

Messenger

Summerfield

WALDORF SCHOOL AND FARM

NOVEMBER 16, 2017

VOLUME 30, ISSUE 3

New Yellow Rose Kindergarten Opens January 2018!

We are thrilled to announce that the school has decided to move forward in opening a third kindergarten in January, 2018.

This new class, Yellow Rose, will be led this year by Miss Thalia Beam, who was the lead teacher in the White Rose Kindergarten from 2007-2015. Miss Thalia, during a visit here from her current home in Wales, UK, has kindly agreed to teach the new class from January through June while we search for a permanent kindergarten teacher.

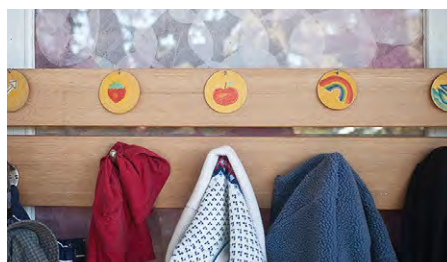
Demand for a third kindergarten has been building, and we have ten families currently in the wait pool who have been eagerly asking if there is any way to get their children into our kindergarten program. We decided that the time was right to offer a place for our current Summerfield families who were awaiting openings, as well as welcoming many new families to our community. At our Morning on the Farm on Saturday,

November 4, over 20 new families with young children turned out to enjoy a sunny visit with the chickens, cows, sheep, Farmer Dan, and of course the early childhood teachers.

Miss Thalia's warmth and experience (not only did she teach kindergarten at Summerfield for eight years, but she took a class through first through eighth grade at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs in New York) will make the opening of the new kindergarten smooth and seamless. Her Early Childhood colleagues are overjoyed to be working with her again.

We are now accepting new kindergarten applicants, so please spread the word!

— Tracy Saucier, Admissions Director



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Important Dates:

Grandparents Day

Friday, November 17

Annual Winter Faire

Saturday, December 2

ARTISAN SHOPPING: 10:30am–3:30pm

FAMILY HOLIDAY FAIRE: 11am–3pm

CIRCUS WALDISSIMA SHOW: 3:30pm

**Community Advent
Spiral Walk**

Sunday, December 3, 5:30pm

HS Open House NEW DATE

Saturday, December 9

Farewell to Mr. Smout

At the end of this week, the Summerfield community will say goodbye to fourth grade class teacher, Cody Smout, who will be handing the class over to another teacher after the Thanksgiving break. On behalf of the school, we want to share our gratitude for Cody's work with the children and his work as a colleague. His dedication to creatively meeting this class in their path as developing human beings has been a gift. The children are surely full of memories that they will treasure long into the future. We wish him the best in his departure.



Until next fall, we have hired Lisa Wespiser, an outstanding, experienced and fully-trained Waldorf class teacher, whose depth of knowledge of the curriculum, organization and warm presence will be the perfect fit to carry the class successfully through the end of the fourth grade year. Lisa comes to us from Sebastopol Independent Charter School, where

she enjoyed leading her class from first through eighth grade followed by a delightful sojourn in kindergarten. It was a magical journey from start to finish! Along the way, Lisa particularly enjoyed seeing her students grow as musicians and find their voice in writing and on the stage.

Lisa is looking forward to returning to her Summerfield roots. She first joined the Summerfield community as a parent in 2000 when her daughter, Erica, was in second grade. After experiencing her daughter's renewed joy for learning, Lisa made the transition from mainstream education to Waldorf. Lisa holds a B.A. in French language and literature as well as a Multiple Subjects California Teaching Credential and Waldorf Teaching Certificate. She is currently working on her Master's Degree and Administrative Credential.

Friday, November 17, will be Mr. Smout's last day, and Ms. Wespiser will begin on Monday, November 27, when we return from Thanksgiving break.

—The Lower School Core Group:
Tim Allen, Andrea Jolicoeur, Tricia Walker & Isabel Wundsam

Teacher Announcement for Class of 2026

The Lower School is pleased to announce next year's Fifth Grade Class Teacher, Saskia Pothof. Ms. Pothof's wisdom and warmth are greatly valued here, and we are excited to continue working with her. We are especially happy that a new group of children will be blessed to have her as their teacher. The Core Group could not wish for a more seasoned, caring and profoundly dedicated teacher to embrace this class through the completion of their Lower School years.



PHOTO BY MIGUEL SALMERON

Saskia was born and raised in the Netherlands. After she completed her Masters Degree in Child Psychology, she worked for eight years in long-term foster care. An encounter with a dolphin in Spain sparked her interest in research on communication with wild dolphins, and in the following years she swam in many oceans with different species of dolphins. In 1993 Saskia moved to the United States to live with her husband and was glad to discover the flourishing Waldorf community in this area. Saskia completed the Waldorf teacher training at the Center for Educational Renewal on the Summerfield campus in the spring of 2002. Her daughter, Dawn, graduated from Summerfield High School in 2012.

While we share with you the excitement of this news, we ask that you please be sensitive to Ms. Pothof's present priority—to focus on graduating the Eighth Grade class currently in her care before taking on the responsibilities of next year's Fifth Grade.

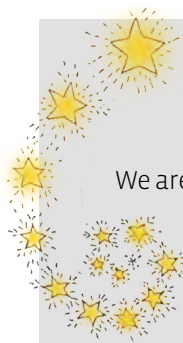
Sincerely, the Lower School Core Group:
Tim Allen, Andrea Jolicoeur, Tricia Walker & Isabel Wundsam

Seeking First Grade Teacher for 2018-19

Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm is seeking a fully-trained Waldorf class teacher to lead our next first grade class and community of families through eighth grade.

If you know of any outstanding candidates for this important position, please encourage them to apply!

—Carrie Wooldridge, HR Coordinator



35TH ANNUAL WINTER FAIRE



We are honored to be able to offer Winter Faire this year in a time when it seems being together is truly the best medicine. Our community has experienced heart-breaking devastation in the last month and we hope Winter Faire will bring much joy to everyone, especially to our children.

There will be a few changes to this year's Faire, but the warmth of spirit will still shine through! So bring the whole family on Saturday, December 2, to enjoy the Summerfield campus in its full splendor of evergreens and holiday spirit!

Local, Artisan Vendor Shopping, 10:30am–3:30pm:

We will not have the Friday night, adult-only shopping with our vendors this year. Instead, our vendors will be open for sales starting Saturday at 10:30am and remain open until 3:30pm. Come to the Faire a little early to get a head start on your shopping, or send your little one to the Circus performance and finish picking up those stocking stuffers!

Faire Activities, 11am–3pm:

Children will enjoy making crafts, like candle dipping, gingerbread-decorating and peg doll making, as well as hear stories from King Winter and be treated to a wonderful puppet show. See what treasures Queen Winter has and don't forget to visit the Snowflake Shoppe, where children can shop for holiday gifts for loved ones without their parents! The Snowflake Shoppe will be in a new location this year—the Eighth Grade classroom. Also new this year will be the Candy Cane Obstacle Course! A warm and tasty meal and drinks will be served in our Polar Bear Café (Sophia Hall) and the Sweet Shoppe will be open with treats for all your sweet teeth!

Entrance fee is \$2 per person and activities range from \$1-\$3 each. Items in the Snowflake Shoppe sell for \$1-\$6 each.

Circus Waldissima Performance, 3:30–4:30pm:

Stick around after the Faire to see Circus Waldissima perform *The Polar Express*! Tickets are \$7 and will be sold at the Faire entrance.

35th ANNUAL

Winter Faire

Come celebrate the spirit of the holiday season at Summerfield's Annual Winter Faire.

Saturday, December 2nd

10:30 am - 3:30 pm ~ Shop for Local Arts & Crafts

11:00 am - 3:00 pm ~ Family Holiday Faire

3:30 pm ~ Circus Waldissima Performance

12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm ~ Puppetshow: The Wandering Travelers



Shop local artisan vendors, make crafts, enjoy live entertainment, along with warm food beverages and treats. The Snowflake Shoppe will be open for children to purchase small handmade gifts for loved ones.

Admission is \$2 at the door -- cash or check only
Craft Activities range from \$1 to \$6
Circus Admission is \$7 per person

PARKING INFO: Once the school parking lot is full, a shuttle will be available from Willowside Middle School on the corner of Hall and Willowside Roads.

Artwork by Summerfield Waldorf High School Alum Sabrina Mann

VOLUNTEERS AND GREENERY NEEDED!

It takes a village to make this magical event happen every year! Please sign up to help with your class activity or on the Main Office door. Volunteer positions for the event include set up and decoration on Friday, parking, craft and activity support (see your class rep), King and Queen Winter, bon fire attendant, and clean up on Saturday and Sunday. We also need loads and loads of greenery for decorating. Please bring your tree trimmings or pick up some trimmings from your local tree farm and deliver them to the school by Thursday, November 30, alongside the fire road next to the After Care room.

