



Sprouting Cedar

..... • SPECIAL ALUMNI EDITION

Alumni Q + A



photo submitted

Shondra Martin opens up about her experience growing up in a Waldorf family, public school, and her life ambition

By Kirsten Andrews

Shondra Martin is a young woman who, without question, will go places, achieve the unimaginable, and quite certainly be recognized for it. At 18, she's already seen and done things many adults still have on their bucket lists.

Connecting with Shondra, a Squamish Waldorf School alum who attended the school from 2002 to 2012, is no easy task. The busy University of Victoria student is currently attending Gustavson School of Business and was off to a week-long surfing trip with friends in Tofino when the idea to profile her in this issue came up. We communicated mostly by email, sitting down for a quick cup of tea one night where I got a broad overview of what was happening in her life: After this quick break from school she would wrap up her year of university with a celebratory trip with her father, James. Plans include travelling in Nepal for a month, where she and her dad will hike to Everest Basecamp, explore the region, and hopefully summit some "hikable" peaks that don't require technical mountaineering.

After that the pair will head to Australia to SCUBA dive the Great Barrier Reef.

Upon her return, Shondra plans to road trip through Jasper, Banff, Yoho and Glacier National park with eight friends for more hiking and exploring.

The former SWS student graduated Waldorf with her combined class five years ago. She left as a Grade 7 student and entered Don Ross middle school the following September in Grade 9. She says she credits her experience at SWS for giving her an unbridled passion for life.

"Waldorf was so natural and enjoyable that learning was not a task of struggling through pages of textbooks and online assignments, but rather a process of creative discovery," she said. "In this way Squamish Waldorf School is able to ignite a passion in each of its students that is unwavering in the face of adversity. It is able to promote creativity and innovation and effortlessly intertwine these attributes in every aspect of education.

Continued on page 2

“Now that I am in university I feel the roots of my childhood education holding me steadfast – and it most definitely nurtured a lifelong love of learning.”

This can be portrayed succinctly by a recent experience Shondra had over university reading break in February where she travelled with 23 other university students to Honduras to volunteer at a temporarily medical clinic in rural communities for people who didn't have access to proper health care.

“I didn't know the names of a single person on the trip, other than the club president,” she recounted. “I had no clue what to expect – and not going to lie, I was terrified; however, volunteering abroad was something I've always wanted to do.

So when I came across the booth at UVic clubs day last September, I put my name down on the list and just kept saying ‘yes’ to every step leading up to the trip.

“Within hours I had made over a dozen new best friends, and within a week my entire perspective on the world had changed. It was so humbling and such an amazing experience to see the way people live, and to help in any way I could, along with my fellow students and five volunteer doctors – all with such pure hearts so full of love for people with nothing, who could give us nothing in return.”

SWS VISION

Squamish Waldorf School is a premier pre-K to Grade 8 Waldorf school providing a holistic education that addresses the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, 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.

Q+A with alum Shondra Martin

Q: You're currently studying at Gustavson School of Business at University of Victoria. Can you give us an idea of your plan or the big picture?

A: I'm still not entirely sure what I plan on doing with the rest of my life, but the idea of positive world change through business has really inspired me to study in that field. I am also passionate about environmental sciences and plan on pursuing a second science degree in geography with a concentration in environment sustainability, conservation and restoration.

Waldorf has had a huge impact on my continuing education; it taught me to pursue my interests and kindled my curiosity. It has created a thirst for knowledge and a passion for learning that has led me to thoroughly enjoy my first year of post-secondary education.

Q: You've been playing soccer competitively for the past decade? What are your athletic ambitions or pursuits? Do you see a connection between these and your Waldorf education?

A: Soccer has always been my passion. Now that I am in university I have a lot less time, though I still play four to five times a week and play on a Division 1 women's club team that recently won island championships – making club history as the first women's team to do so.

I am also a passionate hiker and love being outside in nature. Growing up in a Waldorf setting I was constantly immersed in nature and education was tied to outdoor activities. I can confidently say that this Waldorf influence is one of the main contributors to my love of hiking. From waking up at 2:30 am for sunrise adventures, to epic 14-hour day hikes, to week-long treks, my love of the outdoors is unwavering, and has been since childhood.

