



Sprouting Cedar

May - June 2014



photo by Kirsten Andrews

Erin Hardy and Neve Kelly show their excitement for Spring on Earth Day. CVWS students picked up enough garbage to fill up the back of a pick-up truck!



photo by Kirsten Andrews

Cerys Miller-Hughes, Kai Bolla and River Kelly watch on keenly as workers pack the playcourt foundation on April 22.

Space to Play is here!

It is finally here, the 30'x50' play court made possible by funds from Orcas Anthroposophical Trust and your donations has arrived! It will be installed by May Fair and we couldn't be more excited.

The recycled rubber tile will make a superior surface for sports and games to help us nourish a culture of collaborative play in the children.

Meanwhile, parents are working on a site plan to expand the beauty and green spaces for the rest of our lot. We can expect more gardening bees over the spring and summer.

The surface was chosen for its comfort and durability – it's tough enough to withstand our rainy climate AND the exuberant play we expect to see on it.

The tiles can also be lifted and moved when one day we are able to fulfill our dream of a larger location as we are growing quickly.

Next year's registrations are looking strong. All four of our preschool classes are full and there are only a couple of spaces in kindergarten. Class 1-2 has one space, while there is still more room in the upper grades, particularly Class 5-6-7.

May Fair promises to be like no other

By Kirsten Andrews

The energy around this year's May Fair (Saturday, May 10) is building and there is so much fantastic new blood in our parent body this festival promises to be like no other.

The much anticipated dances around the May pole and always popular cake walk will be rounded out by the introduction of sack races on our new rubber play court.

The fair takes place from 11 am to 3 pm and our school community can expect families from throughout the Sea To Sky Corridor to take part in a refreshing, fun-filled day.

Appetites can be satiated with traditional German barbecued (gluten-free) bratwurst and vegetarian options. Home baking at the CVWS Café and icy gelato from Gelato Carina are May Fair staples and we are always excited to see what people bring.

As always, there will be gorgeous

flower garlands to weave and wear, silk dyeing, a delightful puppet show, Mother's Day gift making, as well as our open house and an opportunity to meet faculty and board.

May Fair is nothing without music and we look forward to hosting Carolyn Grass and friends. Keep your ears open for our bookkeeper and fellow parent Will Meadows on bass guitar!

There are still lots of opportunities for people to participate in helping with the fair. Sign up sheets are at the front of the school or you may call 604-898-3287 to book a shift. You can also sign up online through the Google Doc spreadsheet emailed to parents in April. Set-up begins at 8 am and tear-down goes from 3 to 5 pm.

You can also contact our activities co-ordinator Emily Ormerod directly at emilyormerod@yahoo.ca. We look forward to seeing you there!

PRINCIPAL/
PEDAGOGICAL ADMINISTRATOR
Christine Martin

PRESCHOOL TEACHERS
Astrid Lackner
Judy Roberts

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS
Begoña Cid
Lauren Baldwin

CLASS 1 TEACHER
Christine Martin

CLASS 2/3 TEACHER
Ralf Hoerger (Handwork)

CLASS 5/6 TEACHER
Fritz Bindseil (German)

SPECIALTY TEACHERS
Sibylle Wuethrich -
Special Education Asst.
Jocelyn Pettit - Strings
Correy Matheson - French

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
Gabriel Alden Hull (Music)

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Cedar Valley Waldorf School.

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Watercolour painting by
Bronwyn Maloney-Turner, Class 5-6

Dates to remember

APRIL

29 Tues Craft Bee for May Fair (MPR) | 7-9 pm
30 Wed School Tour | 9:15-10:15 am

MAY

1 Thu Craft Bee for May Fair (MPR) | 9-11 am
1 Thu Grade 2 & 3 Wheat planting Squamish Valley
2 Fri Yard Clean- up Bee | 1-4 pm
6 Tues Craft Bee for May Fair (MPR) | 7-9 pm
8 Thurs Craft Bee for May Fair (MPR) | 9-11 am
10 Sat May Fair and Open House

16 Fri Professional Development – NO SCHOOL
19 Mon Victoria Day – NO SCHOOL

23 Fri Grades Assembly at ZenFit | 12:10 pm
24 Sat Rainbow Preschool Open House | 10 am-1 pm
40345 Hood Road
28 Wed School Tour | 9:15-10:15 am
28 Wed CVWS Grades & VWS Community Choir Joint Concert | 6 pm
St. John's Anglican Church
31 Sat Sunflower Preschool Open House @ CVWS | 10 am-1 pm