Contact Event Coordinators:

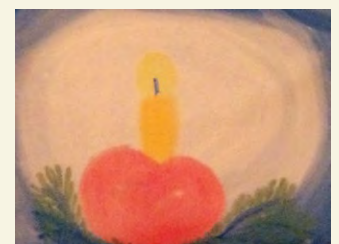
Lisa Hensley, lisa@summerfieldwaldorf.org,
Kristi Hruzewicz, Kristi.grotting@gmail.com
or Michelle Bovard, michelle@summerfieldwaldorf.org
with any questions or offers of help.

Community Advent Spiral SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 AT 5:30PM

Brightly, brightly, deep within, a star is glowing...

Parents, older students, community members and friends are invited to light a candle and walk the evergreen spiral path, accompanied by beautiful harp music, in the Eurythmy Barn on Sunday, December 3, from 5:30–7pm. Just enter the Barn and be seated, observing a quiet meditative mood while you wait your turn.

Donations gratefully accepted to cover the cost of candles, apples and musician. Please note that you are encouraged to come early... if, at 6:30pm, there is no one in attendance, we will end early! Students in first, second, and third grades will walk the Spiral on Monday evening, December 4. ~ Michelle Bovard, LS Secretary



ADVENT CANDLE BY DAISY FEINSTEIN

Community Spirit Shines Forth at a Simpler Sprites Night

By Tonya Stoddard, Parent in White Rose Kindergarten & Third Grade

This year's Sprites Night was a moment of grounding for our community that had been deeply wounded by the devastating fires. Usually we weave and wind our way through the Lower School classrooms witnessing the class-related scenarios each grade produces, creating a tapestry of the curriculum. This is exciting for the children in that they get to experience the gesture of what is yet to come academically as well as what they have moved forward from. However, this year, the students and the parents needed something different, something simpler yet tangible enough to remind them of the shared strength and connection of Summerfield's community.

The excitement with which my children prepared and donned their costumes was a reminder that as much as we hold this trauma together, we also hold a deep, rhythmic joy for our children through the festivals. I was glad that Sprites Night was still being held, though it would look differently than in the past. As we arrived at the school, I saw how excited the children were to be wearing their costumes and seeing the other children in their costumes. Parents were giving each other huge, heartfelt hugs, and faces everywhere were smiling, much like the old, familiar pumpkin path that lined the walk!

I thought for a moment the children would be lost without a Spirit Guide to lead them through the evening, however they immediately found each other and forged their own playful path through the lawn,

Sophia Hall and the playground behind the buildings. All ages and grades were playing with each other and running from here to there with abandon and a careless glee that many had not felt in weeks.

Two islands of calm in the midst of joyful reveling were the storytelling circles. The little, little ones were mesmerized as Mrs. MacKinnon told the courageous tale of Three Billy Goats Gruff. They sat with big, staring eyes as the troll came out and confronted each billy goat, and they collectively started breathing again as each one passed the troll. Even some older students hesitated and listened closely as the biggest billy goat stood up to that troll for himself and his brothers, perhaps echoing how our community has had to stand up to devastation and care for each other. The other circle of calm was the fun, musical story circle of Señora Marcela and her family. The older children were fascinated and couldn't help themselves as they were pulled into song and celebration!

We shared delicious chili together (so generously provided at the last minute by Mary Leveque, Risty Marckx, Farmer Dan and Reme Loosli, our new LS Music Teacher, as we listened to our talented parent and student volunteer musicians in Sophia Hall. Food warmed our bellies and music warmed our souls.

As the darkness fell, the children continued to play, the parents continued to talk, and it was palpable that no one wanted to leave! However, the moon was rising and singing lullabies to the small ones, and the older



PHOTO BY PATTI ENOCHIAN

children were beginning to yawn even as they said they weren't tired.

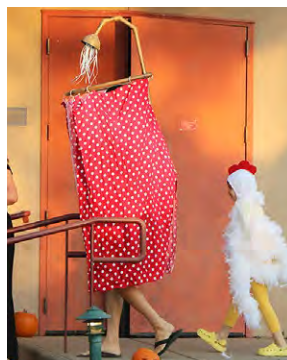
As we walked down the hill to our car, it occurred to me that although this Sprites Night was so very different than what I was used to, it was just as nourishing, perhaps more so, because that night it was as clear as ever that what we are doing here is weaving and winding our way through each other's lives and celebrating our bounty, as well as holding our losses together, creating a tapestry of the community we call Summerfield.

Additional thanks to those who contributed to making Sprites Night the warm community gathering that it was: to the parents who created beautiful lantern pathways and hay-bale circles: Corinna Heisig-Schmidt, Kyle Mack, Amee Sas, Marie-Michel Tassé, Angela Tejada, and Stephanie Woods; and to the parents who helped clean them up: Rachel Hazlett, Justin Yarmark, and the kind souls doing anonymous good deeds under the cover of darkness. Thank you to our parking volunteers Aaron Baker, Lisa Hensley, and Michael Woods. A big thank you to the eighth-grade families who made corn bread. Thank you to the Felton family (Mary, Jeremy and Madeline) and HS teacher Jason Gross for creating and sharing your wonderful music. Thank you to Farmer Dan, Reme Loosli, Tricia Walker and Lisa Hensley for serving up warm nourishing food and kindness. Thank you to our full-time dishwashers Aaron Baker, Reme and Isabel Vallejo for the gifts of your dishpan hands. Thank you to Lisa Hensley, Saskia Pothof and the eighth-grade families who transformed Sophia Hall back into a hall ready for Monday morning eurythmy. Thank you to Andrea Jolicouer, Ann Platz, and Craig Silva for all the behind-the-scenes things you always do, Sprites Night being no exception. Thank you to anyone whose name escapes me but whose efforts made the evening a gift to us all.

— Michelle Bovard, LS Secretary



PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE STEPHENS



When You Step into the High School...

PREPARING FOR THE HS OPEN HOUSE

By Leslie Loy, HS Counselor

Have you ever looked at the Summerfield High School curriculum and wondered: “What is that class all about?” or wondered which lesson inspired a particular work of art or writing highlighted in *The Messenger*? Just what is Sacred Geometry or Counting Theory? What really happens in History of Architecture or the Biology II Main Lesson? Every year, the High School faculty carefully crafts an Open House event that highlights classes from our course offerings and gives prospective parents and students the opportunity to experience what it’s like to sit in a Summerfield High School class. While a short offering, the experiential nature of the Open House gives families a living impression of what makes the High School curriculum and culture a progression of the Waldorf experience from the Lower School. The High School courses naturally support a developmental picture of the human being with content that responds to the needs of our times. Out of this, the faculty takes inspiration from the students, one another, and the world to develop a rigorous, full, and rich educational experience that is unmatched.

All families are warmly invited to our annual High School Open House on **Saturday, December 9 from 10am-1pm**. Join us for this uniquely-designed morning and hear student, alumni, and faculty voices share in the opportunities that life in the High School can offer both for the developing adolescent and the emergent adult citizen.

We will be offering distinct learning paths with cross-disciplinary demo courses that show how interconnected the curriculum is—building between subjects in a year, and across disciplines and topics over the span of four years. In addition, you will get to see students and faculty working together in some of our more unique art course offerings—blacksmithing, block printing, and gesture drawing.

Here is the overview for the day:

10am	Welcome in Sophia Hall with alumni and faculty speakers
10:35am	Path Courses
11:55am	Art Courses
12:30pm	High School Student Panel and Program Table Fair

FAMILIES CAN RSVP AT WWW.SUMMERFIELDWS.ORG/HSOPENHOUSE



LEARNING PATH COURSES:

PATH A:

HISTORY THROUGH ART Examine painting, sculpture, and other art forms and take in the breadth and depth of art’s evolution from Paleolithic times to the Baroque era.

FROM THE 9TH GRADE CURRICULUM

SACRED GEOMETRY We look at the mathematical sequences that helped inspire some of the most complex geometrical patterns and understanding of natural design in art and religious pieces from around the world.

FROM THE 10TH GRADE CURRICULUM

PATH B:

HISTORY THROUGH POETRY This course transports the student through an examination of Renaissance to post-modern poetry.

FROM THE 10TH GRADE CURRICULUM

BIOLOGY Experience the beauty of hands-on scientific learning that encourages students to ask questions and be curious about the world around them and within them.

FROM THE 9TH GRADE CURRICULUM

PATH C:

HERBAL STUDIES Examine the culinary, medicinal, and cosmetic properties of the herbs found on our campus.

FROM THE 9TH GRADE CURRICULUM

CHEMISTRY This hands-on lab looks at how early scientific explorations have helped expand the field of chemistry into the amazing science it is today.

FROM THE 9TH GRADE CURRICULUM

ART COURSES

BLOCK PRINTING Linoleum block printing requires incredible precision in conceptual and application design: a student has to create and then master the product using interwoven block designs and create an art piece, similar to what printing presses used to create a page of printed text.

FROM THE 10TH GRADE CURRICULUM

GESTURE DRAWING Students are encouraged to observe and understand movement in this life drawing class—to see not just the details but the whole gesture of the human form.

FROM THE 11TH GRADE CURRICULUM

BLACKSMITHING The guild arts are a foundational aspect of our curriculum. In blacksmithing, students learn to bend, flatten, texture, and twist steel. This is a developmentally appropriate activity that engages both the will and the intellect.

