

December 2017 Awaken Wonder Peace



The Anchorage
Waldorf School

Awakening Wonder



- chalk drawing by visiting teacher Ms. Anca

Gift of Time

Nature lies stillest at this time of year in the northern hemisphere, as we approach the winter solstice. Stripped of leaves, trees appear lifeless. Sounds become amplified, since fewer of nature's appendages dangle to muffle and absorb noise. Snow creaks underfoot. Waters freeze motionless. Sweet smells of summer and fall give way to the pungent odor of evergreens, whether freshly cut or crackling in a warming fire. When the winter sun's warmth is lacking, we humans speed up our movement, creating our own, inner heat.

Another phenomenon compels us to speed up: the holiday season. No sooner have we finished Thanksgiving dinner than we find ourselves compiling lists for gift-giving. We become catapulted into a frenzy of acquiring material goods, either for creating a special something for loved ones, or to wrap and prepare for mailing to those far away. We are driven by numbers: the countdown to Chanukah or Christmas, the number of rehearsals left until a holiday performance, the tally of goods to bake, the deadline by which packages must be mailed, the dates of parties, the budget allotted for gifts, and the time we are to check in for holiday travel. The nearer we get to Christmas day, it seems, the greater the stress we feel. At the time of year when family is paramount to all other relationships, we are often so caught up in a whirlwind of activity, that we become least available to those we love.

My oldest brother, in an effort to regain quality time and render the holidays more meaningful, one year declared a non-commercial Christmas for his family. The only purchases to be made, he decreed, were those for raw materials required in fashioning a gift. Then he, his wife, and three children drew the name of the one and only family member for whom each would make a gift. All of them devoted such time and attention to their endeavors that their creations became family treasures: a hand knit sweater, a leather tool pouch, a coffee table. Quality replaced quantity, and their holidays were marked by a heightened sense of anticipation, relaxation, and love.

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Gift of Time Continued

When reflecting on our most cherished memories, aren't they all related to time? The time we did this or that...the time we shared with a loved one...when we had a wonderful time with friends or family. How can we harness time to regain a sense of balance during the holiday season? Instead of spending cash, investing in the financial side of Christmas, we can dedicate our efforts to spending time, paying the most attention to our families. Our most deeply rooted traditions probably center around this time of year. Since we are entirely free to create the rituals that hold the most meaning for us, we can begin to choose time-honoring traditions.

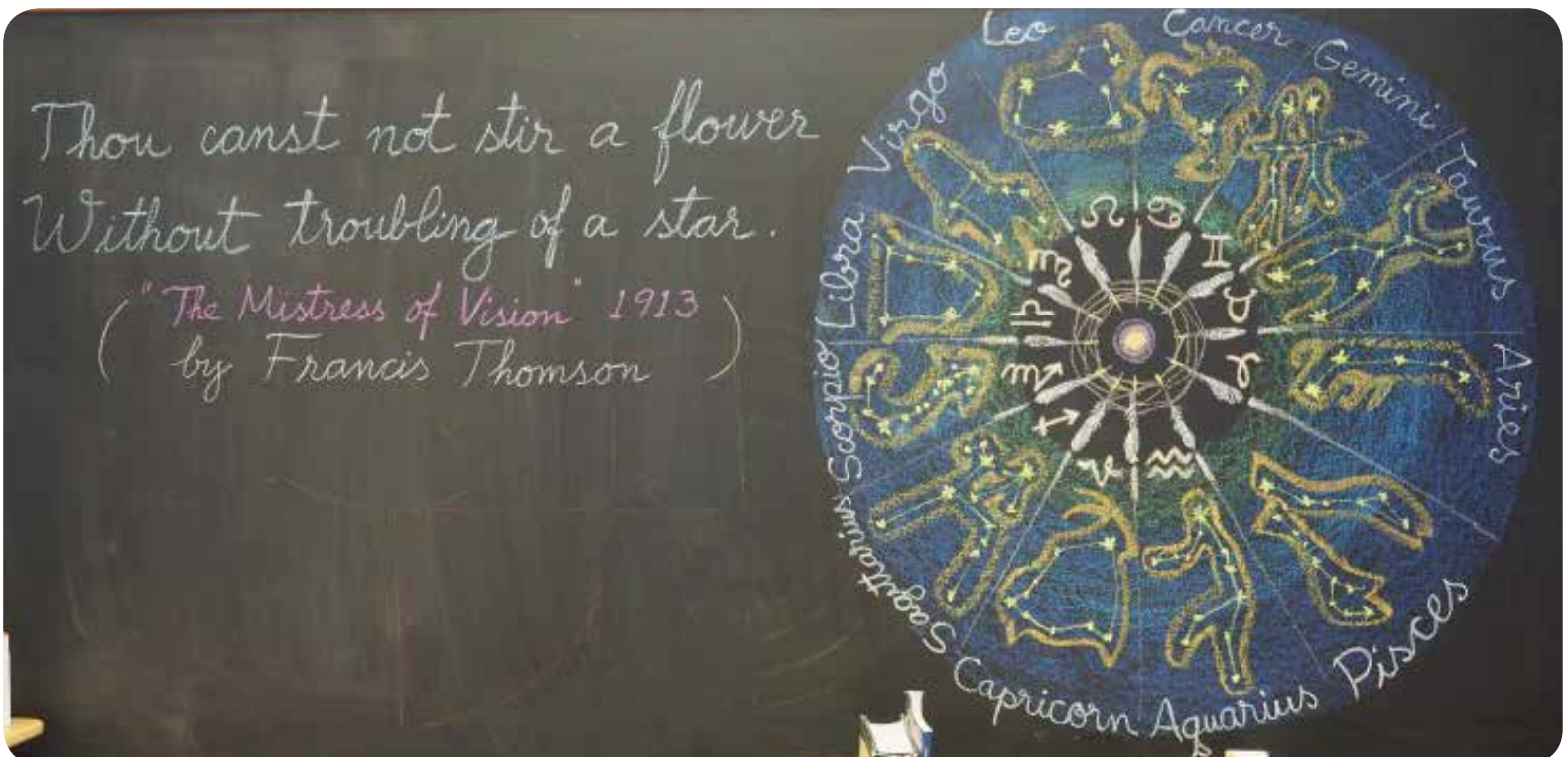
I was fortunate to have a mother who, for Christmas, knitted all of her children and grandchildren a new pair of mittens or socks: nearly 100 individual mittens or socks every year! She could be seen knitting for months ahead of Christmas day. This has now become tradition for me and my own daughters, as we knit throughout the holiday season. Where I broke from tradition was in the opening of gifts. As children, we were handed out gifts from beneath the tree and, after a flurry of torn wrapping paper, had simultaneously diminished the pile of presents in minutes. Weeks and weeks of anticipation ended in a flash. Little, if any, time was taken to savor the gift, let alone the moment.

