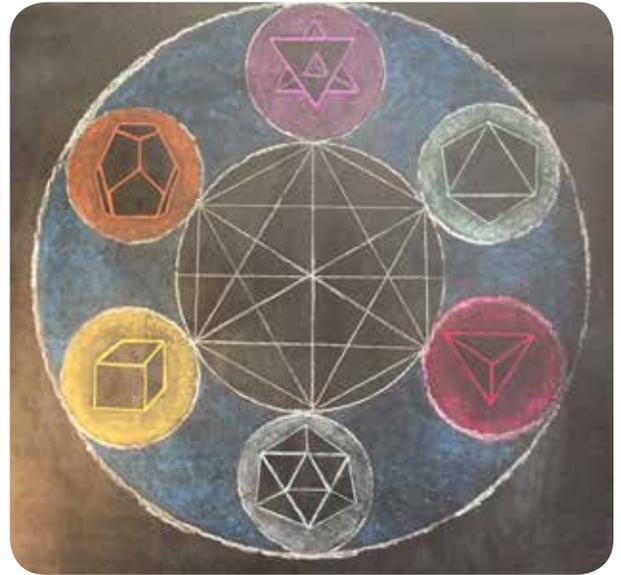
Grade 8

The days have been filled with community building, diving deeply into our academics, forming our collective “we,” and settling into our own rhythms of learning. It is such a joy teaching grade 8 and I love seeing the possibilities for the children. We have just finished up our first block: Geometry and the Study of the Platonic Solids. Together, we have followed how Plato expounded a “theory of everything” based explicitly on these five solids. Where Plato concluded that they must be the fundamental building blocks—the atoms—of nature and made a connection between five polyhedra and four essential (classical) elements of the universe;

tetrahedron - fire, cube - earth, octahedron - air, icosahedron - water, and dodecahedron with its twelve pentagons was associated with the heavens and the twelve constellations.

We have worked to learn how to construct these solids using previously known geometry skills, we have explored the universal elements and utilized new geometry skill, precision, and will. The general ease and comfort that came from constructing 3-dimensional tetrahedra, was long gone and past by the time we constructed our dodecahedrons. The students continue to work with care, to ask questions, to support one another and to strive toward their greatest potential. I feel honored to be with these lovely children; they are full of spirit, heart and life. I am grateful for the loving and kind ways they have come to embrace me as their teacher this year.

Warm regards,
Ms. Klein



Middle School Chorus - Ms. Starr

Our middle school chorus is off to a good start. We are busy exploring what we can do with our changing voices and learning new ways to sing together with both old and new music. It is an interesting realization that sometimes what looks like the easiest part is actually one of the hardest to sing!

We are also off into a world of new discoveries in recorder as many students are learning a new type of recorder. It is a lot of work, and some practice would definitely be helpful, but we are enjoying the new depth of sound that we can produce on the lower recorders.

Fencing - Grades 6/7/8 - Ms. Starr

The sixth, seventh, and eight graders have an an intriguing start to their year with a unit in fencing, or modern sword fighting. They have learned history as well as some basic foot and blade work, and have greatly enjoyed the chance to try out their new skills not only against each other, but against their teacher as well.

Woodworking - Mr. Wood

Our woodworking classes 5th thru 8th are off to a great start! 5th grade has charged into the hard work of working wood with the enthusiasm and joy that is resplendent in this age. Grade 6-7 stuttered out of the gate, but has settled in and are diligently working to produce a great project. The 8th grade class stepped into the shop ready to work, and are working hard to do the remarkably high level of work these students are capable of.

Woodworking is such a different exercise than most of modern life, it requires great effort and persistence over an extended period to see results. I feel honored to be allowed to share this important value with these children and look forward to every single class.



Beginnings of grade 8 project

Movement - Mr. Unterberger

It is wonderful to come back from my summers in the interior and return to your joyful students at AWS! A huge note of gratitude to our wonderful Mrs. Spencer and Miss Starr for working with the children this past month. We have just started moving together as of last week, and we are taking advantage of the nice fall weather and playing outside while the grass still shows.