FROM THE 9TH GRADE CURRICULUM



Creating the Space for our Children to Move...

MOVEMENT EXPERT JAIMEN MCMILLAN SPEAKS ABOUT SPORTS AND FREE PLAY IN CHILDHOOD

By Adam MacKinnon, Editor

The Parent Education Initiative of Summerfield Waldorf School & Farm was honored to host world-renowned movement expert Jaimen McMillan for a lecture in Sophia Hall at the end of October. This was a rare opportunity to learn, and play, with the founder of the field of spacial dynamics. *The Messenger* would like to thank all the attendees for together creating a magical atmosphere of playful learning as we absorbed Jaimen's words of wisdom and engaging physical activities.

After a warm and poignant introduction by his old friend Don Basmajian, Jaimen spoke a little about his background and his family history: he was the second eldest of 17 children! He has had 6 children of his own and has been parenting for over 35 years.

His entry into teaching came after passing the yard of an orphanage in Detroit and noticing that the children were not moving enough. He offered to create a recreation program for them, and his love of teaching blossomed from there. He studied Psychology at the University of Detroit, did his Waldorf teacher training at the Waldorf Institute of Mercy College, and has now been teaching for nearly 50 years.

A CHILD IS NOT A LITTLE ADULT

After this glimpse into his personal history, Jaimen said, "I'm often asked to talk about sports and competition, and to share insights into 'What to Do, When!' Well, I'm going to address that by talking about childhood from a spatial point of view. A child is *not* a little adult—you didn't just shrink him! Each child is unique. And what's interesting if you really pay attention, is that a child does not grow UP, a child grows IN."

Jaimen explained that the whole being of the human isn't present yet in the fertilized egg cell. Life is a process of slowly coming in, and becoming one's self. He brought a picture of how, when a child is born, everyone whispers around it. They're on their best behavior. There's a gentle glow that surrounds the newborn in the first weeks. Everyone can sense a baby's being-ness is still hovering, like the light of a flickering candle (they are just coming into their body). The goal is to bring the child IN... in-ving the newborn gently and rhythmically from the outside.

Rudolf Treichler, a psychiatrist who knew Rudolf Steiner, described that that parents have to help children by bringing them IN in such a way that they can go out again freely. IN enough so that the children are really present in their bodies (fully incarnated), and OUT in such a way that they can come back in. This rhythmical breathing of OUT and IN is a prerequisite to becoming a mature, free adult. If children are not brought in to their bodies in a time-wise way, they seem to 'hover' on the periphery of life—perhaps dreamy, perhaps appearing lazy. On the other hand, if the outside world drives them in too much, they can get stuck, and

then they can't get back OUT in a healthy way. They will then often seek inappropriate ways to get out, such as alcohol and drug abuse.

Healthy child development is dependent on rhythmically going in and out. Healthy children enjoy supportive sleep patterns, laughing and playing freely, etc. It's our job as parents to model many other ways for this to happen healthily throughout the day. Simple conversation is a good way. Regular meal times are another. But screen time is emphatically not. The more time spent in front of a screen the harder time the children will have to go "out", for example entering into deep sleep, or deep play.

One way children venture 'out' is through healthy movement. As part of the discussion about movement, it is helpful to observe the growing child and youth's relationship to the three planes of space: the horizontal (transverse) plane; the frontal (coronal) plane, and the symmetry (sagittal) plane.

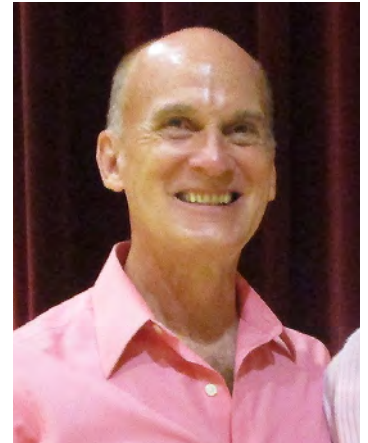
FIRST STAGE • AGE 0-7 •

THE CHILD'S TASK IS TO MASTER THE HORIZONTAL PLANE

Jaimen described how on his travels the first thing he looks at are the playgrounds. Swings, slides, and balance beams are the mainstay of most playgrounds. So many of them have just one swing, and one slide at best. On his current tour, he'd only seen one teeter-totter (they're apparently illegal in some states now). This is unfortunate, because children, until they are 6-7 years old, will spend the majority of their time mastering their first plane of space, the transverse plane, which is the plane that unites UP and DOWN, by finding BALANCE.

Play is the work of children. The young child's primary job is to find a balance between levity and gravity. They like to climb, to jump down, to swing. While swinging, they feel levity... and gravity; they go in and out constantly.

He quipped, "Generally, as a rule, if you, as a parent, find out what children will do in nature, or even on a playground, when you don't make them do it, and they can't get



JAIMEN MCMILLAN





AFTER PATTI LEARNS HOW TO 'MOVE SPACE DOWN', JAIMEEN CAN'T BUDGE HER, EVEN WHEN PULLING WITH ALL HIS MIGHT!

enough of it, you can bet it's good for them!"

How do you know these things are good? Look for their rosy cheeks. When the children create their own relationship with above and below they are simply joyous. Anything that has to do with balance is helpful

learning for them—it's the basis of every movement activity in life.

Adults have to provide opportunities for the children to fall down... even get hurt a little bit, without seriously injuring themselves of course. The experience of falling is really important. They need to hurt themselves just enough to learn consequence. A little bit of struggle, a little bit of disappointment—even temporary failure—is exactly what they need to find their own feet, and their way in life.

Jaimeen related once going to a friend's whose child at nearly 5 months only laid on her back. He asked permission to put the baby on her stomach. The mother replied: "She doesn't like that! She cries." Jaimeen's reaction, "Well, so? It's all right for a child to cry." A baby has to have tummy time: it challenges the child in important ways to deal with up and down. It is also helpful in integrating reflexes. After a time of very loud protesting, the baby got over being insulted, and began the extremely hard work of lifting her heavy head. Within 2 days she was gaining control of her head, and was oh, so proud to be able to hold it up, and surveyed the room with sovereignty. It is important to know that effort is not an obstacle to joy; effort is the prerequisite for joy.

Even the simplest movement you do with babies, for example rocking them up and down gently, with subtle hovering pauses, can be a comforting and effective aid to helping them befriend the horizontal (transverse) plane.

SECOND STAGE • AGE 7-14 • THE TASK IS NOW THE FRONTAL PLANE

The frontal plane is all about creating a middle between the front and back. If children can play games with this plane, working with forward and backward movement, you'll captivate them. Forward and backward is the name of the game at this age. One great game is 'Mother, May I'—children love it! It's one of the best games in the world (and if you travel and observe, you'll see variations of it everywhere, in many different cultures). The children have to ask permission. The children want to come forwards, but must control this desire to forge ahead because they must follow the instructions given by the "mother." They may do 'this' and nothing else. What parent isn't going to love that game!

Hide and seek is a perfect frontal plane game, as is tag. Also, Red Light/Green Light—another great game, and a really important one for children. One fascinating thing about this game is that it

takes a long time before children start to try to cheat!

Jaimeen told an anecdote about the most difficult boy he'd ever taught... "He went around hurting everybody, and he was clever about it, an Artful Dodger (times ten!) character. He was a real challenge and so, with the school in some desperation over what to do, I offered to bring a "games class," telling the parents that the children will think it's just games but really it's all about learning socialization. Among other games, we played Red Light/ Green Light every class. The boy's reaction was vehement: 'I hate this game! This is a stupid game.'

"One day, the class was over before I could play Red Light/Green Light. The moment I knew for sure that the games were working was when this untamed boy came up, crying, and said to me, 'We didn't play that game where I have to stop myself!'"

The key is to get children moving... *and* to make them stop once in a while. Children love to experience what it's like to go away... and then get to come back! And to be able to stop on a dime. When they can, they have mastered the frontal (coronal) plane.

THIRD STAGE • AGE 14-21 • CHILDREN DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP TO THE SAGITTAL PLANE, CREATING A SYMMETRY BETWEEN RIGHT & LEFT

In the middle school and high school years, the Sagittal Plane beckons. The children love to focus, aim, and direct their force towards definite goals. Disciplines such as fencing and archery can challenge and help them move through this stage.



In the Sword, Pen and Arrow Camp that the Spatial Dynamics Institute offers each summer, Jaimeen gets to see children find their uprightness through movement work. In archery, *they* stand still and *the arrow* goes out. In fencing one turns one's body into the sagittal plane, and aims to touch the other with precision, at lightning speed. Basketball is a wonderful example too: give the youth a ball and a hoop and leave them to figure out how to make the connection... they learn to extend themselves in arcs towards the basket and direct the ball, over and over again, into the hoop. And you can notice that they will enthusiastically practice it endlessly. This is the plane of precision that comes after the other two planes have been developed.

For growing children, it's almost a spiritual exercise, as they really realize 'I am not someone confined in my body', and they experience the pursuit of perfection by being *IN* centered, and being *OUT* by their goals... the target, the partner fencer, the hoop: the sagittal/symmetry plane.