As far as athletic ambitions go, they have mostly shifted to academic ambitions or life ambitions since beginning university. However, during high school, I was a high achieving athlete playing competitive soccer, running cross-country, and racing track and field. During my high school years, I have won multiple regional titles, and I qualified for eight provincial championship competitions across the three sports, falling 0.8 seconds short of a ninth in track.

Q: You've always been a strong creative writer and talented artist. How does creativity fit into your life/schedule? How does your creative impetus or output relate to your Waldorf foundation?

A: While most of my current writing is strictly academic, thanks to the university workload, I still enjoy creative writing.

During high school, I wrote many creative novels. My most successful attempt was a piece of creative fiction over 100,000 words, which I failed to finish due to the fact that I didn't know how to write the very last scene, and was afraid that if I were to get it wrong it would ruin the whole book.

I entirely owe this creative passion to Waldorf. From early childhood I have been encouraged to write and develop my creative ideas. Creativity was intertwined with every aspect of learning, and not only the imaginative creativity that produces fiction stories, but other mediums of art, movement, and creative problem solving.

Q: How do you feel about your Waldorf education?

A: Every year I realize more and more how grateful I am for my Waldorf education. While in Waldorf, I didn't think much of it, and was quite happy to switch to the public education system upon graduating

Waldorf in Grade 7, only to find it disappointing.

While I enjoyed going to school with all of my friends from my soccer team, meeting new people and making new friends, I still consider my Waldorf class to be my family. I am barely in contact with any of the girls from my soccer team anymore.

I discovered quite quickly that the public education system was not about learning, knowledge, creative thinking, or enjoyment; it was about succeeding academically. And I did, achieving Principal's List every year of high school and maintaining a grade average above 90%. But slowly, in each year of public school, my love of learning diminished while my concern for grades increased – and my marks, while still high, were falling. Education was no longer about being engaged and pursuing knowledge, it was about memorizing as much as you could, and then forgetting it after the test to make room in your brain for another course load of information for your next exam.

I had been giving the nickname 'the memory bank' by my class teacher from Grades 1 through 5 in Waldorf, and this cycle of memorizing and then discarding worked well for me in the public system, but I still felt what all my Waldorf peers were feeling: boredom. Waldorf was engaging and stimulating, providing a valuable education with which the public system simply could not compete.

When I was in Waldorf, surrounded by my soccer teammates all in the public system, I would hear them talk about school all the time. But my day at school sounded completely different from theirs, and since there were 14 of them and one of me, I figured they must be right and I must be wrong. I thought Waldorf was behind the times, but once experiencing the public system for myself, I realize Waldorf is so, so, incredibly ahead of the times, and has recognized the true value of a meaningful and engaging education, striving beyond the goal of preparing students for the workplace, but striving to prepare students for a lifetime and growing, learning and succeeding in their creative passions.



submitted photo

Shondra Martin, 18, spent 10 years at Squamish Waldorf School before entering the public school system. She considers Waldorf "ahead of the times" when it comes to education.

Q: We often reject our parents ideas at some point. Do you feel you had a different experience than your fellow Waldorf peers because your mom, Christine Martin, was school principal at the time?

A: I don't think my mom being principal had much affect on my Waldorf experience while I was there, except maybe for the fact that the school always felt a little more like home to me than it did to my peers. However, I think my appreciation of my Waldorf education is much more substantial due to my mom's passion and commitment.

I am so incredibly grateful that my mother chose to give me the best education possible and didn't settle to raise me in the public education system. I am so grateful for her ambition and dedication in building this school from the ground up.

I am also awed by the fact that she didn't simply stop once her children

were guaranteed a Waldorf education, but continued with unwavering passion to ensure other children could also get a valuable education, striving to expand and improve the school.

I sometimes joke that Waldorf school was like my mother's third and favourite daughter. Mom was often the first one to school in the morning (if we were late it was always my fault) and the last to leave at night. If it weren't for my persistent whining, she probably would never leave her office. To see first hand the hard work my mother put into the school has lead me to a much deeper appreciation of Waldorf.

