

# January 2018 Awaken Wonder Seek



The Anchorage  
**Waldorf School**

*Awakening Wonder*

## WONDER

One of the common misconceptions about Waldorf education is that science is not taught in the primary grades. The curriculum chart for Waldorf education indicates that lessons in zoology begin in the fourth grade, followed by botany, physics, chemistry, physiology and anatomy in fifth through eighth grades respectively. No explicit science instruction is indicated for kindergarten through third grade, an omission that makes it incumbent upon lower grades teachers to explain how they teach science.

What fascinates me most about this misconception of science instruction is that many Waldorf graduates go on to pursue degrees in scientific fields. One look at the careers of AWS graduates would corroborate this. Why? As with so many areas of the Waldorf curriculum, differences lie more in the realm of how content is given, and when, rather than in the content itself. The “how” and “when” of Waldorf education, as well as the “why”, all relate to Rudolf Steiner’s model of child development.

Steiner recognized that children in kindergarten and the primary grades are naturally instilled with a sense of wonder. Intrinsicly, they exhibit curiosity, admiration, and awe. Teachers foster the sense of wonder by leaving many questions the students ask largely unanswered. Questions such as, “Why does the moon follow me in the car?” do not need a scientific explanation. Especially with so much information at our fingertips, why would we keep children from knowing these answers? The reason is simple. To answer these types of questions is to kill curiosity. Once an answer is known, the investigative process ends. The child, despite lacking the cognition to understand, feels as though s/he knows the answer. The child no longer wonders.

So how do we answer children’s questions? We can acknowledge that it is indeed strange that the moon does this. We can say, “Isn’t that puzzling?” Or we can simply say, “I wonder?” These responses leave the children free to think further, to seek an explanation. If Albert Einstein had not pursued his passion for inquiry, he would not have formulated his theory of relativity. If Louis Pasteur had not further observed the angle of planes of light, he would not have discovered the structures of microbes responsible for souring milk and wines. Had Marie Curie’s unanswered question in regard to uranium rays not been investigated, she would not have seen the possibility of making x-rays. Where did these physicists and chemists gain their intellectual curiosities? By keenly observing: a crucial step in the scientific method.

Waldorf students begin their science studies by observing and experimenting in nature. Kindergartners’ and primary grades students’ questions pertaining to natural history, the earth, and the laws of physics, are continuously tested on the playground, at Baxter Bog, or on Cheney Lake. The early grades curriculum is replete with stories of natural history, told for instruction in form drawing, painting, or beeswax. By the time students begin their study of animals in the fourth grade, they have in actuality spent four years honing observation skills and testing basic hypotheses. More importantly, they have been allowed to wonder. If their yearning for answers has not been curtailed by Google, if they have been encouraged to imagine, and if their experiences have led them to discover answers for themselves, their sense of wonder will never cease.

~Donna Levesque  
Pedagogical Director



## Fireweed Preschool

One fine, cold, January morning, Old Gnome went out to look at his garden. Everything was covered with snow, and icicles hung from the roof of his garden shed.

“Oh bother!”, grumbled Old Gnome, “it will be too long before I can start digging in this garden!” He kicked the snow wishing it was already spring...

Ms. Michele



## Sunflower Kindergarten

Trees are bare, everywhere  
Earth is brown and skies are grey  
Yet one bird can be heard  
On the darkest day  
Ask his name and he'll reply  
Cocking up a roguish eye  
Chickadee, chickadee  
Chickadee dee dee!



It is so lovely to be back in the classroom with all the amazing little beings, who are so joyful to be back among their friends! We have been having such a fun time in circle: very joyful and sweet! I feel well rested from our holiday break, and inspired again by re-reading Kim John Payne's book, *Simplicity Parenting*, which contains such wisdom. I'm looking forward to an enriching discussion in our parent meeting. In this day of information overload, we are the 'filters' for our children. Let's give them the gift of time to unfold into the special little beings they are!