WHY TIMING IS SO IMPORTANT

As a child comes *IN*, they find balance in the horizontal/transverse

plane. As the child learns the middle between forwards and backwards they learn restraint and self-control, in the frontal/coronal plane. There's an incredible satisfaction in setting a goal and going after it. The important thing is that the intensive work on the symmetry plane comes after the other two planes.

In the U.S. there seems to be a philosophy that if a little bit is good, then more must be better. And there's a belief that earlier is better, too. Many parents buy into this. But notice one problem many high schools are having right now, namely that fewer and fewer students are trying out for teams. They're burnt OUT, because they got burned IN by doing the activities too early and too hard.

Also, it's just not true that we get better at something if we start it earlier. In many cases, children just stop sooner and don't carry on with healthy movement activities as adults. Injuries sustained by over-training can last a lifetime. Jaimen mentioned that, in some sports, movement therapists are seeing serious injuries among teens because they've overused muscles and joints that simply hadn't developed enough to support the kinds of stresses school sports were putting on them. There's an increasingly common repetitive use injury called Osgood-Schlatters Disease where the growth-plate of the tibia under the knee cap gets inflamed, and sometimes even malformed; it's extremely painful and the 'bump' can remain there for life. It's the sort of injury that can develop if repetitive drills are done in sport training too early...especially practicing skills that involve too much stopping and starting (such as soccer and basketball). Parents, teachers, and coaches must be careful not to demand too much of children's and youth's bodies while they are still being formed.

ADDRESSING THE WHOLE SPORTS QUESTION

"Many parents love sports, and they want their children to be good at sports. But to those who start their children playing on teams when they are under 12, I like to share this comical analogy...

"I love butterflies, so I collect caterpillars, and I tape my caterpillars onto kites, and I fly them up in the sky, so that they will fly better when they are butterflies!"

This is of course ludicrous, but why do we think that children will do better at something if they do it earlier and earlier? Why can't we just let a caterpillar be a caterpillar."

When children are tired, they'll stop, naturally, on their own, essentially when their body is telling them to. Or, in a game, if their imagination demands that the activity is over, they'll stop. But if you're playing a sport, then it ends with the clock or the coach.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'PLAYING' AND 'COMPETING'

And this gets to one of the other key differences between a game and a sport. When you 'play' you adjust to the situation. For instance, Jaimen related, "When I grew up playing baseball, we had 9 children in our family between ages 3 and 13. After initially crowding the weaker hitter at the plate (knowing our littlest brother couldn't hit it past us), we realized it would be a better experience for everyone if we went right back to the outfield and

tested ourselves, and him, to still run down a 'bunted ball' in time. In short, we found ways to play to make it challenging for everyone and let everyone get something out of it. But you can't do that in a competitive sport. So why don't we let children play *games* before we make them compete in organized *sports*? I count myself blessed that I was allowed to learn to play first. And, as you can see from the baseball example I just described, together we figured out how to play fair."

CHILDREN NEED TO GO THROUGH THE PHASES OF:

- 1) **IMAGINATIVE AND FREE PLAY** IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
- 2) **PLAY IN NATURE** MOTHER NATURE IS STILL THE BEST TEACHER!
- 3) **PLAY** WHICH ADJUSTS TO THE SITUATION WITH FLEXIBLE RULES... THEN
- 4) **SPORTS** WITH THEIR STRICT SET OF RULES AND BOUNDARIES

BUT WHEN IS A GOOD AGE FOR ORGANIZED SPORTS?

"Consider it this way: your children came to you, asking you to be their parents. Here we are, parents and teachers, trying to figure this out. We are the ones who have to make these decisions for the child. One problem we have is that we have fallen into the habit of asking our children what they want, before they are truly capable of seeing the larger picture. They cannot yet know the INs and the OUTs of life.

"Young children need guidelines. They need to hear, 'Yes, this is what you can do', and yes, occasionally they also need to hear: 'No, this is not allowed yet.' For them, hearing no is actually a gift—they won't say it, but what they feel when they hear 'No' is actually 'Because you said 'No', I know that you love me.' It's our job as parents and teachers to set boundaries. We need the courage to say 'No!' We need to inform ourselves, and then be the ones to make the decision.

"The 9-year-change, where children leave childhood behind and step forward, is the beginning of when they can start to have an over-view. Talk with each other. Talk with your teachers. You are lucky here to have one of the leading experts in the world on the 9-year-change, Don Basmajian, working at your school. Use his experience!"

Introducing organized sports before the child has progressed through a mastery of the frontal plane is asking too much from them. You will know because they will then argue endlessly, and senselessly about rules, often crying and claiming everything is unfair!

JAIMEN AND SPANISH TEACHER VERONICA SEIDEMANN
EXPLORE MOVEMENT THROUGH THE HORIZONTAL PLANE



So, what should we ask ourselves when we consider a sport? Firstly, what does the sport demand of the physical body? Secondly, what does the sport demand of the child's feelings? Thirdly, do we agree with the 'philosophy' of the sport? However subtle, or hidden, this is important because the child/youth will be relating to all realms of his/her life with the philosophy that a sport embodies. For example: "This side is mine, that side is yours. I will defend my side, and I will attack yours." We have to ask ourselves: would we be comfortable seeing the same behavior/philosophy at the dinner table, or at bedtime? Ask yourself, "Am I ready as a parent to deal with my child bringing a practiced sport-philosophy home?" Know that as they are on the field, and court, so will they interact with you and their other family members at home.

One consideration is certainly whether your child is really ready to learn from losing. Jaimen made the point that "If we see a baseball player yelling, and throwing a bat or helmet, then it's clear that that player isn't ready to be playing baseball competitively (even if he does happens to be in the Major Leagues!). It's a clue that perhaps that person's feeling world was not fully developed by learning a balance of the world of 'ups and downs'.

"I'm not against sports. Far from it. I'm just suggesting: shouldn't we teach children to play together, before we train them to compete against each other?"

WHAT ABOUT MARTIAL ARTS FOR CHILDREN?

"I have the highest respect for Taekwondo, Aikido, Tai chi and other martial arts. I believe, however, that they're really for adolescents and up. These disciplines are really paths of self development. They sprang from philosophies that embody a unique approach to life, and represent a significant commitment to a path of initiation, really to a whole philosophy of life. I think they're most suitable for a well-developed youth, perhaps between ages 18-25. And since the movement is the philosophy, I don't think it's possible to undertake most martial arts without being ready to undergo a path of development envisioned by those who created them. Before you decide for your children whether to study a martial art, it would be wise to find out the philosophy/religion behind it, because they would be practicing it with their whole body and soul. On a physical level, you want to be sure that the child is really ready for someone coming directly at them with serious intent—that's a significant frontal plane experience!"

IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN JUST GAMES THOUGH...

The frontal plane can come in too early in other ways, too. For instance, although they may seem outwardly different, praising and blaming have the same effect. They both make the child too self-aware. It's too much, right at them, in their face. This is why even praising a young child for a painting or drawing they do, can freeze them with fear. "She said I'm a good artist... and now I don't want to make a mistake." Both praise and blame bring the frontal plane in towards the body. Children need the freedom to make mistakes. And they need to be spared from having to make choices, for which they are not yet prepared. Putting one's attention on the deed, an act, a product, and not directly at the student helps him/her to be able to later face both praise and critique.

Photos and videos are another example of this. Children don't need to see a frozen image of what they looked like on a screen, one second ago. They need an OUTlook, not an IN-look first.



Showing a child a photo or video of some meaningful experience they had can even be a shock to them. They may feel, "But I have my own memories of that." Presenting finished photos/videos too early—any time before the 9-year-change—are flattened experiences they're not ready for...really little frontal planes. It gives them an abstract image too soon, when what's important is their own experience that they created themselves.

"Sure you can take photos, and videos... I did. But I did not show them to my young children. The best answer to a young child wanting to see the photos you take is 'Next year!' ... with the same answer if asked again. Let them enjoy looking back at them when they are older!"

THE QUESTION OF COMFORT... AND BOREDOM

Another huge problem is that U.S. parents is the misconception that a child should never be 'uncomfortable' ... ever. To go back to the caterpillar metaphor, there are parents who would cut open the cocoon in which the chrysalis is forming in order to make it easier for them, so they don't have to struggle to get out. Well, what happens to a chrysalis if you do that: it dies. It needs the struggle. It has to go through the extreme effort to form itself.

So, we as parents must let our children struggle. We have to be willing to let them be bored. Jaimen said he "keeps hearing parents say, 'My job is to entertain them.' No, it's *not*! They don't have to be happy all the time. One day I overheard my 9-year-old daughter saying, 'I'm bored! I am too old for toys and too young for boys!' I didn't try to fix it. Within a short time she was outside playing again. (She is now a poet!) I remember what my mother replied to us when we said we were bored, 'Well, spit in a shoe, mix it up, and give it to *you*!' It was a perfect response. We got the point. Spatially, it got us out of the rut we were in, and off we went to something new."