Furthermore, both high school and university have made me realize how grateful I am for my Waldorf education. High school showed me how valuable an engaging education is, and university has shown me how important it is in all aspects of life.

From May 2016



A passion for life & art

Q+A with alum Erika Yokouchi

Erika Yokouchi is a world traveller, lover of beauty and creator of art in its many forms. A life-long Waldorf student, Erika spent her formative years at Squamish Waldorf School before entering the Vancouver Waldorf High School.

Q: Where are you now?

A: I attend Vancouver Waldorf School. I'm in Grade 12.

Q: What will you do after graduation?

A: I'm planning to take the year off and do some travelling, but I need to save up a little first. I want to go to Hawaii for a bit, visit grandparents in Japan for a few months, and then go back to Switzerland – I did my exchange there when I was 16 and was there for five months. I spent my first few days staying with (former SWS teacher) Andie Flett and

her family. It was amazing. My brother Riki is 16 and he's currently on an exchange in Germany.

When I get back it's hard to say what I will study. I am thinking about interior design or photography. I don't know about a career just yet, but those are things that I'm interested in as something that I want to learn more about – I still just want to keep learning, for a long time. I don't have an end goal in mind just yet.

Q: Are you glad that you stayed with Waldorf after SWS?

A: I'm definitely glad I stayed in Waldorf. I knew when I graduated from Squamish Waldorf that I wanted to go to Whistler or the Vancouver Waldorf School. It was my choice to go to Vancouver, and I'm really glad to be here now – it has a well-structured curriculum and it's been really great.

Q: How would you describe your experience in the Waldorf high school?

A: Here you don't really choose your classes like in public school. That's part of Waldorf philosophy, you have a well-rounded education – the scientists would know about art and history for example, not just the area they are choosing to study. It's important to have an overall education in all the subject areas.

Also, I know everyone that's in my class really well. The Grade 9s and Grade 12s – and everyone in between – hang out and chat. Everyone is friends. We're not segregated by grade or group. If there's a party or event, the entire high school is there. There's a strong community feeling. I really love the trips we go on as well – we did a whole school trip at beginning of year and at the end of each year we do a class trip.

Q: For the first portion of your day you are steeped in one topic consecutively for weeks at a time – your Main Lesson. What benefit do you see to learning like this?

A: To be able to focus on one subject for a month – you can really get in depth with whatever you are studying. You come up with all these ideas along the way.

When it's all in one block you can go into great detail and bring in other ideas from the block. We still create our own main lesson books but it's a bit different from when we were younger. Now we write our own texts, which is really nice.

We're not just being told what to include. When we have a lecture, we can go home and write what our take is of it. In Grade 9 you would write what the teacher spoke about, but now, as we get older, we go home and write something related to the topic, our own ideas incorporated with the facts. You get to offer your own personal take.

Q: What do your main lesson books look like?

A: Esthetics are important. Once you get to Grade 11 you've done so much handwriting! Half the time, we draw from photos and add colour, and add a

Self-portrait by Erika Yokouchi with graphite shavings, watercolour and pencil.



lot of artistic details depending on your style. I really like drawing so I'm able to draw something I like for any topic we are on. Instead of pictures in textbooks you can draw your own pictures, add little details that you wouldn't normally notice – it gives you the opportunity to look really closely at things, zoology for example.

Doing it this way you notice the different forms and can more easily compare one thing against another, like with anatomy. It's kind of the same as reading something or writing something – it's a very different experience just looking at a photo compared to drawing a photo or something real.