JUNE

4 Wed Meeting for 2014-15 kindergarten parents | 7:30 pm
9-11 Grade 2 & 3 Farm Trip
9-12 Grade 5 & 6 Trip to Porteau Cove
12 Thurs Preschool Open House – new families 9-10 am (both locations)
12 Thurs Preschool Boat Day at Alice Lake | 11 am
13 Fri Last Day of School
13 Fri Year End Potluck at Alice Lake | 5-7 pm

OUR MISSION

Cedar Valley Waldorf School provides a holistic education that addresses the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical aspects of the child. The school develops confident, independent thinkers who have a strong social and environmental conscience and who respond to the world with compassion and creativity. The school community honours the child, fosters harmonious relationships and celebrates the wonder of life.

Cedar Shavings

*Love your kids,
love your school!*

CEDAR VALLEY WALDORF SCHOOL
2014 Annual Giving Campaign

Love Your Kids, Love Your School

Thanks to all who donated so far to the giving campaign! We are pleased to announce that donations have reached \$4000 (by press time) which is 50% of our goal. CVWS will officially wrap up the campaign at our assembly on May 23 and announce all of the improvements we will be able to make. There is still time to make a contribution; no matter what the size, your gift will make a difference!

Grades Assembly

The grades classes will give performances for the pleasure of their parents and families on Friday May 23 at 12:10 pm at ZenFit (in the mall by the school). Dismissal will follow the performance.

We are Hiring!

CVWS seeks a Kindergarten Assistant and Office Assistant (afternoons) to join its faculty for September 2014. Please see the ad in this newsletter, visit our website, or speak to Gabriel for more information. Deadline for applications is May 5.

CVWS Grades and VWS Community Choir Concert

CVWS students will give a reprise performance of some of the best gems from the school assembly on Wednesday, May 28 from 6 to 7 pm at St. Joseph's Anglican Church. Admission is by donation. Their performance will be followed by a brief program of uplifting choral music featuring the adult Vancouver Waldorf School Community Choir under the direction of Evgeny Shcherbakov.

"I'm excited to bring our student's music out into the community and to offer the choir performance to our students at a time that works for families," said CVWS administrator and music teacher Gabriel Alden Hull, who also sings with the Community Choir. Donations at the door will cover the cost of hall rental.

Meeting for 2014-15 Kindergarten Parents

On Wednesday, June 4 at 7:30 pm, there will be a meeting for parents enrolled in next year's kindergarten. At the meeting, teachers will be announcing students' class placement, sharing what is planned for the year ahead and ideas to facilitate a successful transition into school for newcomers. Parents of both new and returning students are urged to attend.

Next PIC Meeting
Wednesday, May 7 | 7:30 pm
Location TBA, watch your email!
Everyone is welcome!

Preschool Open House

New and prospective families new to the school are welcome to stop by our Sunflower and Rainbow preschools to meet the teachers and see the classrooms on Thursday, June 12 from 9 to 10 am at both 40345 Hood Rd. and our main location, 38265 Westway Ave.

Freshen our yard

On Friday, May 2 from 1 to 4 pm help us bring spring to our yard and building. We will stain worn wood, weed and replenish the gardens, fix the back fence and make everything ready to receive the community at May Fair (Sat. May 10 from 11 am to 3 pm).

Crafting for May Fair

Craft Kits are available in the MPR for our craft sale at May Fair. This

popular table sees parents through the summer with great children's gifts and school items to see families through the summer months. Craft bees are Tuesday nights and Thursday mornings at the school. Come and stitch with your fellow parents or complete the items at home.

Year End Potluck

We will hold our annual year-end potluck and thank you ceremony at Alice Lake (Local's Beach) on Friday, June 13 from 5 to 7 pm. Please bring a dish to share as well as plates, cups, cutlery and a blanket to spread out.

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WE ARE HIRING FOR SEPT. 2014

The Kindergarten Assistant is a full-time position working under the lead teacher, Monday through Friday 8 am – 3:30 pm. The ideal candidate is experienced in working with children, familiar with Waldorf education, and has completed a minimum 20 hours training in child development, guidance, health/safety or nutrition. Compensation includes tuition benefits.