Learning the INs and OUTs of the progression from child, to youth, to teen, to adult, is an exciting journey. Questioning the fast pace that is being accepted as the "norm" and wrestling for the right of your child to develop at a pace your family deems right are part of being a parent. The answers are not all that complicated. Give your child space to move through every stage, and remember: every age comes with an expiration date! Enjoy each one!

LEARN MORE ABOUT JAIMEN MCMILLAN'S WORK AT WWW.SPACIALDYNAMICS.COM

Special thanks to Yea-Yunn Turkalj for her concise notes from Jaimen's lecture.

Thanksgiving From the Summerfield Farmyard

By Farmer Dan

In the recesses of my mind, come November, are memories of my mother up after dark putting old bedspreads and worn bed sheets over the last of the fall flowers to protect them from the biting frosts of early midwestern winters. All summer and fall she would come to the house with arms full of flowers, her sun- and wind-burned face radiant above the colorful bouquets, to add color and warmth to her, and our, home. Frequently, Queen Ann's Lace was delicately added here and there into the bundle, flowers she called "the rags of the sun," a flower whose property is to simply add all the loveliness that it can. There really is nothing in the world that can be said against flowers.

I think of this now as so many people in Sonoma and neighboring counties, and those within our Summerfield community struggle to rebuild, and as we as a community search for ways to be helpful, and hopeful, and bearers of "loveliness," so to speak, as we move forward. A teaching colleague recently spoke to me about her struggle within... about whether she had done enough to help out as the magnitude of need seemed overwhelming. President Roosevelt gently gave the people of our country after the war this simple prescription for reaching out to those in need: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are . . . with your compassion and love," in the spirit of keeping our gifts simple, meaningful, and sincere.

Early the other morning, as I was warming fresh cider for the soon-to-arrive kindergarteners and was musing about

what to write, a little verse from St John of the Cross, an early Christian Mystic, came to mind, which seemed appropriate as the calendar noted that it was actually All Saint's Day, that goes simply like this:

*They can be like the sun, words.
They can do for the heart
what light can
For a field.*

Meanwhile, in this morning's mist, I could feel a whole menagerie of animals watching me, our two Angora goats, all the mangy sheep, our Jersey calf "Buckeye", and an odd mixture of chickens, all standing by the pasture fence with eyes silently imploring of me whether I was just going to stand there thinking about "words" or was I going to hoist the bucket of blemished apples across the farmyard and over the fence for their morning treat. My gaze also took in the corner of the chicken run, as well, where the day before a bobcat balanced as she pondered which sized chicken might suit her for lunch before Wendell, our farm dog, raced over barking to scare her off. Steiner often used the term "Goethean observation" which described a process of not merely looking, but also seeing, as in being aware of all the interrelatedness all happening at once in nature and on the farm. "Whatever you actually see and love, that's where you are," is the way the poet Mary Oliver puts it. So, part of working with the students on the farm and in the gardens is to give them as many opportunities as possible to stretch their organs of perception out in the natural world as an antidote to a figure recently cited in Harper's Index: "Percentage of Americans who spend more than 90 percent of their lives indoors or in vehicles: 92."

The largest vegetable field on the farm is now cleared of potatoes, field and broom corn, onions, winter squash and pumpkins, hutterite beans and, as of yesterday, cover-cropped, disced, and rolled smooth. This, of course, was accomplished by various combinations of students, both young and



PHOTO BY MIGUEL SALMERON

old, as well as the cooperation and support of our resident farm apprentice and farmer. For instance, two days before our first heavy rains were to fall, the shaft on the seeder sheared in two. Plan B became enlisting a herd of robust third graders to seed the entire field by hand. Each student carried a pouch of fresh cover cropping seeds, of oats, peas, beans, barley and vetch, and spread out across the field. Reciting our verse, "Sow the seeds / O'er the ground / Swinging wide / Swinging 'round", they stood in a broad line behind a rope and worked their way slowly across the field, chanting our verse together, and "casting" the seeds from shoulder pouches in a broad swath (no, this was not the World Series, so we weren't throwing the seeds overhand, or at least most of us weren't) until we crossed from the new hoop house to the apple row, back and forth with the whole class, four times. Then, eight at a time, the students pulled a small drag harrow like the strong little horses they are up and down the field, each looped into their position in the harness, "scratching" the seeds into furrows which eventually were deepened with the aid of the disc behind the tractor as the student workers enjoyed popsicles under the walnut tree in the farmyard after their hard work. And now, at this late hour as the rains fall steadily, the farmers rest peacefully, knowing the cool rains are soaking in the new seeds for an enriching and verdant green manure cover crop for next season's vegetables.

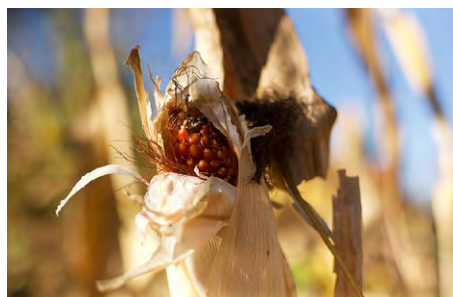


PHOTO BY MADELINE NAGLE



Since last writing, I recently had a strange experience while serving chili in Sophia Hall on Sprites Night. A delicate Victorian lady came by with a large sailing ship floating in her hair

do, followed by a walking candy shelf, sylphs, and tiny fairies, including a personal favorite from childhood's Peter Pan, tiny Tinker Bell. Tinker Bell, you might remember, enabled others to fly by sprinkling fairy, or pixie dust (sometimes called "star stuff"), on them and, because of her petite size, she was prevented from holding more than one feeling at a time and could be pretty fiesty, according to the 1904 original story. It was an enchanting and heartwarming evening, with children allowed to play outside in the dark like they used to while parents visited and shared family stories with jack-o-lanterns merrily lighting up the pathways around the schoolyard.

With the clouds gladly unburdening their bundles of rain at this late-night hour, and the puppy dozing by my feet, once again, before sleep, it is time to wish everyone a richly blessed Thanksgiving holiday from Summerfield farm. In closing, a few lines from the Mystic, St Teresa of Avila, who gracefully once reported:

*I have a lovely habit: at night in my prayers I touch everyone I have seen this day;
I shape my heart like theirs, and theirs like mine.*

Warmly,
Farmer Dan

Lunch Program Update

On October 22, we returned to school after the terrible fires and loss. Our community re-united and found our way back to our rhythm. A new rhythm began on that day as well: feeding the sixth, seventh and eighth graders a hot lunch.

As I stood and watched their happy faces as they received their hot food and saw them help themselves to salad, I realized that this day was long in the making, and now it had arrived. It is still astounding to see that we have our own kitchen, cooks and food from the farm, all coming together to feed our students, faculty and staff, thanks to so many people!

Starting December 4, we will add fourth and fifth grades. And first to third in the new year. What a great new year it will be!

—Ronni Sands, Lunch Program Supervisor

• EIGHTH GRADE BIOGRAPHY NIGHT •

THURSDAY, NOV 30, 6:30-8PM • SOPHIA HALL

"All the Difference"

A PRESENTATION OF MUSIC, POETRY, AND BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF THIRTY INDIVIDUALS IN HISTORY WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE IN CREATING A MORE JUST AND COMPASSIONATE WORLD

By Saskia Pothof, Eighth Grade Teacher

The Eighth Graders study history from the time of the Reformation up through modern day world events, and the Biography Night is a chance to share some of what we are learning with the school community.

The study of history in Waldorf schools progresses from the ancient civilizations to modern times in the Lower School, and then, as critical thinking develops, reverses back from modern to ancient times in the High School. The goal is to develop a depth of understanding that prepares students to be able to contribute to the world; and the more they understand, the more they can help create new solutions to the world's conflicts as they enter adulthood.

This year, students were asked to research the life story of someone who inspired them, someone who found her/his task in life and whose actions, fuelled by the courage of his/her convictions, had an impact on those who followed.

The biographies they chose to present range from the Revolutionary War to current times, and from poets to presidents, from

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS
DRAWINGS BY SASKIA POTHOF



conservationists to inventors, from Civil War strategists to Civil Rights activists.

The Thursday, November 30, presentation is geared to grades five and up, but younger children who would enjoy this material are welcome. The program length is approx. 90 minutes, and starts at 6:30pm in Sophia Hall.

On Trail... A Story of Alumni Who Long-Distance Hike

Rosa Brandt, Class of 2013, writes of her arduous hiking with sister Jessie and other alumni friends on the Pacific Crest Trail, a journey that tested their resilience, their flexibility and their ability to deal with extremes...

As we set off early this morning, our bodies are still aching from yesterday's walk through lava patches and sunlit pine forests. In a few miles we approach a water source where several hikers are gathered, one of whom looks extremely familiar. A little bit farther down the trail she catches up as we sit eating our lunch and, after a brief conversation, we figure out that all three of us are both Sebastopol Charter and Summerfield alumni, hence the familiarity.

This was the morning of August 5, 2016, only five days into our trek on the Pacific Crest Trail through Oregon, and we hadn't yet realized just what we had gotten ourselves into. After three years in college I found myself mentally tired and craving something new; simultaneously, my sister was just beginning a gap year after graduating from high school. Our decision to hike the PCT together was made as we sat at the beach one day, a solid decision based on an idea I'd had many years before.