From March 2016

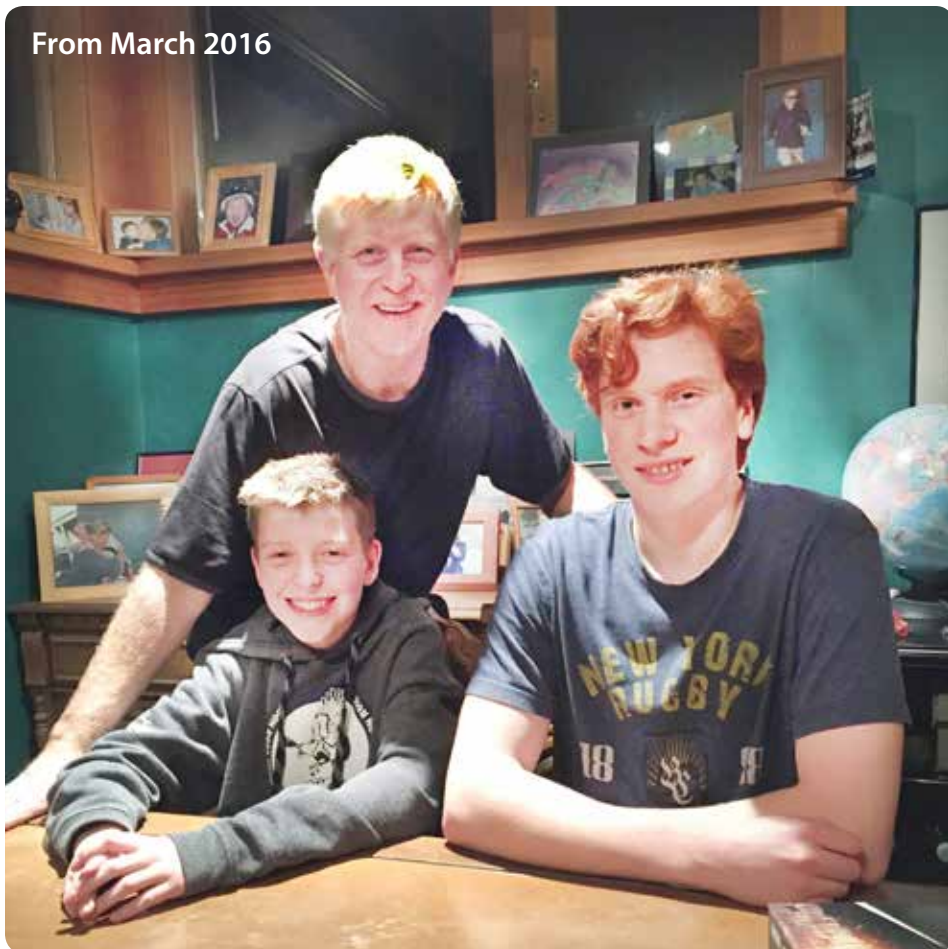


photo by Kirsten Andrews

Perry Murphy with sons and SWS alumni Lukas (left) and Erik. Lukas achieved the principal's list in Grade 7 with a straight-A average, while Erik was awarded the principal's award, for a 97 per cent average and exemplary student achievement. Erik attributes much of his success to his years at SWS.

Top of the Class

Dad says transition to public school seamless

By Kirsten Andrews

More often than not, when a family in Squamish makes the decision to opt out of the “norm” and pursue an education model like Waldorf there comes with the choice a bit of hesitation. To be blunt, Squamish Waldorf School is seen in about as many different ways as there are toddlers in this town.

It's known as being the school where all the students do is art – or music. It's the “hippy” school that doesn't teach children to use computers; the school where kids make bread or play

outside all day. The school where children don't learn to read and write until Grade 1 – or later.

All of that, in some part, is probably true. But did you know that academic excellence is at the core of Waldorf education?

That's a fact, too.

From Grade 1 through 8 our students create their own textbooks, and yes, that includes illustrating them. And when children enter Grade 1 they are first taught their letters with rich stories

(see the Class 1 update on page 13), but alongside that these six-year-olds are also learning all four processes of math – addition, subtraction, multiplication, division – at the same time.

Despite not working on computers until Grade 8 when they are introduced as tools to be taken apart and put back together, our grads can (and do) go on to receive computer science awards.

They skip grades upon entering public school; make the honour roll, and the principal's list.