The Office Assistant would work Monday through Thursday from 12:30 – 3 pm, providing reception and clerical assistance. Candidates must have excellent telephone, clerical and interpersonal skills, competency with computers, the ability to multi-task under pressure, and an understanding of Waldorf education.

Please submit résumés along with three references and a cover letter that includes a brief biography and position(s) of interest by mail or email (jobs@cedarvalleyschool.com) by May 5, 2014.

You can purchase Nesters cards with credit

By now you've heard what a great fundraiser Nesters Gift Cards are for our school. We are pleased to let you know that we are now accepting all major credit cards (Visa, Mastercard, American Express and JCB).

Nesters gives CVWS 10 per cent for each card sold at face value. When paying by cash, cheque or EMT (electronic money transfer) we retain all of this. With credit card purchases we keep 7.25 per cent.

Our goal is to have all of our families who shop at Nesters – whether it's a little or a lot – purchasing gift cards from us! Your participation can mean a huge difference – let's go from earning \$4,000 a year to \$20,000. Christine has created a bar graph to show us what the numbers could look like available on our website.

The only person who is able to receive credit card payments at this time is Kirsten Andrews. Larissa Smith, our school secretary, will also be able to accept credit card payment very soon.

Look for the PIC team on special days out front of the school at morning drop-off from 8:30 am on to purchase your cards. Notice will be sent out in The Sprig as to what days that will take place.

Cards always carry a balance until they are exhausted, and are available in \$25, \$50 and \$100 denominations.

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cost you a cent!*



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now credit cards.**

**Over the past few years Nesters
AND YOU have helped us raise
thousands of dollars ...**

Let's keep it going!

**WE CAN NOW ACCEPT
CREDIT CARDS!**



Roses of thanks

🌹 A tool belt stuffed with roses to Pascal for fixing the blackboard in Class 2-3.

🌹 Roses to Dan, Paul, Scott, Colin, Stuart and Alistair for their work with shovels and pick-axes, levels and trigonometry, preparing the perimeter for our play court, and to Ken whose work with the gutters ensured it would not wash away.

🌹 Armfuls of May flowers to our May Fair committee and co-ordinators: Emily, Kaz, Heidi G., Pip, Sheila, Natasha, Elise, Angela, Colin, Heidi S., Caroline, Mina, Lauren, Kirsten and Gabriel. It blooms to work with you all!

🌹 Roses wrought from gleaming copper and forged in fire to Caroline for offering jewelry classes to Class 5-6.

🌹 Chocolate and pastel roses to all parents who assisted with our Easter festivities.

🌹 A van full of roses to our drivers and parent chaperones for skating this year.

🌹 Roses to our poster crew for May Fair: Sheila, Elise, Pip, Angela R., Angela McG, Peter, Jen, Darlene, Tania, and Larissa.

🌹 Bright beacons of roses to Emily, Colin, Stuart and Greg for reviving our school signs.

🌹 Roses to James and Ken for incredible support behind the scenes.

Anthroposophical Study Group is Open

**This group meets every
Thursday at 7 pm to study
the writings of Rudolf
Steiner. Contact Astrid if
you are interested.**

School Tours

Current and prospective parents are encouraged to attend a school tour to see Waldorf education in action. Tours sit in on Grades 1 through 6, view the kindergarten and preschool classes and end with a question and answer session. Next school tours: Wednesday, April 30 and May 28 from 9:15- 10:15 am.

Suite wanted

Shannon Johnson and her family are returning to Squamish this summer and are looking for a 2-3 bedroom suite to rent for July 1st. Miss Shannon will be returning as the afternoon preschool teacher – we are very excited to welcome her back!

Bake for May Fair

The Waldorf Café is looking for your homemade sweets and savouries. Popular items include popcorn, breads and muffins, cookies, munchie mixes, and options for various dietary restrictions. Please wrap and label your creations and drop off at the school on Friday May 9.

Message from the board

Strategic plan moves forward with energy

In many schools spring is a time for an annual leadership retreat and reflection. The Cedar Valley Waldorf School board of directors, in partnership with the administration, has spent the winter months looking back over the accomplishments and challenges of the last few years.

As such we have laid out steps to be taken in order to ensure the future of the school continues to build upon the solid foundation established in past years. When making decisions, board members must put the interests of the children and the school above all else.