Our Movement goals for the year will again include a space for the children to breath out each week in physical play and challenges, bring balance, flexibility and strengthening to their physical bodies, bring a greater sense of awareness into their bodies and the space around them, and foster respect and confidence in themselves and others through cooperative games and competitive games (when they are 5th grade and older).

At Waldorf we call this part of the curriculum Movement, where you may find it being called Physical Education or Gym class in other schools. One of the blessings behind the term is that Movement embodies all physical activities that can help awaken the forces for learning in the students and help hone skills that that will nourish the children's development. Our Movement curriculum embodies and includes Boethmer Gymnastics, Spatial Dynamics, yoga, circle games, rope skipping, hop scotch, tag, ball skills, skiing, ice skating, Native Youth Olympics, modern dance, folk dance, running, long jump, wrestling, discus, javelin, archery, circus arts, and even fencing in the middle school! We are so fortunate to be able to delve into different disciplines that may not even be available in mainstream schools.

If anyone in the community has questions about Movement or has any passion in a sport or skills they would like to share, please feel free to contact me at any time. I look forward to seeing everyone outside!



Golden Cottage

Meet our aftercare team you have been seeing on campus!

September highlights



Chili Cook off winners



Flower Ceremony



Grade 2/3 made a shelter in the bog



Grade 2/3 learning to make a friction fire



First Fire



Ask Mr. Jensen how many tries it took him!



String of Life



Storytelling by Pashu was a favorite

AWS Maintenance

Saturday October 7 is our first work session from 10 - 12 pm. Dress in layers, we will be outdoors! We will move wood, gravel, hang shovels, prepare ice melt buckets and clear the gutters in preparation for Jack Frost.



Community News

Wednesday October 4, Community Enrichment Talk, 6 pm potluck, 6:30 Artic Entry Style Talks with our faculty going classroom to classroom hearing a story from each grade!

Saturday October 7, Torin Finser is back doing a talk at Winterberry, 6 pm

Presenting: How Parents and Teachers Work Together
Toward a Future Worthy of our Children

The Annual Sourdough Pancake Breakfast, Saturday, Nov. 4, 9-11 am in the AWS school hall.

Hosted by the alumni Giffen family of four, this is a popular AWS fundraiser and social event, serving all-you-can-eat Alaskan sourdough pancakes with fresh berries, sausage, bacon, etc. in a gourmet setting for \$25/ plate. All proceeds go to the school. Tickets available. Please e-mail clobruce@alaska.net if you would like to join the feast.

Mira Starr our chorus teacher is offering classes in harp, cello, piano and music literacy (literacy is required for piano students). She teaches students 1st grade and up, including adults. She teaches mostly at AWS, but homes are possible as well, although there might be an extra fee. If you are interested, please contact Wendy at office@waldorfak.org or Mira at mira.starr@waldorfak.org

Please sign up for **Amazon Smile and Fred Meyer's Rewards** for our schools. This is the easiest way to fundraise when you are buying groceries and shopping online!

School Store is having a huge sale on books and other items. Please stop in the front lobby and take a peak at the 50% off items. We are also starting to get new items in for the upcoming holidays. Be on the look out for wooden animals, local candles, baskets and special handmade treats from Craft Guild.

If you have some news that you want to share, please send it with Wendy at office@waldorfak.org with your information. We are compiling a community resource list.

Help Needed

Parent Council is starting to plan for the following events:

Dec 9, 2017 - Waldorf Winter Craft Faire & May 12, 2018 - May Faire

The more parents can contribute to developing these great events, the better they will be. If you would like to be part of the organizing teams, please let David Turner know by email at davidturner@gci.net or call 713- 725-8283.

We are building a list of requests for tables at the Winter Craft Faire. Space is limited, so if you would like to display and sell your crafts please let David know ASAP.

Gala Committee is also looking for people to join and help celebrate this early Spring auction. Please let Wendy know if you are interested at office@waldorfak.org.