Fifteen-year-old Erik Murphy completed Grade 6 at SWS. A well-rounded teen, Murphy plays midget hockey and is in the hockey academy at Howe Sound Secondary. Last year he maintained a 97 per cent grade average while at Don Ross and received the principal's award – an honour given the top four of 600 students, and one the Murphys attribute to their time at SWS.

“Talk about guys being able to keep focus. They got that out of the Waldorf school as far as I'm concerned. There's your foundation right there,” said their father, Perry who has two older boys that only ever attended public school. “I'm in a position to compare, and I'm a firm believer that their focus was set somewhere at a younger age. I get kudos all the time from their teachers about these kids.”

Erik agrees.

“I can understand and comprehend things a lot easier. They want me to put out something like, say, a character essay... it's just easy. You just write down the facts and put it into a nice sentence. I can focus really well and get done what I need to and I attribute that to Waldorf,” he said, adding he was a pretty average student in his time at SWS.

“Neither of the boys had any problem adjusting to the public school curriculum. They did really well, and I was surprised by that,” Perry admitted. “I didn't know what to expect, I knew in Waldorf they were on the other end of a different kind of teaching. At Squamish Waldorf it seemed to be

SWS alumni take home top awards, satisfaction

more diverse. They got outside and ran around, they planted seeds and harvested, and went for long hikes up the Chief, they built a tree house and a little log cabin. The boys liked going to school. It was stimulating.

“I had a few chats with (class teacher) Fritz (Bindseil), to understand what he was doing. And he did some neat things, like he would put some of the weaker students in the class together with the stronger ones, sit them together and that would help both of them to rise at the same level.

“In the primary years the nurturing of the kids is what I really liked. It was very personal. The teachers seemed to be closer to the students and knew them personally. It was a parent-type of nurturing that they were getting,” he said, adding the faculty felt like family.

“The boys’ mom wanted to put them in Waldorf. It made all the sense in the world to try something different,” said Perry. “My oldest boy struggled, right to the bitter end, and still to this day walks to the beat of his own drummer. He barely got through because he didn’t care. He would have been a kid who would have done well in Waldorf.”

Lukas, 13, quietly took in the discussion. When asked how his marks

are he laughs. “They’re OK this year,” he answered.

“He’s being very modest,” dad said.

“They’ve dropped a little bit. I’ve got one less A – I had one B this year,” he said. “But it’s back to an A again.”

Perry describes his two youngest as committed to whatever task is before them.

“Waldorf really gave them the ability to get things done,” he said, adding that they are just like other kids in many respects – they play sports, get out and hang with their friends, but that they are simply “more accepting of the fact that you have to put energy out to get what you want.”

The Murphys describe the hockey rink as a second home.

“We spend a tremendous amount of time there,” said Perry. “And I spend

an incredible amount of time around kids this age – both of these guys play in different leagues, and with school. Kids their age, you don’t hear

them articulate like these guys. They speak with confidence. You can hear it. That’s not typical of teenage boys.”

“Erik was asked to read In Flanders Fields in front of the entire school for Remembrance Day,” added Perry, his eyes beaming with pride.

“When asked to do it, Erik said ‘It would be an honour.’ I don’t know too many kids who would respond that way.”

“I really loved Waldorf

[kindergarten and elementary] and see the benefit of it, and to be so involved in the public school and for them to really have embraced it and it didn’t seem to be any challenge to them, I really see a benefit in that.”

“Talk about guys being able to keep focus. They got that out of the Waldorf school as far as I’m concerned. There’s your foundation right there. I’m in a position to compare, and I’m a firm believer that their focus was set somewhere at a younger age. I get kudos all the time from their (public school) teachers about these kids.”