The board is engaged in a long-term budget approach consciously designed to support the various elements of the school's visionary strategic plan so as to ensure longevity and growth. Our task is to mindfully evaluate various elements of the school plan and make sensible changes to achieve its goals. Some of these changes have been implemented and rolled out under the 2014-2015 tuition schedule.

By keeping our eyes on the horizon, we continue to consider how to best to plan for future capital funding providing for a school that not only inspires a lifelong love of learning but one that fosters a breadth of amazing young people who will undoubtedly go out into the world as change-makers themselves. To do this we know we must provide them with tangible tools and a stimulating environment in which to thrive.

We appreciate your ongoing support in seeing the school's strategic plan – a plan you helped create – come to fruition.



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Common Myths about Waldorf Education: Reading

“Is it true that Waldorf students are not taught to read until second grade?”

No. Learning to read is an entire process with many contributory facets, and Waldorf education undertakes reading instruction in almost the opposite way that it is introduced in most schools across the nation. Indeed, the foundation for reading instruction is laid already in the kindergarten.

In North America, the mainstream approach to reading has been to introduce decoding skills as the first step in the reading process. This entails memorizing the alphabet and its corresponding sounds through repetitive drills and then linking these sounds together to read simple words and sentences. This is the approach that is built into early

readers. You may remember: “See Dick run. Run, Dick, run. Run, run, run.” or some similar type of reading material when you were in school. Because the content of these early readers must be very simple to restrict words to those that can be easily sounded out, teachers are forced to wait until the middle and upper elementary years to work on more sophisticated texts. Then teachers must work hard to improve comprehension since the pupils at this age have already moved beyond the phase of where imaginative thinking is at its peak.

There is a second concern about teaching reading skills in this sequence. This approach is difficult for many young

jennifer sale
experience. sold.

For each referred sale through our community Jennifer Sale will make a donation to Cedar Valley Waldorf School.

Jennifer is a long-time member of the CVWS Board of Directors and past parent.

Over the years she has donated thousands of dollars to our school through her generous referral program.

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Cedar Valley Waldorf School
Member of the Board of Directors

children because, in many cases, their eye muscles have not matured to the point where they can track properly on a page. Thus, a number of children will be labeled as slow or remedial readers simply because their eyes may not have matured as early as other children.

Waldorf education approaches reading instruction from an almost opposite direction specifically so that instruction is synchronous with the development of children. Reading is much more than recognizing sound/symbol relationships. For true reading to occur, there must be a corresponding inner activity that takes place as the child decodes words: that is, the child must form an inner picture of what he or she is reading so that comprehension develops. The rich life of the imagination is most potent in a child during kindergarten and early elementary years and is present at the same time that the child's sense for the sound and rhythm of language is at its peak.

To capture these capacities at the time that they are most present in the child is the rationale for a foundation of reading that begins first with spoken language. The rich language of fairy tales, the pictorial imagery of songs and poems and the desire of the young child to listen to stories and repeat rhymes and sing songs all become the basis for a language arts curriculum through which a child may come to love "the word." Imagine how much more complex and imaginative are the stories to which a child may be introduced if they are orally presented rather than through the simplistic language of a reader. Imagine how much a child's vocabulary can develop from listening to the content that the teacher brings. Imagine also how much more sophisticated a child's understanding (comprehension) of the world can become through hearing the rich and complex language in the teacher's presentations and stories.

For all of these reasons, Waldorf students will be given a strong foundation in comprehension, vocabulary and in the sounds and meanings of their native tongue. Then students will be introduced to writing and spelling the letters and words that are part of their stories. And, as a final step, the students will read from their own texts describing the stories that they have heard. In this way, students have the proper time to develop all of the skills that are part of the complex skill of reading at the time when it is most appropriate for them to do so. When reading is approached in this way, children become voracious readers who love and understand what they choose to read.

LEARN MORE:

There's More to Reading than Meets the Eye
www.awsna.org/renmoretoread.html

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RAINBOW PRESCHOOL

The Rainbow Children have enjoyed a wet and splashy spring. We have been watching the crocuses and now the tulips coming out of the ground and our planted seeds are finally showing green shoots. I can't wait for the cherry tree in the garden to blossom.

