

November 2017 Awaken Wonder Gratitude



The Anchorage
Waldorf School
Awakening Wonder

ADVENT SEASON

The first Sunday after Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the Advent season. Advent, meaning “coming” or “arrival”, has traditionally represented four weeks of preparation for Christmas. In many cultures, this preparation involved light, and Waldorf schools worldwide celebrate the season with an Advent Spiral, sometimes called Advent Garden.

Advent celebrations take many forms in various parts of the world. The Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah around this time of year with the lighting of the menorah, to remember the days of oil miraculously burning as their forefathers sought to reclaim the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. A much more recent celebration, Kwanzaa, derived from the Swahili “matunda ya kwanza” involves the remembrance of principles in African culture, commemorated with the lighting of candles during the month of December. Literally translated, “matunda ya kwanza” means first fruit, and this cultural celebration includes a large harvest feast. Each year, Mexicans celebrate Las Posadas, as groups carry candles and sing at the doorsteps of neighbors during a reenactment of Mary’s and Joseph’s search for a place to birth the Christ child. A melding of Russian Orthodox and Yup’ik culture in Alaska has brought the tradition of starring, the twirling of candles set in the form of a star that represents the star of Bethlehem. This custom takes place during Slaviq, when Orthodox Alaska natives feast and sing carols, including songs of peace to their deceased. In Sweden, the feast of Santa Lucia traces the story of a young girl who brought nourishment to persecuted Christians, hiding in catacombs. Lucia, meaning “light”, wore a crown of four candles, lighting her way and freeing her hands to deliver food. This feast, and the Advent spiral, traveled from Europe to North America, where Waldorf schools have carried on both traditions.

The burning of Advent candles stems from Germany, perhaps dating as far back as the 6th century. Advent wreaths were fashioned with a ring of evergreen boughs along which four candles were placed, each representing one of the four weeks until Christmas. Many Waldorf teachers create Advent wreaths for their classrooms, reciting different verses for the four weeks, each candle representing earth, plants, animals, and humans respectively. For Advent spirals, or gardens, much larger rings of coniferous boughs are laid in the form of a spiral, with a center candle that serves as a source of Light for all who enter.

Students walk the Advent spiral during the darkest part of the year. This is also the time of year during which we are most materialistically drawn. The Advent spiral, I find, provides the perfect antidote. Sitting in a candlelit room, with the pungent smell of spruce and hemlock wafting in the air, and the strumming of harp strings holding us in a state of utter peace, children and adults alike are afforded a wondrous gift of this season. We are left free to think of the spiral as representing either the garden of Eden or the bounty of our forest. We may think of the center candle as the Light of the world, or as the sun, giving light to all. What serves us well to remember is that for our children, this is the quintessential time of year. If only for a brief moment, let us recognize the profundity of the Advent spiral’s bringing joy to our children’s hearts and light to their eyes. To revel in the peace of that moment is to carry your light into the dark of winter’s night.

I wish you peace and joy during these next four weeks,

Donna Levesque
Pedagogical Director



Fireweed Preschool

The sunlight fast is dwindling
My little lamp needs kindling
Its beam shines far in darkest night
Dear lantern guard me with your light...

Fireweed preschoolers have been preparing for The Lantern Walk. They have each painted and oiled their lanterns, finger-knitted handles and adorned them with beads! Oh my! Each lantern unique and beautiful holding its own spark from Father Sun's rays.

Miss Michele



Sunflower Kindergarten

Advent, Advent, a candle burns.
Advent, Advent, a candle burns.
First one, then two, then three, then four
Then stands the Star Child at the door.

The Advent Spiral is a tradition for children in the younger grades at the Anchorage Waldorf School.

The room will be darkened and filled with a mood of wonder and quiet anticipation. Evergreen boughs are laid out to create a spiral with a lit candle in the center. Interspersed along the edges of the spiral path are golden stars twinkling like a starry night. Beautiful harp music accompanies the experience, helping to create a special mood.

Each child takes a turn to slowly walk the spiral, holding a red apple with a small unlit beeswax candle inserted into it. As the child reaches the center, he or she lights the candle and then retraces his or her steps out of the spiral. On the return, the child places the apple and candle on one of the golden stars, bringing forth the Light.

Child after child has a turn, and more and more lit candles grace the spiral as the room begins to glow.

As you prepare for Thanksgiving, and perhaps get your Christmas tree, please remember to save the trimmings for our evergreen spiral. You may place them by the main building's kitchen entrance.

Blessings,
Miss Susan



Grade 1

Our eager first graders finished their second language block of the school year. They began with an introduction to the letters by way of stories, poems, songs, riddles, speech exercises, drawing pictures, writing the letters, and shaping letters with beeswax. They practiced writing their letters while hearing and identifying the sounds of the letters in words, which is an initial form of dictation.