Waldorf grads stand out; one research study gives students top marks

Douglas Gerwin and David Mitchell from the Research Bulletin conducted a survey in the spring of 2007 to see what happens to Waldorf school graduates after they leave high school. They found the following:

- After graduating from a Waldorf high school, attends college (94%)
- Major in arts/humanities (47%) or science/math (42%) as an undergraduate
- Graduates or is about to graduate from college (88%)
- Practices and values life-long learning (91%)
- Is self-reliant and highly values self confidence (94%)

- Is highly satisfied in choice of occupation (89%)
- High values in verbal expression (93%) and in critical thinking (92%)
- Expresses a high level of consciousness in making relationships work – both at home and on the job
- Highly values interpersonal relationships (96%)
- Highly values tolerance of other viewpoints (90%)
- At work cares most about ethical principals (82%) and values helping others (82%)

Standing Out Without Standing Alone – Profile of Waldorf School Graduate, Research Bulletin, Spring 2007, Volume 12-12

From December 2016



Alumni Mallory Woods FINDS HER GROOVE

Mallory Woods is an 18-year-old working artist who graduated Grade 8 from Squamish Waldorf School in 2012, and is the big sister of SWS students Matthew and Evelyn Sinclair. She graduated from Howe Sound Secondary in June 2016 and is now pursuing her bachelor of fine arts at Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary.

Q: What was your experience with Waldorf education?

A: I love Waldorf education and am really passionate about how it preserves the imagination of children.

Much of who I am was nurtured through my Waldorf education and where I am today is a reflection of that. I have gone to three different Waldorf schools: Morning Glory Waldorf School, The Vancouver Waldorf school and of course our own Squamish Waldorf School. Each one of them gave me more to build on and I believe, helped create a solid base for who I am today.

Q: What was your aspiration when you graduated?

A: When I left Waldorf I had plans to go to Emily Carr to get my bachelor of fine arts. This is something Peter (Morris, class

teacher) really helped me move towards.

Q: What are you currently doing?

A: I am currently at the Alberta College of Art and Design for my bachelors of fine arts before transferring to get my doctorate in psychology. All this is going towards my goal of a career as a child-oriented art therapist.

Q: What is your passion?

A: My passion is my art. So much of myself goes into my pieces that it simply wouldn't be sustainable if it wasn't what fueled me. The creativity of Waldorf only helped strengthen that over the years. I truly am following my passion. I am doing what I need to do to follow my dreams. Moving to Calgary was part of that.

Q: What is the best aspect of your experience with Waldorf?

A: Just the incredible amount of love and support I have felt during my schooling. It so strongly contributed to me being where I am today. I am in close contact with many of my elementary school teachers – they truly are, in the most authentic sense of the word, teachers. They have been my mentors, my friends, my challengers and my guardians. And they still are.

Q: Would you recommend a Waldorf education to others?

Absolutely. And I do, all the time, pretty much whenever I can. Especially for the younger years, keeping that love of play and imagination is so critical. Waldorf helps kids live their childhood to its fullest extent.

Q: What difference do you want to make in the world?

A: I feel such a burning desire to help those who are struggling. Waldorf held me through some hard times in my family. I want to be able to pass that same generosity along. I see that desire also burning in many of my fellow Waldorf alumni. Through my work in counseling and therapy, I know I can create that space for children. I have the workings of an autobiography underway; a book that will give a closer look into my life, my alternative upbringing, and the perspectives that arose from it. It will closely link to self-help, my work with my own mental



submitted photo

Mallory Woods has been creating and selling her painted canvases in Squamish and showcasing her works at local cafés and the Foyer Gallery for the last couple of years.

development, and psychology behind child development. I may be young, but Waldorf breeds thoughtful, opinionated young adults.

Q: What are your favourite recollections of being in SWS?

A: We had so much fun together, and we were all very close. What sort of shenanigans can you imagine a close-knit group of pre-teens, with the creativity and freedom Waldorf had installed in us, would get up to? Because I am pretty sure we did them all. From finding mud baths in the forest (and diving in, clothing and all, only to have to be hosed down in front of the school), to getting lost on top of The Chief and leaving cryptic symbols in rocks and logs so our teacher would find us, to standing in our pajamas, five feet from wild orcas and hiking to the most beautiful places I have ever been, to chasing small(ish) sharks.

My favourite memories were the kind we would never have gotten in a thousand years if it weren't for Waldorf. You don't get to do these things in a public school.

Q: How do you feel the “head, heart, hands” method to education works for children?