Our circles are all about blossoms, flowers and baby chicks. We are still talking about the magic of finding Lady Spring in the forest and are continuing this theme in our story. Springtime is also a time for the faculty to have a professional development week. I enjoyed six days of inspiring workshops contemplating both familiar and new ideas.

One of the topics of the Early Childhood Conference was sleep and its importance. How much sleep do we really need? Why is it so difficult for some of us (children and adults alike) to come to rest after a busy day? What can we do about it? How does lack of sleep affect us in our waking life? These questions and more arose from this conference.

During sleep, our bodies and souls are cleansed and rebuilt, our emotions are being processed and all healing requires sleep. A well-rested child is content, happy and able to flow with the day. I tell the children that it is during rest time that their bodies grow.

Studies done by Dr. Avi Sadeh of Tel Aviv University show that children, after being deprived of just one hour of sleep, will function at a lower grade level. Sleep deprivation, alongside poor nutrition, is the most ignored cause of disease.

Since the invention of artificial light, our day has been extended and melatonin (hormone that regulates the sleeping/waking cycle) kicks in later than in the past, when we were dependent on natural light. Our lives have become so busy, that for most of us it is challenging to get enough rest.

What can we do to help children get a good night sleep?



File photo

During sleep, our bodies and souls are cleansed and rebuilt, our emotions are processed and all healing requires sleep. A well-rested child is content, happy and able to flow with the day.

How much sleep is enough?

Adults need around seven to nine hours of sleep while children need a lot more, depending on the age. The national sleep foundation recommends that children sleep:

- 15 to 16 hours/day at 1 to 4 weeks
- 14 to 15 hours/day at 1 to 12 mos
- 12 to 14 hours/day at 1 to 3 years
- 11 to 13 hours/day at 3 to 6 years
- 10 to 11 hours/day at 7 to 12 years
- 11 hours/day for 12-year-olds through adolescence

- Remember that children need sleep for healthy development;
- They will also need down time during the day (sometimes even a

nap), especially when they start a new program like preschool, Kindergarten, Grade 1, or extracurricular activities;

- Don't over schedule their days, children need down time to "just be;"
- Provide a darkened room;
- Children need a bedtime routine (bath, snack, story, etc. it matters little what it is as long it is regular);
- Children need to go to bed at the same time every night;

Keeping these guidelines in mind, I hope you will all get a better night's rest!

With the support of faculty, I have put together a sleep survey to better understand the relationship between the sleeping and waking life of our children. The survey link will be emailed to all parents. Your participation will help us gain understanding and new insights into this aspect of children's development.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

~ Miss Astrid

SUNFLOWER PRESCHOOL

*A caterpillar crawled to the top of a tree.
"I think I'll take a nap," said he.
So – under a leaf he began to creep
To spin his cocoon, and he fell asleep.
All winter he slept in his cocoon bed,
Till spring came along one day and said,
"Wake up, wake, up, little sleepyhead.
Wake up, it's time to get out of bed."
So – he opened his eyes that sunshiny day.
Lo! He was a butterfly – and flew away!*

Welcome Spring!

Just the other day we found a small snail in our playground garden. After some discussion about snails not liking the feel of sand it was decided that she would be happier in the forest.

We carefully placed her in the brush just outside the fence in what appeared to be a vacated bird's nest. One of the children took it upon herself to provide leaves for warmth and food. Everyone was pleased with the snail's new home. This happening led to the children sharing in their wonderfully enthusiastic way their knowledge that caterpillars do turn into butterflies.

I suspect that we will have many more wonderings about spring's new growth of colours, smells, textures and tastes. As we walk through the day we are mindful of the changes in our habitat – from the sun shining on our faces, the singing of the birds, the differing shades of greens of the leaves to the gentle unfolding of the colourful tulip petals in our garden.

~ Miss Judy



This beautiful image is taken from the month of May in "Around The Sun" by Elsa Beskow. The book features delightful verses and delicate, playful illustrations that take young children through the special joys of each month of the year, from icy February to the green shoots of April, the red poppies of July, September's apples and the delights of December. Look for books like this at our May Fair book sale!



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MORNINGSTAR & HUCKLEBERRY KINDERGARTENS

*Awake, awake it is springtime,
The gentle breezes blow,
The sunshine whispers to the flowers,
"Awake, awake and grow!"*

Spring is here! New colours greet us on our walk every morning as flowers, bushes and trees awaken to spring. The children are so excited to see the small and the big changes nature offers every day. Watching the carpet of nature unfold and seeing all the bulb children awake lives inside the children. We can hear the birds happily singing, "Spring is here!"

