

CŌNFLUENCE

Spring 2015

News from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

Vol.4, No.3



Alliance board and advisory board members gather as President Shanna Mall signs the historic agreement with AWSNA on March 27, 2015 at G.W. Carver High School of Arts & Sciences.

Waldorf Education in the News

On March 27, 2015 the Association for Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education (the Alliance) announced a collaborative licensing agreement, which grants the use of the service mark “Public Waldorf” to the Alliance.

Together, both organizations are forging a new relationship based on their common foundation and perspective on what is best for children. Jointly, their goal is to strengthen Waldorf education and ensure its availability and accessibility to the next generation.

Waldorf educators, whether they work in independent or in public schools, hold Rudolf Steiner’s goal for education to be eloquently expressed in this quote: “Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and meaning to their lives.” In all of Waldorf education lives the hope of providing new ideas for cultural and educational renewal. It is with tremendous excitement and hope that both associations look towards a future of working collaboratively in service to the children of North America.

For more information, we share on page 2 the **Joint Letter** that spells out the terms of the license agreement, and on our website the **Memorandum of Understanding** that spells out how AWSNA and the Alliance intend to work together, and a **Core Principles** (Exhibit A) document with commentary on how Waldorf education is expressed in public Waldorf charter schools. We invite you to share our enthusiasm for this new development in our movement for educational renewal!

FOCUS OF THIS ISSUE GRADUATION

FROM THE ALLIANCE

Not Only for My Own Family . . .

BY SHANNA MALL



Had it not been for the birth of my first child, I may have never known about Waldorf education. It never came up in my teacher training, in my work as a high school teacher of at-risk students, or in conversations with friends; then, in 2000, I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy and all of a sudden everyone had educational suggestions.

I met Waldorf education when visiting the Harvest Festival at Anchorage Waldorf School. I can still remember the smell of the damp autumn leaves in the crisp air. I remember my son, now fourteen, trying to figure out how to get “fish” from the pond. I looked around and saw a community I had longed for and knew that this was what I wanted, not only for my own family, but for all families. Right in that moment, I began to dream the possibilities.

That dream led to Winterberry Charter School, which opened in 2005-06. During this year our school received many letters from AWSNA that felt legalistic regarding our use of the word “Waldorf” in Winterberry’s literature and documents. To be honest, the letters filled me with anger and judgment. Wasn’t it clear that I was trying to make something beautiful accessible to all children?

The answer to that question came over time—in countless interactions with students, parents, teachers, mentors, instructors, and years of on-the-ground experience. In the summer of 2005 at Rudolf Steiner College’s Public School Institute, I remember listening to George Hoffecker talk about Steiner’s views on essentials principles in education. He was mesmerizing, but I was on a mission from my board and needed to find out “the formula” to make what I thought was a “traditional Waldorf school.”

George was kind, but stated that there was no such thing. Frankly, this wasn’t helpful. I had a job to do! We had pallets of silks, beeswax crayons, chalkboards, wooden furniture, and a stack of watercolor paper taller than me waiting for us in Anchorage. Of course we were “Waldorf.” Right?

During the next few years, we realized that we had the ingredients to be, at best, marginal, and, at worst, dangerous. We had started the journey with a lofty goal and didn’t yet understand that Steiner’s educational ideas aren’t a program or a matrix that can be applied in a formulaic way. Thankfully, throughout our journey as a school, our community has come to understand that all education is an art.

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Dear Colleagues,

We are excited to share news of increasing collaboration between The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education¹ (the Alliance) and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America² (AWSNA). Together we are forging a new relationship based on our common foundation and perspective on what is best for children. Today, a license for the Alliance use of the term “Public Waldorf” was signed, as was a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that affirms and articulates some of the many ways the two organizations and our respective members can collaborate.