Our first night on trail, we brushed our teeth in the dimming colors of sunset and watched dragonflies darting around us. I awoke the next morning and immediately felt a sharp aching throughout my entire body, a cramping in my legs most of all.

One day as we were hiking through Goat Rocks Wilderness in Washington, we crossed a couple of steep icy slopes, descending towards a stretch of trail known as The Knife's Edge. On a clear day, we would have had a remarkable view of Mt. Rainier and visibility for miles, but it was just our luck that it was completely fogged in. Walking the ridge, we avoided glancing down as the cliffs on either side dropped down to snowfields, and we kept moving forwards, mist dampening our hair. As the trail wound down and around the mountainside, the fog cleared and a beautiful and colorful expanse of hills and valleys stretched out ahead of us, leaving us in awe.

Nine months later and partway through our southbound section from Ashland, we found ourselves hiking down through late-season snowfields and vibrant greenery. As we continued on the trail, we passed a small glacier and crossed a stream flowing out from under the overhanging snow, small white flowers hiding just underneath. Ecstatic, we filled our bottles with the fresh glacial water and felt complete satisfaction.

A journal entry of mine from August 22, 2016, speaks to a particularly challenging day on trail: *Today was rough for me. Lots of climbing through burnt forests, dry and dusty, and around five o'clock I lost it. We will have come 300 miles tomorrow, and this is the point it has finally gotten to me. Walking up a steep*

hill, the wind howling and the sun glaring and my feet aching, I broke emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Something my sister wrote in her journal on September 18, 2016, speaks to another trying time on trail. *Well, these last two days have been drastically different. Welcome to life in the Cascades in early autumn. The huckleberry bushes are turning red and purple, and it rained for 36 hours. Our second rainy day on trail was not miserable for me, but it was challenging. It felt like the ultimate rain test, with slippery rocks, a stream for a trail, exposed sweeps and dense brush. Whacking our way through sharp plants after a dramatic river ford on a slippery low log. Warm then cold weather as we sweated and got absolutely soaked. It was beautiful, though. The mountainscapes just visible through thick fog. The colors of grass, trees, flowers, all glistening with droplets... We were tough there on the trail, hobbling on as water poured from the sky relentlessly. I was freezing by the time I got out of my clothes and into my bag... I lay awake for hours, negative thoughts hitting me. And yet, we persevered. We got up the next morning and hiked on as usual.*

Trail life is tough, both emotionally and physically, and yet, amidst the pain, are moments of unbelievable beauty. Interwoven with blisters and injuries are moments you feel deep connection to the land you are walking across, a deep appreciation for each minute you are present out there.

At some point during our desert hiking section in Southern California, we switched from a day hiking schedule to one in which we woke up around 3am and walked our daily miles in that wonderful period of darkness close to dawn. Desert sunrises on the trail were absolutely spectacular, and one in particular stood out to me. That morning, an almost-full moon hung high in the sky, eliminating our need for headlamps almost completely. We climbed effortlessly, drinking minimal water and snacking occasionally. It was beautiful in an eerie, foreign way, but it

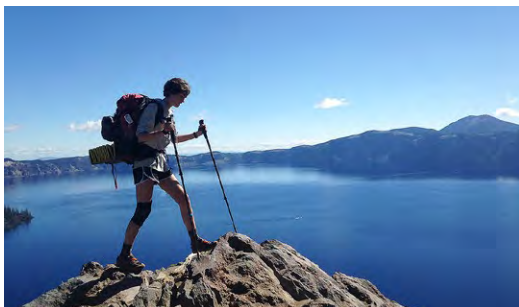
gave me energy and motivation to push on, appreciation to be out there, and a reminder that the desert can be beautiful amongst the harshness. I was enjoying every moment. Too quickly the sky lightened up, but Joshua Trees silhouetted on the ridgeline and sunrise hues in the background were stunning.

As we hiked, we adapted. We were



JESSIE AND ROSA, SISTERS ON MT. HOOD

JESSIE IN FRONT OF CRATER LAKE





BRENNA AND FRIEND FUEGO
AT THE NORTHERN TERMINUS

flexible, changing our plans due to this year's unusually high snow levels and forest fires. And the day we decided to get off trail, we had begun the hike out from a resupply in Mt. Shasta. I can't recall what started it, but we began casually talking about how we were feeling and suddenly I was in tears. I couldn't explain exactly what it was, but I just felt tired and done walking. I wasn't enjoying backpacking anymore, it had become a chore,

something I felt I had to do just to say I hiked the miles. Jessie felt the same, and we decided that it made the most sense to get off trail before we ruined the end of a wonderful year of backpacking on a bad note. But don't think that we came to this decision easily. We sat there and discussed our options for a good hour before picking ourselves back up, hoisting up our packs, and heading back the way we had just come.

I didn't come off the trail having answers to all my life questions, but long-distance hiking started some inner dialogue that will

continue on. And the transition from the hiking bubble back into my senior year of college has not been as seamless as I'd imagined. I've struggled with being overwhelmed by the fast pace and overload of information we are exposed to in our daily lives. I had gone from a simple lifestyle on trail (sleep, eat, walk, repeat) back into the busy world. But the lessons learned on trail, lessons of perseverance, deep appreciation and connection to land and all others we share the land with, how to recover from and heal from physical and mental pain, the ability to let yourself experience raw emotions of awe and satisfaction, letting your surroundings clear your mind and simultaneously

inspire you, I partially owe to Summerfield. It was there I was taught to see the big picture, to embrace flexibility and accept change as it comes.

ROSA AND COLIN IN WASHINGTON



Other Alumni Share Their Experience...

Rosa also spoke to several Summerfield alumni who have experienced long-distance hiking in the last couple of years:

- Brenna Sheldon (SWSF class of 2009) completed a thru-hike of the 2,660 mile PCT in 2016.
- Sisters Rosa Brandt (class of 2013) & Jessie Brandt (class of 2016) hiked 1,700 miles of the PCT in three large segments during 2016 and 2017. Colin Fox (class of 2012) hiked with them for 350 miles in Northern Oregon and Washington.
- Rowan Keller (class of 2017) hiked 240 miles on the John Muir Trail with his brother & cousin in 2016 and hiked/mountaineered 200 miles in Alaska in 2017.

When did you feel the strongest on trail?

Brenna: In Northern Washington, after 3.5 months on the trail, I decided to try hiking 50 miles in one day. That day I climbed over ten thousand feet, and descended an equal amount. I hiked 17 hours straight, sitting down for only ten minutes to scarf down lunch. My body felt invincible. Every muscle, especially my feet, screamed at me to stop (for the final 6 hours). Laying down that night, under a gazillion stars, I felt the deepest gratitude towards my body. And I felt incredibly strong, physically and mentally.

Jessie: At 5am in the desert of California as the first spark of sunrise lit up our arid surroundings. We just walked and walked, up and down mountainsides and across valleys, our powerful legs carrying us 18 miles into the brightening day before we'd settle down in the shade at noon. On those epic mornings, I trusted that my body could take me anywhere and everywhere.

What was the best feeling you experienced on your hike?

Brenna: Settling into my sleeping bag after dinner each night, after hiking 30-35 miles. Nothing beats the feeling of satisfaction and exhaustion at the end of a day on the trail. Also glissading down mountain passes in the High Sierras and jumping into clear lakes in central Oregon.

Jessie: Satisfaction fueled by feeling tough, filled with energy, and most of all, fresh, despite being covered in dirt. My brain felt on fire, my senses felt fully awake, my mood was heightened—not always positive, but always incredibly real and accessible.

Describe what contentment consisted of while backpacking.

Brenna: Contentment was finding the perfect lunch spot by noon, after a 14-mile morning. A rock jutting into a rushing stream; partial shade, warm sun. Dipping my tired feet into the water. Eating tortillas with hummus, tuna fish

and avocado. A huge, crisp apple. And plenty of chocolate covered coffee beans for an afternoon energy boost. And sharing all this with a dear friend.

Jessie: Relaxing into my steps and watching my sister in front, taking me with her as she moved through each new elevation. Leading the way and smiling to the little path, thinking really hard or not thinking at all.

What was incredibly challenging on your hike?

Brenna: Many days felt impossible. I had to keep the blinders down and take it one day at a time. Couldn't dwell on the end goal or total distance remaining. We'd look at maps each morning and set a mileage target, checking the elevation gain, since heavy climbing is much more challenging than rolling hills or flat stretches. The first few miles each morning my body was stiff and begged to be horizontal. But it's mind over matter on the trail. You sing a song, talk to a friend, eat a bar, watch the sun move across the sky, enjoy the scenery, watch the day fade, the evening spread, and the moon light up the sky—suddenly you've walked 14 miles, 24 miles, 35, and then, one bittersweet day, 2,659 miles!

Jessie: Pain from oversteering my body. Sometimes it would dominate my mind every step, or in waves throughout an hour or day. I felt incapable of hiking, like I had lost control; as if my body was telling me "no," loud and clear and awful.