Physical activity in nature is so healing for the children who just want to run in the spring grass and roll down the hillsides. The surging joy of springtime, with its dancing, laughing energy makes it nearly impossible not to do so.

The perfect outdoor playground is a natural setting. There, the swells of hills and the mystery of bushes, tall grasses and stumps call to the children. We are so lucky to have such a beautiful forest to explore during our nature walks each week.

The play that unfolds every time we are there is full of imagination and all of the children's senses are enlivened. The changing of all the different terrains in which we play (hills, mud, roots) strengthens the physical building of their bodies. Homes are being built, places are being explored and what the young child is doing, in a very physical way, is building his own body, building the physical structure that will house him in his life's journey.

All these good experiences provide a foundation in the child's will and feeling life; experiencing the gifts of the earth in all the seasons sows the seeds for caring for our planet in future years.

Children are so amazed to see that our bulbs, which we planted in the autumn, are already out and that some of them are beginning to awake to the signs of spring. They are wondering which colour of dress Mother Earth has given to them before finding their way up to the earth. The stories, circles and



photo by Kirsten Andrews

Lady Spring visited the preschool and kindergarten children and their families recently. Children received a plantable container with a sunflower seed to take home and nurture.

finger games we carry speak to them not only in words, but in ways they can deeply understand because they are experiencing this with their hands and hearts. Each new blossom is a celebration in its own right.

Learning through play

Play is the heart of childhood, the foundation of our humanity. Humanity is given a very long period of infancy and childhood. During this extended infancy, the brain is wired together for efficiently learning and functioning, which will serve us for the rest of our lives. Children think through movement and play.

In movement and play the brain goes through all the complex processes of growth and learning. The main avenue through which the child perceives the world is the realm of the senses. Through the natural sensory input of play, the child actively makes the world his own, rather than remaining a passive observer. When we watch children play, we can see through their constant sensory-physical interaction

with the environment how they gain experience and understanding of the situation, of themselves, and the relationship between the two. They come to know themselves, the world and what flows between.

Through play, children also learn basic skills such as sharing with others, exploring possibilities and even risk-taking and conflict resolution. Rich, imaginative play and purposeful activities are the first steps in the grander cognitive processes that develop in the years to come and guide the children without stress towards becoming free, creative thinkers and decision makers for the remainder of their lives.

Preparing for grade school

With the arrival of spring comes another activity in the kindergarten – the "Good Games." Over the course of many weeks the teachers spend time working with the children individually.

We blend artistic activities and practical tools into a playful experience that reveals the child's developmental story. These games are a tool for

honing our observations skills as teachers, and they add to what we observe in our daily work with the children inside and outside of the classroom. Through our understanding of the human being, we recognize readiness as a developmental process, not something determined by declaring a fixed age for school entry.

In Waldorf education we strive for a holistic education that balances the emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual aspect of the child and takes into consideration the stages of development. Moving into Grade 1 is a significant step. The rate of success is greater if the tasks and challenges in front of the child are appropriate for their stage of development. That way they can rise and meet it with intelligence, drive and enthusiasm. If the child is not ready the tasks can seem overwhelming and bring with it a great deal of stress and insecurity.

Celebrating the Seasons

We live in the great round of the year, and the celebration of festivals lives deeply in our roots. Across all cultures and ages, humans have come together in observance of progression of time, in recognition of our relationship to the earth. We can rejoice in the turning of the seasons with images, stories, foods and activities that evoke seasonal qualities.

The festival needs to speak to every person, each at their own different level. A festival is not something that occurs on a particular day just for a few hours, it is a building toward a moment shared together in the warm embrace of our “school

family.” We can see a pattern of preparation, a wave of energy as the day draws near, cooking, cleaning, decorating, telling and retelling of stories, songs, etc. The actual day is filled with all the goodness of the energy that we have given towards this day.

Walking through our forest and finding Lady Spring where the children usually play was an incredible experience for us teachers, parents and children. Having all the families from preschool and kindergarten come together and share a morning was great for bonding and learning. We can hear the children say every time we go back to “Lady Spring’s home” that the forest is so beautiful and green because she came and visited us.