The license empowers the Alliance to use the mark “Public WaldorfSM” with acknowledgement that it is a service mark owned by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and used pursuant to a license. Some of the details of the agreements include:

- 1) Describing Public Waldorf Education in a document entitled Exhibit A, which was mutually agreed upon by AWSNA and the Alliance. Exhibit A is based upon the Core Principles articulated by the Pedagogical Council Section of North America³. Exhibit A will be available soon on the Alliance website, and will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure it represents the continuing development of Public Waldorf Education.
- 2) Authorizing use of “Public Waldorf” by the Alliance. Alliance member schools may indicate they are members of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and they may refer individuals to the Alliance website and materials for explanations of Public Waldorf. While the other service mark guidelines still apply to Alliance members, the Memorandum of Understanding addresses a timeline to permit sub-licensing by the Alliance to Alliance member schools.
- 3) The term of the license is “in perpetuity,” which means that it remains valid as long as the conditions of the license are upheld, unless there is a mutually agreed upon decision to end it.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has three main categories that highlight how the two organizations seek to work together. These include strengthening the integrity of anthroposophically inspired education, sharing resources, and cultivating collegial relationships. There are specific agreements outlined that are important to various entities, so we thoughtfully request that the MoU be read carefully by all. AWSNA and the Alliance agree that periodic review of this collaboration will be beneficial, and help our relationship thrive.

Waldorf educators, whether they work in independent or in public schools, hold Rudolf Steiner’s goal for education to be eloquently expressed in this quote: “Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and meaning to their lives.”

In all of Waldorf education lives the hope of providing new ideas for cultural and educational renewal in our communities. It is with tremendous excitement and hope that we look towards a future of working collaboratively in service to the children of North America.

¹ Membership consists of U.S. public charter and district schools.

² Membership consists of U.S., Canadian, and Mexican independent schools.

³ Both AWSNA and the Alliance embrace these Core Principles, which provide a lens for each organization to express their ideal practices.

SIGNATORS TO THIS AGREEMENT ARE NOTED ON PAGE 6

... But for All Families

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 Enter the nine-ish year conversation between AWSNA and the Alliance regarding the many and varied manifestations of schools that look to Rudolf Steiner’s idea for their education principles. Sometimes the conversation was strained, other times it moved slowly. Over the past two years, however, a committee of representatives from AWSNA and the Alliance has crafted an agreement that is intended to help us work together to further the collaboration that can happen between our two organizations and members with common interests. At the core of our agreement is a commitment to work collaboratively to support the healthy development of all of the schools associated with AWSNA and The Alliance.

As public Waldorf education unfurls its wings and takes flight, I am hopeful we can use the poetry of Margaret Wheatley to guide our thoughts, words and deeds:

Turning to One Another

There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

Ask “What’s possible?” not “What’s wrong?” Keep asking.

Notice what you care about. Assume that many others share your dreams.

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.

Talk to people you know.

Talk to people you don’t know.

Talk to people you never talk to.

Be intrigued by the differences you hear.

Expect to be surprised.

Treasure curiosity more than certainty.

Invite in everybody who cares to work on what’s possible.

Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.

Know that creative solutions come from new connections.

Remember, you don’t fear people whose story you know.

Real listening always brings people closer together.

Trust that meaningful conversations can change the world.

Rely on human goodness. Stay together.

My mind is full of images of what is to come. My heart is full of joy at the prospect of the laughter, learning and community this collaboration will bring to all students. My hands are ready for the heavy lifting and collaborative imagining that will serve us throughout this century and beyond.

Blessings,

Shanna Mall, Interim President

GRADUATION

This issue of **Confluence** celebrates the accomplishments of public Waldorf high school students who graduate this June from three Alliance member schools.

George Washington Carver School of Arts & Science

SACRAMENTO, CA

Allegra Alessandri, Principal of George Washington Carver School of Arts and Science, sat down with a couple of graduating seniors to reflect on their education as they approach the end of their high school careers. **Mauricio Crespo** attended public Waldorf schools since fifth grade. **Diana Ormanzhi** started Waldorf as a Carver freshman.

MAURICIO CRESPO, CARVER CLASS OF 2015



Allegra Alessandri: You've attended public Waldorf schools since fifth grade. Tell me about the highlights and memories from your journey.

Mauricio Crespo: When I think of my Waldorf education, I think of the freedom I've experienced. Switching from mainstream school to John Morse [now Alice Birney] broadened my horizons. I had new experiences, like learning the violin. That was perhaps the most significant change. It was huge. I learned that we could work together as a class in unity to create beautiful music. I loved Pachelbel's "Canon." Together we could make something beautiful, creating beauty—

that's teamwork. Other new experiences

were the Greek games—learning to throw the javelin, archery. Learning the recorder. These were significant for me because they opened my mind and broadened my experiences.