A: I have recently been feeling the added value more than ever as I work my way through art university. Cedar weaving isn't new to me; neither are drop spindles, natural dying, or leather work.

These things we have been doing since we were children suddenly have given me a wonderful real life advantage and yet another way for me to express myself. I think it's very much needed, especially with where we are in the world today. Children need to learn to contemplate thoroughly, to boldly speak from their hearts and work hard for what they believe in – now more than ever. In short, the world needs more Waldorf.

Our alumni are making us proud!

Once again our alumni have demonstrated strong academic results following graduation from Squamish Waldorf School.

Results provided by Don Ross Secondary School for 2015 included Ivana Hamilton, Sam Watt, Courtney Williams and Erik Yaremkevich for Grade 9 honour roll (overall grade average of 73 to 85 per cent).

Congratulations go to Jason Hoerger, Irene Lopez Bago (who also skipped a grade after graduating from SWS), Erik Murphy, Sienna Royal Grant, and Grant Willcox for achieving the Grade 9 principal's list (achieved an overall grade average of 86 to 100 per cent).

Other Grade 9 awards given to our alumni included Eric Murphy, who received the principal's award, given to only the top four students of the whole school; Erik Yaremkevich for band; and Courtney Williams took home the First Nations Award.

Of the 13 SWS students who went to Don Ross for Grade 9; 69 per cent of the class reached honours or higher, 38 per cent made the principals list. In years past, we have found that 30 per cent of the public school students received honours, while seven per cent were included on the principal's list.

Two Grade 7 alumni have also done exceptionally well: Rodrigo Queimano (French Immersion) received honours, while Lukas Murphy made the principal's list.

Needless to say we are very proud of all our grads and love to hear about their successes – both in and out of school. Well done!

From December 2013



photo by Kirsten Andrews

SWS founding parent Jacki Willcox, pictured with son Grant (Grade 8) and daughter Cayley (Grade 10), said both she and her husband John credit Waldorf education for their teens' curiosity, creativity, and desire to learn. Grant and Cayley do too.

SWS alumni excel academically

By Christine Martin

In the last two years Squamish Waldorf School has graduated two classes of children, many of whom have been in our school or another Waldorf school since early childhood.

In June SWS graduated a combined Grade 6-7 class, and the year before graduated its first Grade 7-8 class. This now provides us with the exciting opportunity to see how our students have fared in the public school system.

In 2012, all the students from the Grade 7-8 class went into Grade 9; there were 10 students (an additional four had left the previous year to move

into Don Ross earlier), and were split evenly among the two grades. Many of the students in the Grade 7 class were children with autumn birthdays and therefore spent an extra year in our early childhood program gaining a strong foundation. These students, although they had only seven years of elementary school, had developed strong academic skills at Squamish and were able to move up to Grade 9.

Of these 14 students 12 have gone onto Don Ross Squamish's middle school, one to the Vancouver Waldorf School, and another relocated to the United States.

The students, some a little anxious to go to new and much larger schools, quickly adapted. Socially they fit in maintaining friendships with their SWS classmates plus building new relationships. It did not take them long to feel comfortable and confident.

Academically they shone. Fifty-eight per cent of the students from Squamish made the honour roll (requiring a 73-85 per cent or higher average) in their first year at Don Ross. Only 30 per cent of students from the public system received honours.

Only 12 students out of a total of 191 made the principal's list (86 per cent average and higher) in 2012. Three of these were SWS grads, and a fourth had attended SWS for her early childhood and first elementary school years. Twenty-five per cent of SWS graduates earned this distinction compared to seven per cent from the public system.

In 2013 students from the class of 2012 received awards for outdoor education, art, physical education, and science. Students who received the English award and the "Excellence in French Immersion" were also students who attended SWS in early childhood and the earlier grades.

The year prior, of the four students who had left a year early to enter Grade 8 at Don Ross three made the principal's list (out of a total of 35 students). Awards are given at the end of the year for the top two students in each subject area. Students from SWS received the top awards in French, social studies and computer science (yes, computer science!).

There is a reason the top executives of the Silicon Valley send their children to Waldorf (see New York Times article A Silicon Valley school that does not compute)!