Preparation for Easter took place through many varied activities that included sowing seeds, making baskets, planting bulbs and hearing of the Easter hare that hides eggs for us. Children lived for days in joyful anticipation of the search of the Easter eggs. Our in-class Easter festival was a delight to all the children, as we went out to the forest in search of eggs dyed in a range of natural hues. The festival was simple but special.

Now, with our next festival just around the corner, we will once again work and get together to dance around the May pole and make our ribbons fly. We are looking forward to seeing all the families, friends and all our community there. We encourage our parent-body to look for ways to make this event as special as every other one.

~ Miss Begoña and Miss Lauren



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Class one

How do we strengthen children's capacities for the English language in reading and writing? In English, approximately 70 per cent of spelling can be detected by auditory discrimination. In many other languages this is a much higher percentage. Auditory discrimination and visual memory are two capacities we need for good spelling.

Auditory discrimination has its foundation in listening. Here we are faced with the need to educate the child into a faculty which in our present civilization has deteriorated almost out of existence (as parents have experienced as they ask their child to do something). Alliterations, tongue twisters, poems and games enhance children's listening ability. In addition, when children become conscious of their own speaking they begin to listen better. Careful, clear and differentiated articulation awakens one's listening capabilities.

Strengthening observational skills enhances visual memory. Every day the children come into the classroom and identify what has changed from the day before (what is new, what has been moved, what is now gone). When working with sentences on the blackboard and in their main lesson books we want them to look, really look at the words. How many times do you see the word 'the'? Where do you see double letters? What is the longest word in the sentence? What is the shortest word? There many questions I ask the children in order that the children really look and look again at the words.

This spring we have moved to a more challenging level of observations and memory recall. In March I fixed a curtain in front of a section of the blackboard. A sentence is written on the blackboard, when the curtain is drawn back we read the sentence together. The curtain is then closed and the children are asked questions about the sentence. What's the shortest word? What's the longest word? etc.



photo by Christine Martin

Cerys Miller-Hughes and Koyuki Belostotsky lead the way of Class 1 with a basket full of Easter eggs during a scavenger hunt on April 17.

From memory they have to recall the sentence and the spelling of each word. The children also write words in the air with their hand, then with their eyes closed, followed by writing words behind closed eyelids. After working with the sentence, the sentence is dictated which then they have to write out.

Another aspect that influences reading and writing is spatial orientation. The sequencing in spelling is a question of left right. To help strengthen spatial orientation we play

games. I may ask them: "Put your right middle finger behind you right ear." We also engage in Brain Gym and other activities that stimulate both the left and right hemisphere of the brain.

The development of writing and reading is a wondrous and at times challenging journey, taken at different speeds for different children. It is important that the process unfolds within the child with confidence, comfort and joy.

~ Miss Christine

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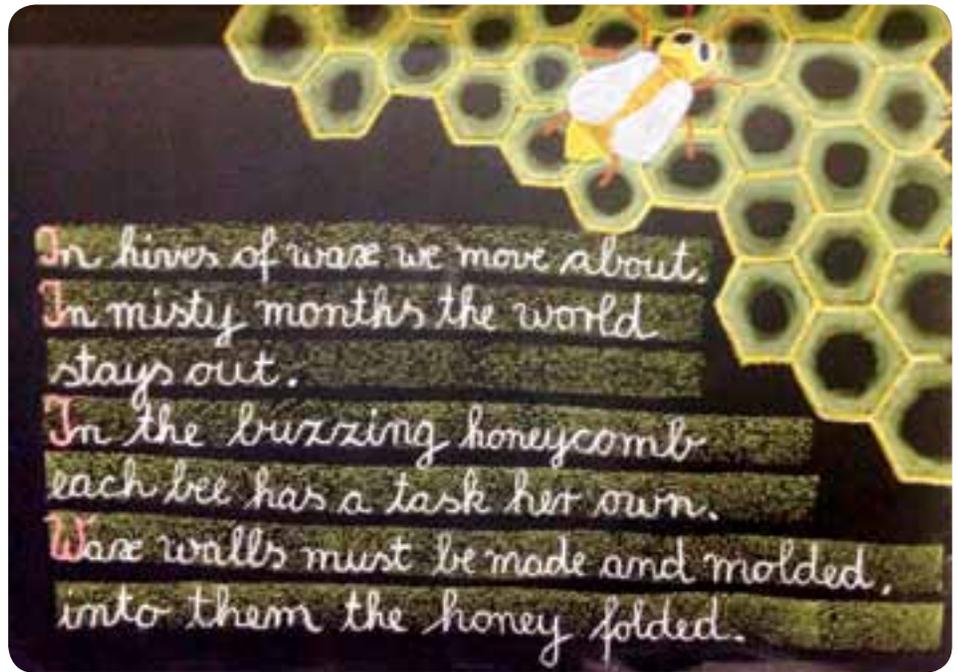
CLASS TWO/THREE