Also significant was that I experienced that the whole class could be a group. I'd come from an elementary school where, in order for others to take an interest in and be kind to me, I needed to develop a skill, like soccer. At Waldorf, I was part of the whole class just for being me.

AA: What are your plans for life after Carver?

MC: I will attend the University of California at Santa Cruz. I plan to double major in Biology and Environmental Science and minor in Education. I want to be a teacher or a professor—I guess like my science teacher, Mr. DeWaard!

AA: How has your Waldorf education shaped you? How do you think it sets you apart from your peers?

MC: I come from a community of Argentine immigrants. Most are working class—struggling economically. Some live in unsafe neighborhoods where kids grow up carrying knives and brag about owning guns. This is a strong, negative influence. I feel as though I could have been surrounded by that negative influence. Whereas now in Waldorf I'm surrounded by students and teachers in a college-going, career-focused education. A high percentage of students at Carver are ambitious and high achievers preparing for college.

AA: What is one element of your journey that you appreciate the most? What seems most precious?

MC: At Carver, I experienced freedom. First, I learned the importance of building great relationships of respect and mutual understanding. Second, I found that by building these deep relationships with my teachers and other students, I was given the freedom to direct my own decisions in the service of my learning. An example was the blood drive that I organized for my civic action project. Last year when I donated blood I vomited. It beat me! So this year I organized another blood drive so that I could conquer it and to contribute to the memory of the family members I recently lost. It was a real way to contribute to their memory. The drive was able to draw 35 pints of blood! I presented my project at Sacramento State University to a college class. I spoke about my passion for this project. They were surprised that one person could make such a big contribution.

AA: What was your favorite Main Lesson?

MC: Health and Nutrition.

AA: What is your favorite mythical creature?

MC: The Griffin. ■

DIANA ORMANZHI, CARVER CLASS OF 2015

Allegra Alessandri: You started Carver without having attended a Waldorf elementary school. How was the change for you? How does Carver differ from your middle and elementary schools?

Diana Ormanzhi: I didn't know what to expect in high school. I came from a small charter where I was able to study Russian—my family is Ukrainian and Moldovan—and my parents wanted me to stay in a small charter for high school. When I got to Carver I found it artsy. I've been drawing since I was two, so the adjustment to a Waldorf school was easy for me, because I was already artistic. Some people might not appreciate or understand why art is important. It's always hard for me to explain to people who don't know about Waldorf or Carver.



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GRADUATION

AA: At Carver you've excelled in the arts. You won the Congressional Art Award last spring, which earned you a trip to Washington, D.C., and now your art is hanging in the Capitol. Just this spring, you won the Platinum Award for the California Supreme Court's Law Day, called Operation Protect and Defend. Your grand-prize-winning art will hang in Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy's Library here in Sacramento. Your work embodies Carver's values of social and environmental justice. Can you tell me about your inspiration?

DO: I don't have an exact source of inspiration or a muse. I need pressure to create art. I hate pressure, but it helps me creatively. The winning pieces originated because I felt the pressure to meet a deadline. I felt pressure to find a good idea, and that allowed me to brainstorm deeply. I had no idea where to start. I began asking questions like, how does media affect us? How would it affect a juror? Piece by piece, my ideas evolved as I worked.

AA: What are your plans for life after Carver?

DO: I will start college at American River College in the fall. In an ideal future I will be a curator for a museum or gallery and eventually have my own gallery. People tell me that you can't make a living as an artist, that it's a risky job. But they are thinking of the struggling artist, not the gallery owner or museum curator. At ARC, I will study art history and studio art, of course. But I can also take classes in gallery curating. Part of that course involves an internship in a local gallery or museum.

AA: How has your Waldorf education shaped you? How do you think it sets you apart from your peers?

DO: My high school education has opened my eyes to the problems with technology and our children. My fear is that technology and electronics are taking over. I'll put pen and paper in front of my children before I give them technology to play with. I want my child to learn creativity, to draw, make art or play an instrument.

My study in history has shaped my thinking. My ideas have expanded and deepened. Before Carver, I had never even thought about women's rights or that they might be endangered. Now, I see how big an issue this is around the world. We are watching *Miss-Representation* in Government class right now. The arguments presented in the film make me angry and emotional. In this is the inspiration for me to make something artistic. I believe I can create art to bring more attention to the issue of inequality. If I can use art to make one more person aware of these issues, that's making change.