Currently, the children are busily working to gather jewels for the Gnome King's Treasure House. In this math block, they will be helping four very unique gnomes. Trina Times is yellow as a candle flame. She lights up hidden places so as to find more treasures, at least 2 times more than 12 jewels per day. Peter Plus, who is green and greedy likes to think: $3 + 3 + 3 + 3 = 12$. While he adds up what he finds, he wants more and more and more, not only for the King but for himself. He fills his pockets so that they rattle as he approaches the King. Mini Minus is blue and ragged and often careless. She has holes in her dress and holes in the sack she carries. When the jewels she's carrying fall out of her bag, she often wails, "Raggedy blue what will I do?" Warm-hearted and red, the fourth gnome is Danny Divide. When he hears the wailing of Mini Minus, he hurries up to her and says, "With you I'll share the jewels I bear."

Ms. Smith



Grade 2/3

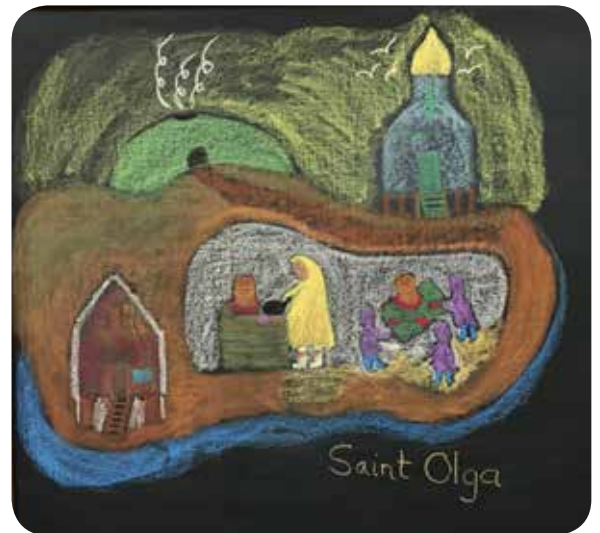
It is hard to believe that it is time to write a new entry into this newsletter. Time flies!

Grade 2/3 entered into our second Saint/Enlightened Human Being block. We explored the story of a Yup'ik woman, Saint Olga, whose path to official sainthood is in keeping with the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church. Her sainthood is alive and well. She was a talented midwife and healer from Klethwuk, AK. She lived by the rules of her village except when she could not. For instance, when a neighbor child was not fed well, and was hungry, Olga would break the rules and feed the child potato pancakes. Saint Olga was also an accomplished knitter and skin sewer. She provided warm hats and gloves to those in her village and beyond. Her children learned her ways and continued to serve those in need.

Our class then studied the life of Martin. At 10 years old he was interested in the Christian ways of his parents' servants. As a 12 year-old he begged to become a hermit, but his father was not willing. At 15 years old he had to enlist in the Roman Cavalry, and as a 17 year-old soldier, he met the beggar at the gate.

On another note, we have a scientific observation study in progress. "The White Box Investigation" has turned into "What is in the Incubator?" Today it was revealed that the 'little black wormy things', which had been identified as caterpillars by many, are real and true caterpillars. They are silk worms. The story of The Silk Empress was told.

Our class has been gifted. We have hosted and helped with three of Grade 6/7's Knighting Projects. Skylar created a building project for us. He wanted to teach Grade 2/3 how to make birdhouses and he did. In a 45-minute lesson, we all had a birdhouse to take home for spring nesting possibilities! That was amazing. Many thanks to Skylar and his dad, Chuck! Then Carson invited us to help him create a 'Wall of Gratitude'. I look forward to seeing his art piece that will be on view in the Great Hall soon. The third project was Aubrey's documentation of the importance of the Baxter Bog to AWS. Aubrey accompanied our class on two of our bog walks and documented in photographs our adventures and our journaling about nature observations. It is such a wonderful thing to see these multi-aged collaborations. Thank you, Ms. Herda, for these opportunities for connection between our student groups!



Grade 4/5

If you look out in your backyard, you will likely see several different kinds of birds. They live in the same basic habitat, so why are they so different? This is an example of the questions we've been asking ourselves in our Zoology block the past few weeks. We have been observing and wondering what makes each bird really good at what it does, looking at its feet, its beak, its shape. We've talked about the bald eagle, the Harlequin duck, the raven, the Rufous hummingbird and the black-capped chickadee. This block has been a wonderful science block for us, full of drawing, writing and, most importantly, questions.