After measuring time just before Christmas, Class 2-3 has learned how to measure length and distance. We primarily focused on body-based measurements such as the foot, the inch, the hand and quite a few more. The class had lots of fun comparing what, for example, 10 feet would be like if we measured them with the smallest foot of the children in the class versus the longest foot.

Since most of the children have now gone through their nine-year change they are eager to find out more of the world around them and they want to measure everything. The moment in this block when all students were truly astonished was when we measured the dimensions of Noah's Ark as it is given in the Old Testament. To sum it up in their own words: "The ark was huge!"

After distances and lengths we moved onto money. After a theoretical introduction to the concept of money versus bartering, the class then planned for two class markets. The first was to be held within their class for which the children made their own money, and a second market that would involve other classes in the school and parents as customers with actual money.

The children in Class 2-3 made and prepared the goods for each market and both were a great success. The students learned how to make change for purchases, how to price their wares



photos by Larissa Smith

The students of Class 2-3 proudly display their Easter grass grown from seed.

and how to work as a team for their booths, the set-up and the clean-up.

It was agreed that 50 per cent of the

total earnings from each booth would go toward a class fund which totaled \$84.75 at the end of the market. Later on in the school year the class will decide how the fund will be used.

With spring then knocking on our door we started preparing some of the garden beds outside for planting in our gardening block. The children learned of the importance of bees for new seeds and the role of the worms in the ground. To practically illustrate the lifecycle of plants the class then planted seeds in seed boxes and wheat grass in clear plastic trays. They were able to observe how seeds sprout, sending out longer and longer roots and how finally the stem of the plant emerges. It was of course then nice to have these trays with wheat grass filled with the eggs after our Easter egg hunt.

Children around and after the nine-year change have a greater curiosity about the world around them. The "how" and "why" of things are more central to their thinking. Main lesson blocks like gardening, farming, house building, wool and many more are under the general heading of Living on the Earth, which is what the children of this age are trying to explore.

~Ralf Hoerger



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CLASS FIVE/SIX

After our language arts block, which was about creative writing and grammar, we started the first of two blocks on Ancient Rome.

This block led my students from the legend of Romulus and Remus to the death of Julius Caesar. It included a lot of stories and practical activities such as discussing of Roman laws and practicing of Latin tongue twisters.

The children enjoyed the stories about Hannibal, Caesar and others very much. During this three-week block Miss Markovich from Nova Scotia covered large portions of the main lessons. Now that her practicum in our class is completed she will go on to be a class teacher at Sunrise Waldorf School. We all want to wish her the best. Thanks for your wonderful work!

Math was our next block after Rome. We practice math daily in the beginning of each main lesson and even during our German lessons. Mental math exercises like chain math, times tables, fractions, estimating, and more are part of these daily exercises.

During the three-week math block one daily exercise was about understanding numbers. The students had to organize a number mix of fractions, decimals and percentages from negative numbers to millions. Long division, multiplication, addition and subtraction of decimals was another main focus during this block. Measurement and graphs were also part of this block.



photo by Fritz Bindseil

The students of Class 5-6 took up a practicum with jeweler Caroline Miller and learnt copper-smithing among other things Tuesday afternoons over a three-week period.

The second Rome block led the students to the collapse of the Roman Empire and dealt with practical aspects of the city, including the life of Roman women, architecture, Roman numbers, inventions and more.

The students finished their Easter bunny carvings and prepared Ukrainian Easter eggs. They also dyed and decorated Easter eggs with Miss Baldwin for the kindergarten children.

On three Thursday afternoons we had the wonderful opportunity to create jewelry with Caroline Miller in her studio. Thanks Caroline for this wonderful opportunity!

~ Fritz Bindseil



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