AA: What is one element of your high school journey that you appreciate the most?

DO: My parents never took me to a museum. I am thankful for the opportunities at Carver to go to museums and art installations. I am so grateful for the opportunity to make so much art. As a sophomore I thought I was really good! Now looking back, I can see how I've grown. In my junior and senior years a new kind of thinking happened for me. I am grateful to my teachers at Carver, who showed me a way to discover deeper knowledge. By introducing me to deeper and more important ideas, Carver has helped me to evolve my thinking about the world. And I can express this through art. Art at Carver gave me the tools and ability to express my deep and valuable new leaning.

I submitted my AP Studio Art portfolio as a junior and earned the highest score. There was lots of pressure to create three pieces every two weeks. My portfolio centered on the theme of my childhood self and my present self. My mom had saved many of my drawings growing up. I chose twelve of these to recreate and compare the child's drawing to the seventeen-year-old me. One comparison was of a circus. The six-year-old me drew a happy scene with a girl eating ice cream, a joyful jumping clown with the circus happening in the background. My current self depicted a close-up of the circus, with a slightly opened curtain revealing the clown with his head in his hand, showing despair or fatigue. I wanted to show how my thinking changed as I developed through childhood.

I am thankful for the opportunity to see art as a future for me, that I can have a realistic career as an artist. How amazing that my career can revolve around my passion for art! I value that. My passion can be my life. I can use art to educate and share ideas.

AA: Favorite Main Lesson?

DO: Middle Eastern History was one of my favorites. I think it cleared up some misconceptions I had about that region. Storytelling and paper marbling made it even more enjoyable. (Students write an original tale of Arabian Nights and hand bind their main lesson books.) ■



Two of Diana Ormanzhi's award winning paintings.



GRADUATION

Desert Marigold School

PHOENIX, AZ

This profile of Desert Marigold senior Samantha Romero was written by Sade Moore, a Desert Marigold ninth grader who is interested in studying journalism and who served as the lighting technician for the school's recent production of "West Side Story."

SAMANTHA ROMERO, DESERT MARIGOLD CLASS OF 2015

This spring, seniors at Desert Marigold and everywhere else are getting ready to end a chapter of their lives and start a new one. As they plan their futures, what lessons and skills acquired from peers and mentors during their high school career will they carry with them? Samantha Romero is not afraid to show her appreciation for the four years she has spent as a public Waldorf student.

Samantha came to DMS in her freshman year. She could have started in sixth grade, the year her younger brother joined DMS as a kindergartener; but she decided it was best for her to wait until high school since changing schools halfway through the year felt too complicated. About her brother, she says, "He never wanted to go to his first school. But once he started here, he loved it." She also says she has seen his artistic and social skills grow exceptionally. Her once closed-off brother is now outgoing and "all over the place." Samantha is certainly glad about making her own decision to attend DMS. One memory that stands out to her is how friendly everyone was on her first day. "When I first started here as a freshman, everyone was hugging each other. At first the kindness threw me off, but then it grew on me. People are so kind here!"

After four years at a public Waldorf school, Samantha has grown to love the curriculum. "At my old schools, I often felt overwhelmed and rushed. Here, the work is hands-on and moves at a steady pace." She also says the artistic approach is particularly useful in subjects like science, where illustrating can help her visualize concepts. Before coming to DMS, Samantha wasn't particularly interested in visual arts, but the curriculum has sparked her interest, and she has found many uses for her newly acquired skill. For example, Samantha now turns to art therapy in times of stress.

She says her senior class has a variety of students, ranging from "Waldorf their whole life" to "completely new to the concept." When asked how close she is with her classmate, she laughs. "A little too close," she says. "We're all like siblings."

She explains that many of her peers have similar interests and goals for the future, most related to the sciences in one way or another. One is interested in studying genetics and several are interested in psychology. Samantha's immediate plan is to attend Carrington College in Phoenix for a year to get certified as a veterinary assistant. After that, she plans to complete her associate's degree at a local community college, then transfer to Arizona State University to study Italian. She has enjoyed studying Japanese at DMS and says she would like to learn another language. She is fairly sure her desire to become a veterinary assistant was inspired by the farm at DMS. "I remember



taking care of chickens in my first year."