It is a myth that Waldorf is not strong in the area of academics: The performance of SWS grads definitely debunks this. Squamish students are certainly well round – academically, socially, emotional and physically.

I have two daughters who were

Students thrive post-graduation

students at our school: Mikayla, who is 16 and Shondra, 14. When they transitioned into the public school I received many compliments from the teachers. One teacher said, “There are a few students in my teaching career that inspire me to teach, your daughter is one of them.

Some students, some of the times come to school ready to learn. Your daughter comes everyday eager to learn. It is wonderful to see.”

Another comment was: “If all students were as focused and responsible as your daughter it would make my teaching job easier.”

The feedback I have received

from parents of students who have graduated from SWS and go on to the public system has all been positive.

Parent Jacki Willcox said the transition experiences of her son Grant, now in Grade 8 at Don Ross, and daughter Cayley, in Grade 10 at Coast Mountain Academy, have been smooth.

“Both children have adjusted with ease to their (new schools) and have missed nothing by being in the Waldorf system. In fact both of our children recognize the benefits they derived from their Waldorf years – their approach to learning is curious, their desire to learn is inherent and their creativity is nurtured,” she said, adding that they began Waldorf in preschool.

“The mission statement of the school has manifest in both children. My son tells me he and his Waldorf classmates are all getting As and their work is highly creative.”

Willcox added that Cayley is “with kids who have had an extremely

academic focus and can see her own ideas are original and that she has an ability to think outside the box.”

Heather Adamson, mother of two alumni (2012 and 2013), echoes this sentiment.

“The transition for both of them was much smoother than any of us expected. It was also successful – any way you look at it. I feel strongly that their experience at Squamish has prepared them well not just for secondary education but for life. Waldorf encourages students to think for themselves, and they do. My kids do well academically, at times very well. They are also both very creative and relatively active. They are well-rounded teenagers. They have good relationships with their family and friends. What more could I want?”

Willcox said she sees many aspects of the teaching model used by Waldorf education being mirrored in other independent schools in Squamish.

“The new thinking in education reflects the fundamentals Waldorf has been following for years. Coast Mountain Academy and Quest University both embrace many similar ideas of nurturing creativity, self-directed learning, development of community, and small class sizes of fully engaged students. Squamish has been doing this for years,” she said.

“My husband and I have no doubts that both our children will contribute to society in meaningful ways and help to make the world a better place – they are happy, well-adjusted kids with a love of learning.

“Their years at Waldorf have been a blessing for which we will always be thankful.”

“I feel strongly that their experience at Squamish Waldorf School has prepared them well not just for secondary education but for life.”

***Heather Adamson,
mother of two SWS grads***

Waldorf grad wins 2013 Nobel Prize

Neuroscientist Thomas Südhof, 57, was in the remote town of Baeza in Spain to attend a conference and give a lecture, when he found out he was one of the Nobel Prize winners this year.

“Every scientist dreams of this. I didn’t realize there was chance I would be awarded the prize. I am stunned and really happy,” said the Hannover Waldorf School graduate.

“We’ve made so many major advances during the past 50 years in this field, but there’s still much more to learn,” said Südhof, who in a 2010 interview with *The Lancet* credited his bassoon instructor as his most influential teacher for helping him to learn the discipline to practice for hours on end.

“Understanding how the brain works is one of the most fundamental problems in neuroscience.”

Südhof, a medical doctor and professor of molecular and cellular physiology at the Stanford School of Medicine, won the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. He shared the prize with James Rothman, PhD, a former Stanford professor of biochemistry, and Randy Schekman, PhD, who earned his doctorate at Stanford under the late Dr. Arthur Kornberg, MD, another winner of the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine.

The three were awarded the prize “for their discoveries of machinery regulating vesicle traffic, a major transport system in our cells.”

~ *The Stanford Report*, Oct. 7, 2013.

Want more? Visit www.thewaldorfs.waldorf.net/famousalumni.html for a list of Waldorf alumni recognized in their field for positive contributions to the arts, science, politics, and other fields.



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