Mr. Jensen



Grade 6/7

Class 6/7 has transitioned from the beauty and clarity of geometry to the darkness of medieval times. The accomplishments of geometry have made way for the fall of the Roman Empire and the Dark Ages that followed. The rise of the Islamic religion and the rise of Christianity are also being considered. These subjects fit with the students' idealism and the beginnings of their venturing into the unknown world to discover what will become their personal quests.

In conjunction with curriculum background, students have pursued their knighting projects. Each student has been asked to consider what new skill they would like to develop or gain. Then, they have been asked to consider their community and how they can give back an aspect of themselves to the people around them. In some cases, this means looking out into the wider world and helping or contributing to an organization such as the Anchorage Food Bank. In other cases it means helping in our very own community by sharing a gift with a lower class or working to improve an aspect of our school campus with students, we are enjoying gifts: exploring our connection with our local bog (improving skills of photography, composition and nature study); building a birdhouse with class 2/3 and the class 4/5 greenhouse tool shed, (improving skills of measurement, building and teaching); planning and beginning a sustainable recycling program for our school, (improving skills of outreach, communication, project planning); creating a comic strip for individual children in class 1, (improving skills in drawing, communication, empathy and encouragement); teaching mathematics to class 4/5, (improving skills in communication, mathematical knowledge, and management) and too many others to list.

The children are inwardly preparing for the stepping through of a threshold of development. This threshold is symbolized by the orchestration of their knighting ceremony. In a world where adolescence is not being celebrated as often, our children gain much from this inward preparation, giving of themselves, and a community that takes time to celebrate their gifts.

We are also blessed with a little Waldorf gnome who has helped me with some lovely blackboard drawings for our students and planning for the knighting ceremony. Ms. Anca Harrington is an accomplished Waldorf teacher who is visiting Anchorage for three months with her husband, offering to help while she is here. I have greatly appreciated her gifts.

With warmth,
Shannon Herda



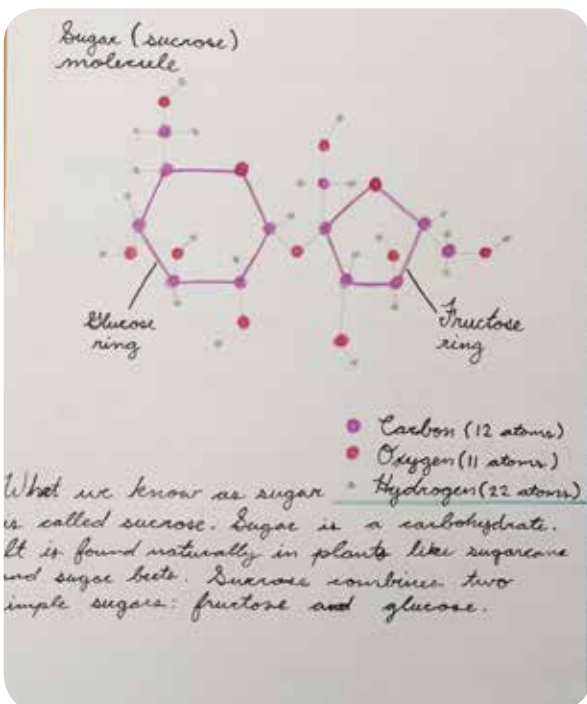
Grade 8

This month we are studying plant and organic chemistry. In this block, our focus is on the organic processes which transform plants into substances useful for humans - mainly food. We study the processes that take food from its raw state to its individual nutritional components: sugars, starches, lipids, and proteins. These processes occur both outside of us in the form of ripening, processing, and cooking as well as inside of us, in the form of metabolism.

These days, the eighth graders are ready for technical challenges in chemistry: working with testing procedures used to detect the presence of sugar, starch, protein, and fat; microscope work to "see" these components; lab reports to document our experiments and experiences; and cooking to identify how these parts and pieces combine to make wholesome foods and meals. In addition, we have taken up a morning yoga practice to highlight the need for balance in diet, nutrition and exercise. The calming of this practice allows us to step forward each day with greater consciousness and greater understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

It is truly a GREAT time to be in grade 8. We are really enjoying ourselves.

Warm regards,
Ms. Klein



November 14, 2017

Properties of Carbohydrates: Sugar, Starch, and Cellulose

	Glucose	Fructose	Lactose	Lactose	Starch	Cellulose
Type	monosaccharide	monosaccharide	disaccharide	disaccharide	polysaccharide	polysaccharide
Color	white	white	white	white	white	white
Texture	powdery	granular	granular	powdery	squandy	n/a
Quotient	3	5	4	1	1	n/a
Shape						

Orchestra - Mary Schallert



Handwork - Ms. Margaret



Grade 1. The beginnings of flute bags.



Grade 2/3. Pride of lions.



Grade 4/5. Completed wet- and needle-felted Russian book covers.

Grade 6/7.
A soon-to-be marionette.