Samantha's class will be just the third to graduate from DMS, and she admits to having had doubts about attending such a young school. However, she is extremely thankful she stayed, and believes the school has grown a lot during her time. She says her teachers have been trustworthy, caring, aware, and great people to talk to, in addition to being supportive of her academic career. She especially appreciates how they prioritize helping students to understand concepts over just making sure assignments get turned in.

In all, Samantha expresses real gratitude both for the public Waldorf curriculum and for the people with whom she has fondly shared her four years at DMS. She says she has learned to stay positive and to take things as they come. She savors the upcoming responsibility of having her own apartment and starting anew, and hopes to become more independent after this year. "It's scary and exciting at the same time," she says. It is clear Samantha embraces the challenge of taking what she has learned at DMS and putting it to good use as she enters the next invigorating stage of her life. ■

Credo High School

ROHNERT PARK, CA

CAITLIN LONG, CREDO CLASS OF 2015

This June marks the closing of my twelve-year Waldorf education. Thinking back four years ago, the idea of being a Waldorf advocate or even dipping my toe into Anthroposophy was absurd, yet here I am writing about the experience I'm most grateful for.

I began first grade at Stone Bridge School, a rather dissonant hub within the conservative community of Napa, California. I didn't question the flower wreaths, veiled movement classes, goji berry granola meals, and Birkenstocked teachers, because it all made sense and had its own purpose. Then seventh grade came around, and as we all know, thirteen is an age when the whole world flips upside-down. I slowly realized I had an individual opinion and that I didn't need to conform to the beliefs of adults; suddenly, the smell of rebellion was too sweet to pass up. By eighth grade, I was "so done" with the hippy Waldorf system, and wanted to go to Napa High with the rest of my classmates.

Luckily, a new public Waldorf high school would be opening the following year, not more than a 45-minute drive away. Of course,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

GRADUATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5 my mother saw no reason not to seize this opportunity and wisely gave me no choice but to attend. I grudgingly accepted my rose at the opening ceremony as a member of the pioneering class of Credo High School. As the only class on campus, we found ourselves with the huge responsibility of having to represent all of Credo and give it a good reputation for future students. There were about forty of us, most of whom were hesitant about this leadership role at the start, yet as the year ticked on we began to realize that our position could be beneficial: we had been given the opportunity to have our voices heard, our opinions matter, and the ability to inaugurate traditions for future years. The leadership role was loaded mostly onto the shoulders of the founders and faculty of Credo, who simultaneously built the nest while feeding the birds. Their heavy task was carried out with unparalleled courage and passion, and every ounce of their energy was sacrificed towards building a community of thriving, sustainable humans. It is a fertile learning environment where the teachers want their students to succeed, not competitively, but within themselves. The Credo teachers' intention is to plant a seed within us, which we can then cultivate into something that still holds integrity with our own individual truths.

Our classes did just that. There is nothing greater than having a class outside on a cold, cloudy day, huddled around burning embers, and pounding metal. Blacksmithing is one out of several remarkable classes I experienced, also Mandarin, Farming, Astronomy/Planetary Archetypes, Civics, Biomimicry, Yoga and Clay Sculpting. Every year starts off with one Morning Lesson block followed by a weeklong Adventure Learning trip. Freshmen embark on a grounding, 25-mile backpacking expedition, which provides an opportunity to build strong personal relationships while maintaining a healthy group atmosphere. Sophomores venture out by way of kayak and learn how to maneuver themselves on the water just as they are studying Ocean Ecology and reading *The Odyssey*. Juniors are given the chance to expand their comfort zones with zip-lining and ropes courses, as well as exploring the night sky from an observatory in preparation for the upcoming Astronomy block. Seniors are released into the wilderness for a 24-hour solo quest, a space that allows them to spend time with themselves and ignite their inner fires. A class called Personal Sustainability, which ties in closely with the senior solo trip, guided me the most in knowing how I want to carry myself in this world. It's a class I am absolutely in awe of every time I participate, for it is striking to witness a group of teenagers speak so genuinely from themselves and be heard with the utmost respect and acceptance by their peers.

To have received twelve years of education is in itself the deepest privilege, but to be a Waldorf graduate is worth every grain of gratitude I can muster. It has built the foundation on which I will go out into the world, and I am well prepared. After I graduate, I will be attending Quest University in British Columbia, Canada, a college focused on giving students a well-rounded education that teaches them how to think independently. I have decided to devote my life to healing the earth and to finding innovative methods of approaching world issues, whether by means of green engineering (biomimicry), architecture, social work or travel journalism. As I approach graduation, I now know that if I follow my own truth, it will lead me where I need to go on behalf of the world. ■



Caitlin Long is shown here sculpting her senior portrait project.