All is well in Sunflower Kindergarten,

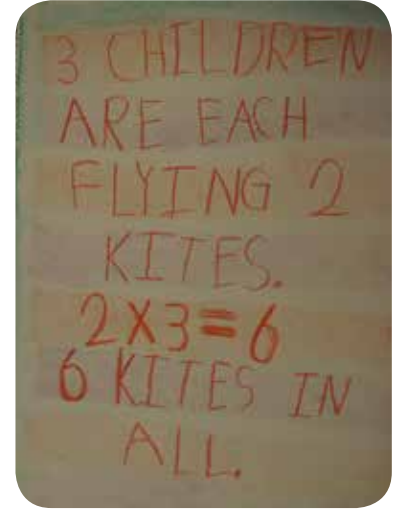
Miss Susan & Miss Isabeau

## Grade 1

In first grade, stories are being told about Trina Times, Peter Plus, and Danny Divide, who work daily with Chester and Wilson, picking cherries at the farm and organizing them into groups. First graders help further the process by drawing the cherries and writing number sentences in their main lesson books. Trina's friend, Lilly, is trying to convince Peter Plus that there are faster ways to count, but Peter likes to count by ones, so the children write Peter's number sentences in their books the way he likes it. However, the first graders will soon discover how tiring it is to write  $2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2$ . Instead, they will quickly appreciate that writing  $11 \times 2$  is more efficient.

Now when Danny Divide collects his cherries, he always makes sure that he divides them up equally, because he is always fair. The children write his number sentences in their books as well and are learning to equally divide up things.

Ms. Smith



## Grade 2/3

It has been delightful to see the children's joy in being back together after time apart.

Much of our current class excitement centers around our study of silkworms, silk moths and the products they have gifted to us. The first moth hatched on December 26, so we had a silk moth open house at my home during vacation. Fortunately, the moths continued to hatch through the New Year, so the entire class has now observed the full life cycle of these amazing little animals. We now are waiting for our new eggs to hatch. Life goes on.

Our first fiber arts project was silk painting a family gift before winter break. It was an exercise in symmetry as well as an introduction to using a silk resist, called gutta, and silk dyes. Our second project was to create cocoon rattles. (see photo) Shamans of the First Peoples of California used cocoon rattles in healing rituals. Next, we will be degumming cocoons to stretch silk hankies for dry needle felting.

The class is enjoying the stories of *Indian Tales* by Jamie De Angula. This author collected stories from the Pit Tribe in California in the early 1900's. The character of Fox Boy from these stories inspires my introduction of place value. It is great to be venturing back into the world of arithmetic.

The totally new, and certainly favorite lessons for many, have been our beginning lessons in cursive writing! This began with a brief review of running forms, as in form drawing. The children are taking off with this and really loving it!

I wish you and your families much joy in this New Year.

Warmly, Meg Eggleston



Grade 2/3 Continued



First silk paintings



Silk cocoon rattles

## Grade 4/5

Our days are filled with cutting, splitting, and combining pieces that are parts of things. We are adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing fractions. The challenge for us is to understand what we're doing to our numbers and why we're doing it. Fortunately we have stories of heroes to inspire us to conquer these fractions. The *Iliad*, by Homer, has filled our imaginations with stories of intrigue, escapes and battles.

Mr. Jensen



## Grade 6/7

By the time you read this newsletter, class 6/7 will have presented their play to the community. This year the play describes a period of time we call the Crusades, and it gently brings to light a varied perspective and understanding around the three religions of that time period: Judaism, Christianity and Muslim. There are so many reasons we work to bring a play to our community as a class, curriculum development being just one. The students bring forth a piece of themselves and have to dig deep to present this to their community. They have to value each other and work together to allow themselves to shine. No one person is able to carry a play; without one another, there would be no merit to their individual gifts. A play is intricately woven together, and transformation occurs for each person as she or he moves through the dramatic process to the final performance. We are always nervous, excited, and so aware that there is more work that could be done, but I hope that you can sense the achievement that each class brings with these humble offerings to our community. This work for our class has coincided with a block of perspective drawing and the telling of Renaissance artists' history, including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael. This has been so fitting, as this time period saw an expansion of human horizons and understandings. Our class, too, has been expanding their horizons and skills.

with warmth, Shannon Herda



## Grade 8

Happy New Year! It is so great to be back to school. Moving from clay busts, acrylics and collage, we are diving into our second history block as the class is learning about events that led up to the American Revolutionary War. We are mapping the original 13 colonies, discussing British rule over them, and learning the words to "Paul Revere's Ride". We will continue our study by examining patriotism, sanctuary, and citizenship in the period that led to the Civil War. This is a fascinating and enlightening period in history for 8th graders.