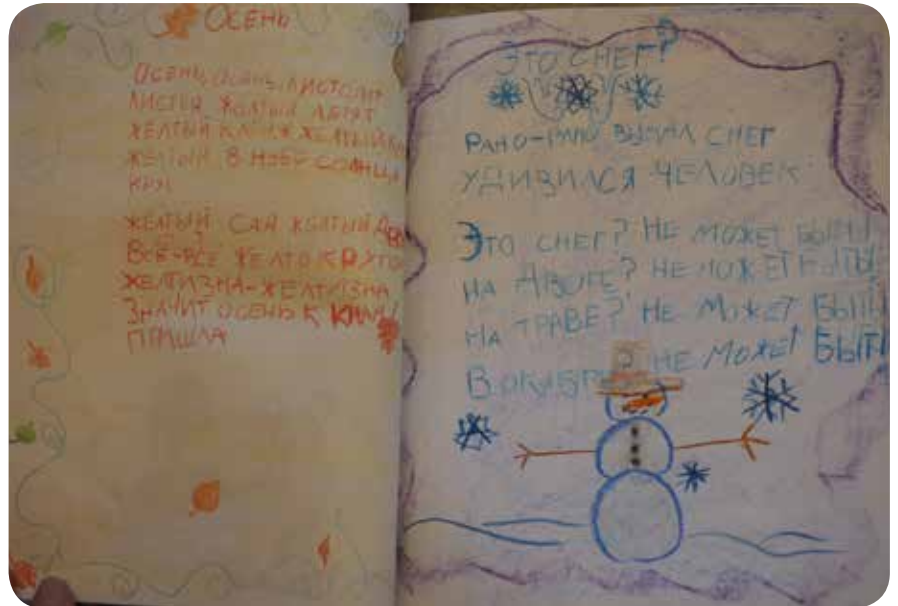
Grade 8. Kuspuks are starting to take shape.

Middle School Music - Ms. Starr

As we grow more confident in our separate parts, we are beginning to focus on differences in style that music offers us. For instance, there is a vast difference between the raw energy of Beethoven and the almost ethereal purity of a Gregorian chant. Exploring this contrast takes us deeper into the true power of music, and its ability to capture the soul.

Russian - Ms. Burton

Ms. Burton has been in Russia for a few weeks with her family, helping her mother to recover from surgery. She has been in our thoughts and we look forward to her return. The community raised over \$650 to help Svetlana with her unexpected travel expenses by hosting a pumpkin carving and fairy tale walk in October. Below are inside pages from the grade 4/5 Russian books.



Woodworking - Mr. Wood



Movement - Mr. Unterberger

It has been wonderful moving outside with students during this transition into winter. After the Thanksgiving break, we will move inside for a tumbling and gymnastics block. We will be skiing and/or skating in the New Year, and while the school does have some gear available, especially in the younger grades, any donations of hockey style, insulated ice skates and nordic style cross-country skis and boots would be greatly appreciated.

Blessings to all,

Mr. Unterberger



November highlights



Grade 2/3 enjoying the cold.



Sledding hill in action.



Grade 8 is cooking up chemistry experiments in their cabin.



Waxwings pay a visit to Grade 4/5 for their zoology block.



Fireweed Preschool having a warm snack. Looks like Monday - rice day.



Grade 8 making holiday wreaths to raise funds for their 8th grade trip.

AWS Maintenance

Handy Helpers will resume in January.

I have appreciated all the offers to help on campus and I am looking forward to starting some projects in the new year.

Amanda





Craft for Charity

To benefit AWAIC Shelter

Make crafts and fill bags of much needed supplies for women and children at AWAIC. This event is co-sponsored by Grade 2/3 and the Craft Guild.

Experience the joy of giving to others! All are welcome.

Saturday, December 2
10 am - 12 pm, Great Hall

Donations are being collected in the front lobby.
Supplies needed for the shelter include:

- New or gently used bath towels
- Deodorant
- Used cellphones
- New unopened vitamins
- New women's underwear in all sizes
- New or gently used comfortable footwear
- New or gently used women's t-shirts
- New or gently used women's elastic waist pants (sweatpants, yoga pants, etc)
- Fresh Produce
- Milk and eggs with at least one week until the expiration date
- Gift Cards: Walmart, Fred Meyer, Target, Carrs/Safeway



The Anchorage
Waldorf
School

Awakening Wonder

The Anchorage Waldorf School's
Second Annual

Winter Craft Faire

Come shop for local crafts, art, baked goods and more,
with festive music by local musicians and
a craft making table for children

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Saturday, December 9
9:00 am - 3:00 pm

...

The Anchorage Waldorf School
3250 Baxter Road 333-9062 WaldorfAK.org



lady poppins