With my own children, opening presents typically lasts until after supper. We all look on as each family member opens a gift. If it is a game, we often decide to play it right then and there. We take frequent breaks during the opening of gifts to eat, or assemble pieces to a new jigsaw puzzle, or take a long walk, donning a new article of clothing. The true gift of the season is holding a space to be completely present and to treasure each other's company.

Children crave parents' full attention. They long to hear stories: funny stories about relatives, stories about their own births, stories that begin with "I remember when...". Memories are forged by what we do with our children and the traditions we build. Childhood is the only time in our lives that we are free of obligations. By giving our children days devoid of hustle and bustle, free from media or electronics--by allowing our children time in the quiet of nature, to enjoy a warm drink inside a snow fort—we give ourselves the same gifts. Enjoy the peace and stillness of the winter season. Let winter's snow and ice serve as messengers, asking us to slow down and heighten our senses. Abundantly, we can give to both ourselves and our children a gift that can never be bought, but can always be made: the gift of time.

~Donna Levesque
Pedagogical Director

**Please take in a glimpse of our campus in late November and December.
Happy Holidays!**





Fireweed Preschool and Sunflower Kindergarten





Grade I



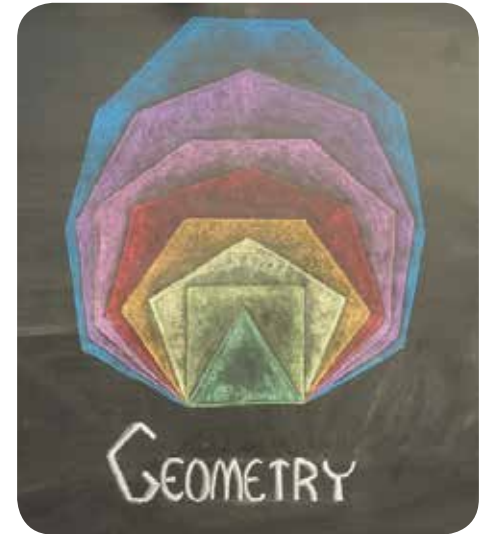


Grade 2/3



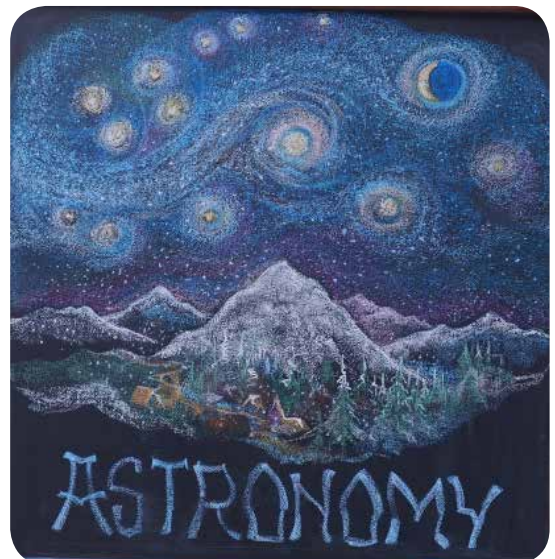


Grade 4/5





Grade 6/7



Grade 8



Craft for Charity to benefit AWAIC Shelter



Grandparent's Day