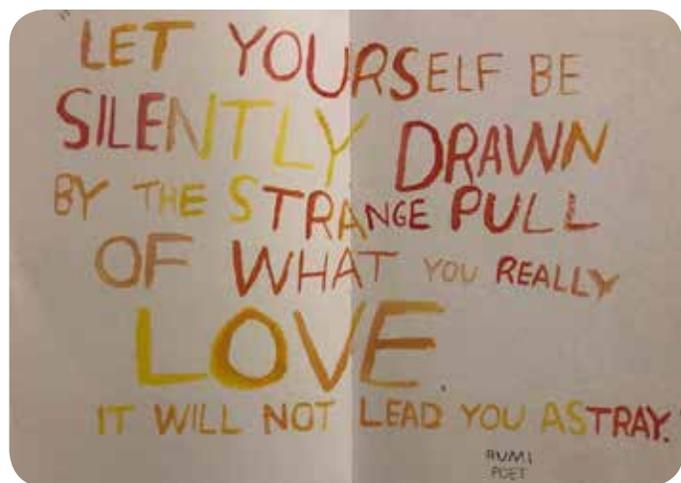
Dear AWS Community,

It has been an amazing start to our 2017-18 school year. We were busy this summer getting ready for the start of the new school year. We have installed bathrooms in the Pre-K classroom, put new carpeting in 4 cabins and new laminate in the Great Hall, replaced the kitchen sink with a beautiful stainless steel three compartment commercial sink, installed new lighting in the school entry way, lazured an early childhood classroom, and spruced things up by re-arranging and decluttering. If you haven't yet had the opportunity stop in and check it out.

We received our Municipal Child Care License the week before school started. We are now able to offer an extended day to the early childhood program. We were also able to collaborate with Winterberry and take over their aftercare program. This is a great way to get to know Winterberry families and also to add an additional income stream for our school.

The faculty and staff have all been busy expanding their Waldorf knowledge base and fine tuning their skills. Donna Levesque has returned home to AWS as our new pedagogical director and brings with her years of Waldorf experience. Shannon Herda and Mira Starr graduated from Antioch with their Waldorf Teaching Certificates this summer. I completed my one-year Waldorf Administration and Leadership Development training this month. Maria Klein attended renewal training for 8th grade in California. Shannon attended 6/7th grade renewal training in New Hampshire. Tomas Jensen completed his online training for 4/5th grade renewal courses. Meg Eggleston completed 2/3rd renewal training online, Kathleen Smith completed online courses in How to Understand Great Art and The World's Greatest Paintings, Susan Barnes completed trainings for early childhood trainings in Canada and Washington. Michele Poplarchik, our Pre-K teacher is Lifeways trained. Dohn Wood has expanded our wood working tool box. Svetlana Burton has brainstormed with the grades teachers in improving the learning curve for new students and made herself available this summer so students could keep their Russian momentum going. Matt Unterberger is excited to be back in movement full time and open to all the possibilities in which we can utilize his many other talents. Margaret Mackie (our handwork teacher) completed online training for working with the grades as a specialty teacher. Mary Schallert has tweaked the Orchestra program with a beginning and an advanced Orchestra class. Our 5 early childhood assistants and aftercare providers are all in the process of completing an online Lifeways Training Course. Wendy Turner and I completed the year-long Building Bridges Foundation Studies that we hosted at our school. Maggie Heide has been become our tour guide extraordinaire and enrollment expert. Bruni Benner is sharing her love of our school through the South Saturday Market, Spot light articles on Facebook, and flyers throughout Anchorage. We have 18 new families thanks to our enrollment coordinator and outreach specialist. Laura Pannone has been busy learning our new TADS programs for payment agreements and enjoying the efficiencies of Quickbooks Online. We have a talented group of faculty and staff dedicated to bringing our children and our families the best Waldorf experiences possible! I am honored to work with so many people who truly love our Waldorf School.

Stacy Durych
Executive Director



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