The exhaustion that set in when we arrived in towns to the social realm and whirlwind speed of the world, spinning forward on a rhythm so different than when we were among the mountains.

Why were you out there?

Brenna: I set out on the Pacific Crest Trail to see mountains and lakes and streams and endless views, and to challenge myself physically and mentally. I wanted to understand how my mind would feel after walking 1,300 miles, knowing an equal distance loomed before me. I wanted to pare down my belongings to 12 essential pounds, which I could carry on my back. And of course, I sought adventure and the unknown.

Jessie: To regain energy for my next step of academic study from an extremely different kind of learning. To have time to ponder growing up. To walk, to think a heck of a lot, to slow down and notice what it is to be alive and conscious.

Describe what you learned from your most difficult day on trail.

Brenna: I learned that good company, food, dry clothes, and a warm, dry sleeping bag are all you need to be completely content. And that everything is better after a good night's sleep.

Jessie: That my relationship with my sister-as-hiking partner was complex, wonderful, exhausting, and brilliantly important, all at once.

Growing Sustainable Children

A GARDEN TEACHER'S GUIDE

High School Counselor and alumna Leslie Loy reviews a new book by Summerfield teachers Ronni Sands and Willow Summer, published this fall by Rudolf Steiner Books.

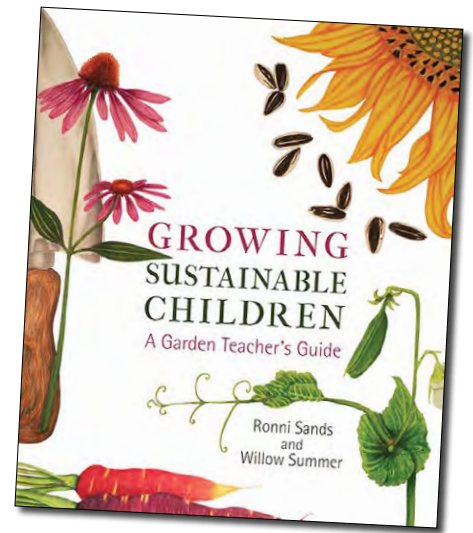
Ronni Sands began to teach at Summerfield almost 25 years ago, at a time when there was no permaculture garden and no Sophia Hall. There was no track, there were no green houses on the farm, and no shed. Back then, Ronni spritely walked around the garden and oversaw students for hours upon hours, attempting to tame crabgrass in the garden beds, remulching the fields, reshaping the compost piles, and grinding to bake wholesome blue corn muffins and steeping chamomile tea for snack.

Back then, the garden was still in its fledgling stages, morphing with each constellation of students. Along with the physical reformation of the natural environment, the gardening program was defining itself according to the skills and growing capacities of its teachers, Ronni and Dan included. In this way, some things have not changed: this attention to cycles and refertilization are at the heart of the Summerfield garden class experience throughout all the grades.

Since her arrival, Ronni has helped to mold a beautiful, rich gardening curriculum that is a response to both the local agricultural

needs and the picture Steiner gives of the developing human being. After years of equally hard work, study, collaboration, learning, and painstaking writing and re-writing, Ronni offers yet another fruit of extraordinary labor to our community and to anyone else who may be interested: a book for all to enjoy. Her research lab—Summerfield's gardens and its gardening classes—has lent her the necessary inspiration and evidence for a gorgeously focused book that balances examples, guidance, tools and tricks with pedagogical context.

Initially, one might think that a book titled *Growing Sustainable Children: A Garden Teacher's Guide* is meant for just teachers, and even more just for gardening instructors. It is, however, actually a useful resource for anyone who is particularly interested in understanding or participating in Summerfield's unique, embedded relationship to the land. Through *Growing Sustainable Children*, any reader can better understand the deepening of the garden/land stewardship curriculum that is vital to a Summerfield student's educational experience. Our



classrooms open up to the land and every outbreath takes place in relationship to the land and the seasons, and so, in essence, this book is a must-read for any parent who chooses to send their child to Summerfield to better understand what Summerfield is striving to achieve through its curriculum and community-based programs.

Together, Ronni and co-author Willow Summer, draw out and articulate a direct mirror of the extraordinary work and commitment that Summerfield's curriculum holds to nourishing and conserving its local resources while teaching all students of all ages the fundamental principles in biodynamics, permaculture, and organic practices. That alone is an extraordinary concept: through working with the gardens and the land, every student becomes a land steward, primed to be global citizens who care for the world and the people around them.

Students in the Roots & Shoots program learn to pay attention to the changing colors of the leaves, the scents of the flowers, the feeling of the soil in their hands; the third grader learns how to care for the farm animals and to harvest grain and to transform that, eventually, into bread loaves; the twelfth grader learns how to consider real conservation issues and to analyze ecological concerns and to create projects that address those readily, both on-campus and with other schools

DISCUSSION EVENT: *Growing Sustainable Children*

Ronni and Willow are hosting an evening of discussion and dialogue around their book, for parents, teachers, and gardeners, on **Wed, Nov 29, 6:30-8pm in Sophia Hall.**

Ronni says, "Children today are drawn to explore nature and participate in outdoor activities. From Kindergarten 'mud pies' to twelfth grade *Environmental Studies*, there is a developmentally appropriate activity that meets the child where they are. Teaching at Summerfield for 25 years has helped me to develop this curriculum at a school where teaching opportunities are infinite. Along with Farmer Dana and Farmer Dan, we integrate the needs of the farm with the capacities of the children.

"In our book Willow and I explore the child's changing consciousness, and the many garden activities that each age can participate in. On November 29, we will share this developmental picture and hope to inspire everyone to get outside and work with the earth. In this ever-changing climate, it is now, more than ever, necessary to engage in *Growing Sustainable Children*."

and students, and even with leaders in the local community. This is demonstrated thoroughly in Ronni and Willow's book, complete with examples, weighted in a view of the developmental picture of the student and their age-appropriate questions and needs: when to sing, when to speak, when to reflect, when to look at the small seed and when to look at the whole plant.

Under the tutelage of our gardening faculty, our students have learned to breathe with the seasons around them, have come to embrace the nature that nurtures and cares for them, and have learned reciprocity in that they are nourished by the gardens just as they nourish them. This becomes so clearly evident when reading *Growing Sustainable Children*: one can recognize how one subject—in this case, gardening—truly builds over the years and how the natural classroom of the garden matures and ripens with(in) the students each year.

Through this book, Ronni and Willow help to frame the essentials that our gardens and the curriculum provides. They easily explain how adults can prepare and offer gardening courses or opportunities, and address all the necessary considerations that they have learned over the years. They synthesize the important essentials while offering up their own experiences—thoughtfully digested and applied.

Growing Sustainable Children: A Garden Teacher's Guide is a wonderful book for the beginning gardener or teacher, or the parent wishing to better understand the enriching gardening curriculum at Summerfield. Equally, the book will prove to be a stimulating and accessible read for the individual who seeks to understand the important in-and-out breath that nature and individual experience together, throughout each season and each lifecycle in the garden.

Well done, Ronni and Willow! Thank you for sharing your research and work with us all!

— Leslie Loy, HS Counselor

Annual Giving Message

By Eric Iskin, AGC Class Rep for Third Grade

Hello Dear Parents,

As Class Three Annual Giving Campaign (AGC) Rep, I wrote to my class a bit later than in past years. Although the goal of the campaign is still the same, the series of events that have shaken our community last month have left an indelible impact on all of us. We are a philanthropic group as a whole, and the fallout from the fires have called each and every one of us to step up and assist in so many different ways—financially, through donations of clothing, meal trains, housing those displaced, and overall emotional support. Our recent efforts, exhaustion of resources, and the overall need of the community seem to overshadow the need for a successful Annual Giving Campaign for our school, but I would argue we need to do this, now more than ever.



In addition to the AGC funding the gap between Summerfield's basic operating costs and all of the school's extra amazing projects, events, and improvements, more families are now applying for emergency tuition assistance as a result of changed circumstances from the fires. As we assume responsibility to take care of each other, we must also do everything we can to allow our school to operate and thrive.

Summerfield Waldorf School & Farm is, without a doubt, the most unique, most affordable, and certainly the best private school anywhere. The value that we receive day in and day out is not repeatable elsewhere. It is because of successful campaigns such as this that tuition can remain low, financial assistance can be provided, and phenomenal improvements to our campus can continue.

The financial goal of this year's Annual Giving Campaign is to raise \$250,000. The other goal is to *again* see 100% participation throughout the school. Suggested giving amounts are one month's tuition per student, between \$1000 and \$1800. This is not possible for everyone, so please understand that no gift is too large or too small. Some families give \$50 and some give over \$5,000. The most important component is that we show solidarity, with everyone pitching in what they can for a common goal. And, as before, when our classes reach 100% participation, we will receive an additional \$500 to be used for our classes as our teacher sees fit. The deadline for pledges is December 15th. Please note, this does not mean that payment is due by then, only your pledge. Payments can be made monthly or in one sum. Payments are due on May 31, 2018. You can pledge in the Development or Finance Offices, or online here: www.summerfieldws.org/giving.