FROM PAGE 2



Respectfully and with gratitude,

AWSNA Executive Team

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David Owen-Cruise
Beverly Amico

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Sharing Resources, Expertise and Opportunities

BY TIM NONN

*Working together to enrich experiences for students is common in Waldorf schools. Collaboration at every level – among parents and teachers, across the grades, and between schools – has long been a factor in a school community’s success. This **From the Field** article tells stories of collaboration among public and independent private schools where neighboring school communities share resources, expertise and opportunities that enliven their students’ and parents’ educational experiences.*

PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP A VIRTUE IN MEDIEVAL GAMES

Finding the perfect fit sometimes requires a road trip. **Deanna Douglas**, the Director of Enrollment at Desert Marigold School in Phoenix, AZ, found a perfect fit for the school’s medieval games. She paired up with **Heidi Johnson**, a movement education teacher at Tucson Waldorf School, to create an annual statewide event for public and private Waldorf schools.

Deanna praised Heidi’s experience and skills. She said, “Watching the way she brought the curriculum to the students really helped me in the way I brought it. I just have a better understanding of the curriculum because of her.” Heidi also had words of praise for Deanna: “Deanna is very open and just has wonderful, creative ideas. She thought of a quest piece and a vigil. She can hold the master of ceremony role very well. I’m more shy and like to work more behind the scenes.”

This dynamic team brings together sixth grade students who have been studying medieval history in the classroom. They offer opportunities to make crafts, learn about medieval etiquette, practice sports, such as archery, and participate in the reenactment of medieval ceremonies.

Every year in the spring, sixth graders from Waldorf schools across Arizona gather together at Pine Forest School in Flagstaff to participate in the medieval games. The event is fun for students, and it also gives Waldorf teachers the opportunity to share their skills and experience. Over the past eight years, Deanna and Heidi have formed a strong collegial relationship. Their collaboration enabled them to deepen their understanding of the curriculum. Heidi, who has worked in movement education and medieval games in several cities over her teaching career, freely shared the breadth and depth of her experience. Deanna said, “She sat down with me and shared all of her notes about all of the games, everything she does, such as working on form.”

Deanna and Heidi encourage students to learn about medieval virtues (and vices) at the annual games. As Waldorf colleagues, they use the opportunity to practice the virtue of sharing and cooperation to improve their teaching skills and contribute to the development of every public and private Waldorf school in Arizona.



Pine Forest School in Flagstaff, hosts Medieval Games for schools across Arizona.

SHARED VALUES IN SAN DIEGO

A long-running Tuesday morning parent enrichment program at **The Waldorf School of San Diego** often welcomes parents and administrators from **Sparrow Academy**, according to **Bonnie Holden**, Director of Pedagogy. Sparrow Academy is a nearby public Waldorf charter school that currently enrolls grades K-4. Similarly, the San Diego school’s annual Winter Faire, “Celebrate the Season of Light,” is an opportunity for a shared festival life among San Diego’s Waldorf communities.



In February, **Torin Finser**, chair of the Waldorf teacher training program at Antioch University, gave a talk at the Waldorf school in San Diego on his new book *A Second Classroom: Parent Teacher Relations*. He reports, “There were many charter folks there who responded positively” to the spirit of the talk. The importance of shared values among parents and teachers is critical in both public and private independent Waldorf schools.