- Ms. Klein

"Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience."

-George Washington



## Middle School Music

In this new year, we have also ushered in a new genre of music in our classes. We have travelled from the cathedrals, salons, and concert halls of classical music out to the hearthsides and campfires of folk music. On recorder, we have begun “Aura Lea”, a soldiers’ song from the Civil War (later used by Elvis) and “Wild Mountain Thyme”, a ballad from the highlands of Scotland. In choir, while we continue our work on Jean Sibelius’s “Finlandia”, we have added “Yonder Come Day”, a song from the Georgia Sea Islands, which comes from the same roots as African-American spirituals and jazz. The students are slowly finding their ways through these new musical landscapes. I look forward to further travels with them.

Mira Starr

## Russian

Students were busy before the winter break learning about Russian traditions that celebrate Christmas and New Year with Ded Moroz and Snegurochka. Grade 8 students cooked borsch and wrote, in Russian, the recipe for this traditional Russian-Ukrainian soup. After the break, everybody is settling back into our routines. We have enjoyed new stories, fairy tales and verses. Number LOTO seems to be an all time favorite for all grades as they learn numbers 1-100.

Ms. Burton



## Woodworking

Woodworking is going well this year, with all classes doing some high quality work. This year's Christmas presents turned out beautifully. The 4/5 class made laminated cutting boards, gluing, sanding, and decorating their gifts. Class 6/7 finished a very ambitious chip carving project and followed that up with some very nice, log, candle holders. They hand cut dados to inset the feet and used a portable drill press and forsize bit to seat the candles. They also wood burned decorations. Eighth graders learned to use a lathe and made beautiful pens. Amazingly, all the projects were finished in time for the holidays. Onward to more amazing projects with these awesome students. Thank you, Mr. Wood



## Handwork

Grade 2/3 Lions

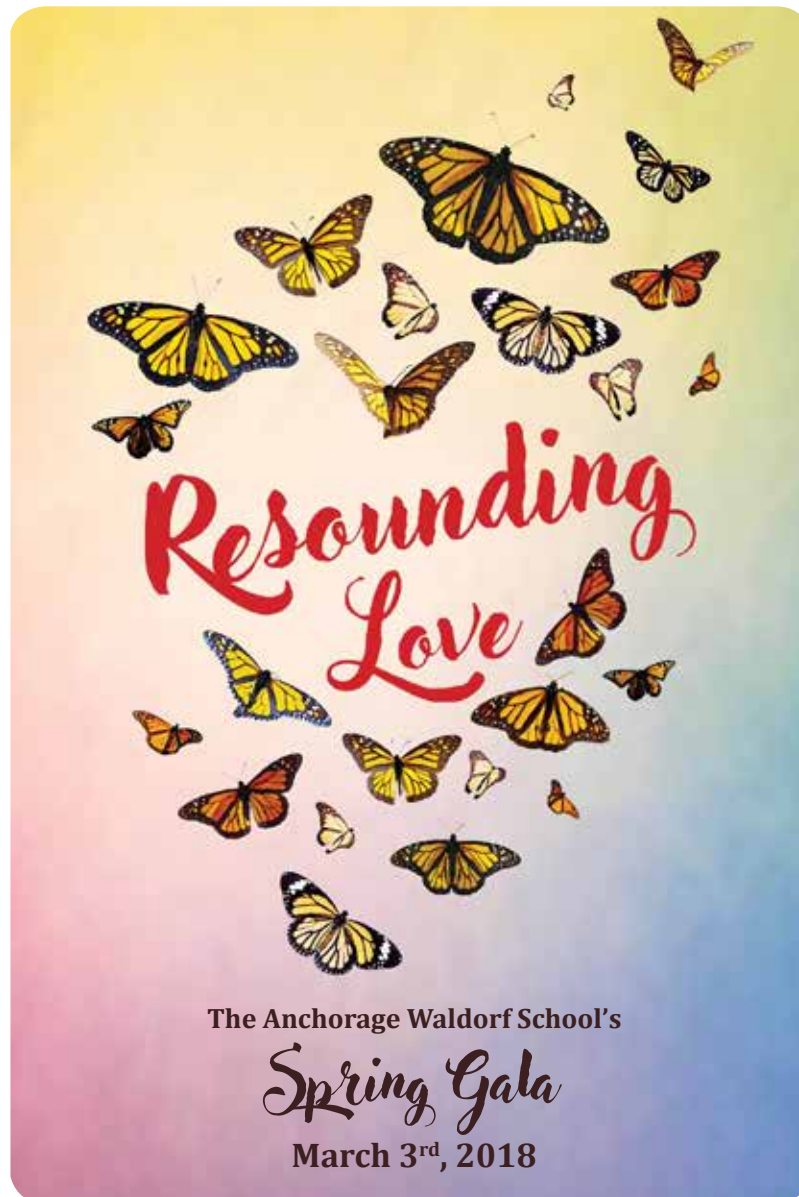


1st graders skiing on campus with Mr. Unterberger at Movement time

## Movement







## **Save the date!**

**Saturday, March 3, 2018 at 5:00 pm**

**The Bridge Restaurant in downtown Anchorage**

This year's Spring Gala is just around the corner! It will be a memorable evening of music, socializing, food, and fundraising that will fill our hearts and community with **Resounding Love**.

### **Here's how you can contribute:**

- Donate a service, voucher or item for the auction •
- Sponsor a teacher or underwrite a table for the event •
- Give a Monetary donation if you can't attend •
- And the best way - PLEASE Attend the Gala and bring friends. We can't wait to see you! •

In preparation, organizers are collecting photographs of teacher-student moments to present a gift of gratitude during the event. If you have taken any candid (or posed) photographs of your child with a class teacher or specialty teacher, or photographs of teachers with their classes, would you please forward them to [office@waldorfak.org](mailto:office@waldorfak.org). Please note that by sending the photo it is implied that you are giving us permission to publish it for the Gala presentation or in future publications. Contact Rosey (907) 227-6729 or Amanda (907) 720-3990 with questions and THANKS in advance for helping us make this year's Spring Gala a resounding success!

## New Administrative Staff



Please welcome our new Outreach Coordinator Nashira Tuting. She and her three lovely daughters have recently moved here from Florida.



Please welcome Nicole Bickford-St. Pierre. She is our new Lead Administrator for Golden Cottage and assisting at the front desk.

## A few Holiday and January Highlights



Visiting teacher Anca and her husband David performed a marionette show for the grades.



New water fountain!



## Gratitude

**Thank you** to all who gave to the **Growing the Orchard Annual Giving Fund**. We raised \$45,000!

**Thank you to the Handy Helpers** of Saturday, January 13! Amanda German, Amy Meissner, Ed Russell, Kurtis Walton and his father-in-law, James Fahl, and Katia Kingry painted the walls of the Great Hall a nice warm pastel color.



# The Role of Arts in Waldorf Education

presented by Donna Levesque, Pedagogical Director

**Wednesday, February 7, Great Hall**

6:00 pm potluck

6:30 - 7:30 watercolor painting

7:30 - 8:00 discussion

**RSVP at 333-9062 or email [office@waldorfak.org](mailto:office@waldorfak.org)**  
We need to know how many painting stations to set up so please RSVP by Tuesday February 6. Thank you!

**Childcare will be provided.** Donations appreciated.

3250 Baxter Road [waldorfak.org](http://waldorfak.org)



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