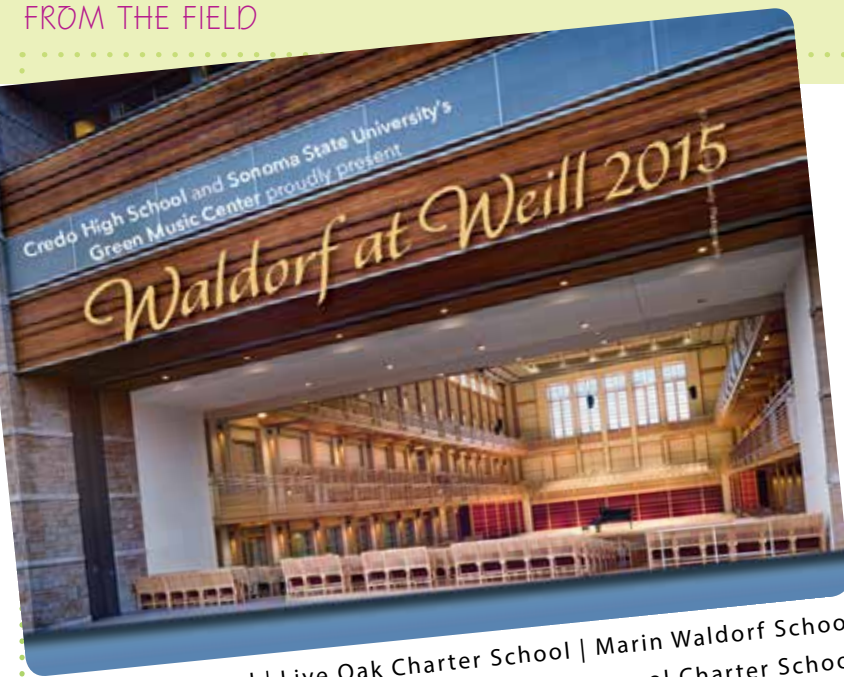
NINE SCHOOLS PERFORM AT “WALDORF AT WEILL”

Emma Christopher, a senior at **Credo High School** in Rohnert Park, CA, was very nervous the first time she performed at Sonoma State University’s Weill Hall. She had sung before small groups on numerous occasions, but on that night in 2013 there were almost 1,400 people in the audience. “It was a very nerve-wracking experience,” Emma said.

Waldorf at Weill was the brainchild of Credo Executive Director **Chip Romer**. The \$150M Weill Hall, built in 2012, is one of the world’s finest acoustical venues. The annual Waldorf at Weill program includes student performers from Credo and eight other public and private Waldorf schools in Northern California. Its goal is to provide students with a professional performing experience as a component of their artistic education.

Emma’s experience at Weill, both on stage and in the audience, confirmed what the Credo organizers had hoped would happen with the students. She said, “I saw Bobby McFerrin at Weill the other night. I just felt like it was home to me—he was on my stage! It was just cool that I performed on the same stage as someone so amazing as Bobby.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Credo High School | Live Oak Charter School | Marin Waldorf School
 Novato Charter School | Sebastopol Charter School
 Stone Bridge School | Summerfield Waldorf School & Farm
 SunRidge Charter School | Woodland Star Charter School

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 For the past three years, Waldorf at Weill has brought together students, parents, teachers and the general public. It's a logistical challenge, but the program is creating a deep sense of community around an appreciation for the performing arts. Events, which are held in early spring, include individual and ensemble performances by singers, musicians and dancers. Everyone works together to make the 90-minute performances a success. And it pays off. Emma's mother, Lori, was surprised at how comfortable her daughter looked. "She is a very reserved girl, and to see her on the stage like that was just such a thrilling moment for a mom and dad."

Waldorf at Weill also gives students the opportunity to perform year after year, allowing them to hone their performing skills and gain confidence. Like Emma, they can overcome their nervousness and learn to feel at home on stage. "My third year it really felt like home," Emma said. "I remembered past years and how nervous I was when I was younger. And that memory really resonated with me. I feel like I've come such a long way in my musical career. That stage really helped me to develop as a singer and a performer."

SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

When **Journey School** in Aliso Viejo, CA launched a digital citizenship course in 2011, students and parents sat up and took notice. It wasn't a subject that a Waldorf school ordinarily offers in its curriculum.

Diana Graber, a school parent and founding member, organized the year-round course for the K-8 public Waldorf charter school. She had just finished her master's degree in Media Psychology and Social Change. Diana is passionate about teaching digital citizenship to students. "They have to learn to treat people online just as they would treat them in real life." The course is mainly designed for sixth graders, whose interest in everything digital is peaking. "It's a powerful time to be talking about this stuff. It just works."



The students in her course also learn about the creative commons, privacy transactions, plagiarism, copyright infringement and effective methods for online searches. These skills have produced some surprising results, including consistently higher API scores. Diana said, "Other educators said we shouldn't be surprised because when you're teaching digital media literacy, you're actually teaching critical thinking skills."

Journey School's digital citizenship course has attracted attention from other Waldorf and non-Waldorf schools in California and across the country. This Summer, **Patti Connolly**, the Education Director at Journey School, with collaborator Diana Graber, will lead the workshop "Digital Literacy Media Education – A Slow Tech Approach" at the AWSNA 2015 Summer Conference at **Highland Hall Waldorf School** in Los Angeles, CA, the week of June 22 through 25.

To learn more about the AWSNA Conference >
<http://www.whywaldorfworks.org>

To learn more about Media Literacy >
<http://www.cyberwise.org>



On its eighth grade trip in the Sierra Nevada mountains, this graduating class of the Winterberry Charter School in Anchorage, AK, is one of many graduating classes in both public and private Waldorf schools who are savouring their last days together.



BY
VICTORIA
TEMPLE

WELCOME NEW BOARD AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Cassandra Bridge, Director of the Monterey Bay Charter School, has joined the Alliance Board as its Outreach Chair. **Jeff Lough**, nationally certified school psychologist, Waldorf charter school founder and parent at the Coastal Grove Charter School, has joined the Advisory Board, along with **Mary Goral, Ph.D.**, Director of the Kentahten Teacher Training Program in Crestwood, Kentucky. *Welcome!*



Cassandra Bridge



Mary Goral



Jeff Lough

REQUEST FOR PERMANENT PENCIL AND PAPER TESTING IN CALIFORNIA GOES FORWARD

Alliance advocacy recently resulted in a “win” for our members with the California Department of Education. In March, Membership Chair **Betsy Thagard** and Waldorf administrators **Chris Topham** and **Nikki Lloyd** traveled to Sacramento to ask state officials for a permanent pencil and paper option for state computerized tests for the lower grades of Waldorf charter schools. State officials agreed with the Alliance that computerized testing for younger children conflicts with the mission of Waldorf charter schools and agreed to support our request for a permanent paper test option

for grades three, four and five. Since this request must go before several other state government bodies, the Alliance is now working with Eric Premack of the Charter Schools Development Center to make the testing option a reality. CDE’s support makes it much more likely that a permanent waiver will be made available to our California member schools. Stay tuned for future developments!



RESEARCH SUPPORTS LIMITING SCREEN TIME

A research paper by **Patti Connolly** and **Diana Graber** makes the case for limiting screen time for young children. Patti and Diana, digital literacy educators at the Journey School in Los Angeles, were invited to present their research supporting screen time limitations for young children to the California Department of Education in the Alliance’s effort to secure a permanent pencil and paper standardized testing option for public Waldorf school students in California, in third through fifth grade.

To read their paper > [Why Limit Screen Time?](#)

THE WHOLE CHILD AND URBAN EDUCATION: A WALDORF PERSPECTIVE



What does Waldorf education look like in a racially and culturally diverse inner-city neighborhood school in Oakland, CA? **Ida Oberman**, Executive Director of the Community School for Creative Education, founded in 2010, was recently interviewed by **Richard Whittaker**, for the March 31, 2015 edition of *Works & Conversation*.

To read this compelling interview with Dr. Oberman > <http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=426>

SUMMER INTENSIVE AT GREAT LAKES WALDORF INSTITUTE

A host of creative training opportunities exist at the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute (WI) this July, including a practical arts workshop at **Bente Goldstein’s** farm! Classes cover the inner life of the teacher, math in the grades, early childhood education and a variety of artistic courses. GLWI offers an MA in Education with a Waldorf emphasis in partnership with Mount Mary University. For more information > www.greatlakeswaldorf.org

SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AT RUDOLF STEINER COLLEGE

The Waldorf for Public Schools Summer Institute takes place July 13 - 24, 2015 at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California. The program features a neurologically-sound, arts-filled, integrated curriculum using active learning practices developed in Waldorf education that are applicable in public school classrooms. The Institute also serves the needs of home-school parents, who are welcome to attend. To learn more > <http://www.rudolfsteinercollege.edu>

INTERNATIONAL WOW-DAY 2015

Organized by the **Freunde-Waldorf** based in Berlin, WOW-Day is an opportunity for Waldorf schools world-wide to raise funds for new holistic educational initiatives around the globe. This year events are to be scheduled between September 29 and November 29. Everything you need to know about how to participate is at > <http://www.freunde-waldorf.de/en/wow-day/information-downloads/downloads.html>