If you have already given, thank you! Together, we can all continue to make a difference as we rebuild our community and continue to fortify the educational infrastructure that benefits our families on so many levels!

With gratitude,
Eric Iskin
(Tahlia's Dad, Class Three)

Immersion Day in the High School

By Leslie Loy, HS Counselor

PHOTO BY MIGUEL SALMERÓN



For eighth graders, the High School is something they've always witnessed from afar: high schoolers performing seemingly magnificent

feats on the basketball court and on the soccer field; students putting on elaborate class plays and playing beautiful pieces of music at assemblies; twelfth graders accompanying the younger children at pumpkin carving activities and the Rose Ceremony, or presenting their senior projects before the whole community. To the younger students in the school, the high schoolers seem so interesting and so much older, wiser, and settled in the world.

In seventh and eighth grade, families typically begin to discuss high school—what they want—and, with their teachers, begin to explore and express their wishes and hopes for the future. While the end of eighth grade indicates a benchmark of completion, it is not intended to be an end mark, but rather a point of acknowledgement before moving on to high school—a transition between one mode and another.

To give students a glimpse into what high school life is like—the busyness of moving from one classroom to another for every lesson, shifting from a class teacher-centered experience to multiple teachers teaching different courses in different styles and with varied expectations, the intermingling of classes and age groups—the High School hosts each year an

PHOTO BY MADELINE NAGLE



Immersion Day, a participation-centered school day that invites and includes all Summerfield eighth graders into the high school for classes and activities.

This year, on Thursday, October 5, the eighth graders joined the High School students in classes, beginning with the High School's version of a Main Lesson. Students were immersed in looking at the skies in Astronomy with Fred Bassett and the eleventh grade; they sought to understand earth's evolution hidden in the story of rocks and minerals in Geology with Beth Weisburn and the ninth grade; or they learned about humanoid robotics in the Senior Seminar with Bob Flagg and George Herschkowitz. After a snack and some social interactions with all the high school students and faculty, they then continued to track classes where they were able to explore writing, geometry, jewelry-making,

PHOTO BY IREN BARNUM



and to listen to seniors read their college application essays. This was followed by dipping into Spanish and German classes and the sharing of a hearty, casual lunch under an autumnal sun.

Immersion Day historically opens up students' pictures of high school, shifting the idea that Summerfield High School is "more of the same" into an awareness of a rich, diverse, experience geared to the new needs of a growing adolescent. Here, the students deepen their love for learning, and discover what it's like to be in an environment where "no one holds back while asking questions" or where the courses are "challenging, but not impossible." (Quotes are from students on their feedback forms summarizing their experiences from the day.)

Immersion Day aims to be inclusive, and teachers and high school students strive



PHOTO BY IREN BARNUM

to make sure that the visiting students are engaged and supported in classes and in the social setting. The high school students are excited to have visitors and to share their appreciation for Summerfield, and they work hard to ensure that the eighth graders feel warmly welcome. Likewise, faculty aims to ensure that the visiting eighth graders are given "questions that the eighth graders could work on also" and where students learn firsthand that the High School "is very different than lower school (in a good way)." Our intention is to give students the agency to discover what is possible at Summerfield and to let the courses and the culture speak for themselves. Overall, our third annual Immersion Day proved to be an illuminating experience as the High School students and faculty prepare to welcome the class of 2022.

2018-19 Financial Assistance

The Financial Assistance process for next year starts in December!

Learn more on our website:
www.summerfieldws.org/financialassistance.

Winter Faire Pre-Sale Tickets Available!

Want to avoid standing in line to get into the Winter Faire? Entrance, activity and circus tickets will be available for pre-sale every morning at drop-off the week before the Faire (Mon, Nov 27–Fri, Dec 1), 8–8:45am at the Lower Bus Stop. Checks and cash only, please.

Wisdom begins in Wonder



OPENING A NEW KINDERGARTEN IN JANUARY 2018

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Our Kindergarten Program provides children with a nurturing, beautiful space filled with imaginative play and wonder. Come experience the magic of Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm!

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ADMISSIONS@SUMMERFIELDWALDORF.ORG or (707) 575-7194 ext. 102

Biodynamic Study Group

With the changing seasons, the Farm Guild is turning its collective head towards the annual Study Group.

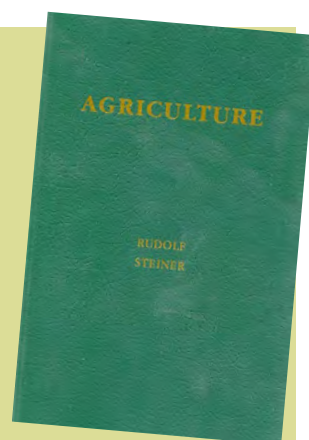
This year we will focus again on the Agriculture Course by Rudolf Steiner.

Sails, the Summerfield store in the main office, will be ordering a few copies for availability by the end of November. The book can also be purchased through steinerbooks.com.

Our sessions will take place on Thursdays, from 9–10:15am in the Handwork Room, beginning on November 30 and going through January.

Please email Dana at dana@summerfieldwaldorf.org if you are interested in attending.

—Dana Revallo, Farmer



The Messenger Marketplace

Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm is not affiliated with, and does not endorse, any of the individual initiatives or services advertised in this classified section. Advertisements are screened for appropriateness and made available to community members to use at their own discretion

Writing Opportunity

Sonoma County Wildfires Anthology – Call for Submissions

Each of us has a story to share. Tell yours here.

*two weeks since the fires
today I remember
to brush my hair*

Fire symbolizes danger and destruction, but also transformation and rebirth. How are these wildfires impacting your life? How have they come into your home, your relationships, or your community? Prospective submitters are asked to share their personal experiences through poetry or short story.

Local haiku poet, Jessica Malone Latham (mother in Rosebud class), along with community activist and environmental advocate Kristin Maharg Suarez are gathering various stories about the October 2017 Sonoma County wildfires as a way to process, heal, and come together.

This anthology aims to give all Sonoma County residents a forum to share their voice and create a breathing piece of history. **Youth of any age are highly encouraged to participate!** Though we are focusing on writing, photography and art will be considered as a way to incorporate imagery into the anthology.

For more details on how to submit, please visit www.jessicalatham.com and click on the link Wine Country Wildfires Anthology. We look forward to your submission!

*resilience—
a burnt magnolia
still blooms.*

Classes/Events/Workshops

The Art of Handwork: Wednesday mornings in the Handwork Room

Our very own master handwork teacher, Lisa Wilde is offering a weekly handwork group from 8:30-10am for parents beginning Wednesday, Nov 1. Come and enjoy the magic our children experience as Ms. Wilde presents different handwork projects based on the interests of the participants, using a variety of materials and techniques; such as felting, plant dyeing and weaving. Classes are \$10. Drop-ins and all skill levels from beginner to expert are welcome. Participants may also bring their own handwork projects and get advice or just work with the group.



Circle of Hands: 6780 McKinley St.
#120, the Barlow, • 707-634-6140 •

circleofhandswaldorfshop.com

Woodland House Workshop: at Circle of Hands with Sharon Easley on Saturday, Dec 9, 10am-2pm, \$105. Appropriate for creatures 5-500 years old, but ages 5-10 must attend with an adult (for no extra cost). Make an enchanting fairy, elf or sea creature home out of bark, branches, moss and shells—all supplies are included (and you can add in your own found treasures). This class is very popular and space is limited, so sign up early! Call us at 707-634-6140 or register & pay on our website: www.circleofhandswaldorfshop.com/collections/class/products/december-woodland-house-workshop-december-9th-2017



Training

Center for Educational Renewal opened its program in 1990 on the beautiful, 40-acre campus of Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm, enjoying a setting that is integrated with nature and a vibrant Waldorf community! Director Don Basmajian brings his ever-growing love of teaching and the Waldorf curriculum to our teacher training students as deepen their understanding of Waldorf pedagogy, human development and Anthroposophy. An in-depth study of the arts and the curriculum serves as the foundation for our students' self-transformation. In addition to coursework, students complete annual classroom observations and student teaching. Graduates are prepared to become professional Waldorf teachers at the early childhood, lower school and high school levels.

New course begins June, 2018! ednew.org Four years, part-time, September - May, Wednesdays and Fridays, 3:30pm-6:30pm; Two-week Summer Intensive each June.

Services Needed/Offered

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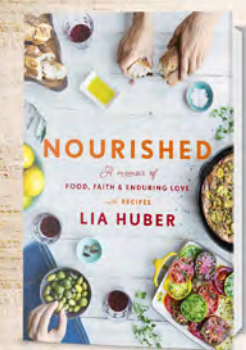
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Childcare and In-Home Help

Waldorf mother of a 7 year child offering childcare services and/or light help in the home (cooking, cleaning, etc) during weekdays when my daughter is in school. Please contact me for more information if you are interested. I have worked for a few different families in the area for the last four and half years. Felicia Channing 707-327-8287 or zabeldy@gmail.com.

Sebastopol Strings Academy

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Summerfield's *Messenger* newsletter is published once a month during the school year, and has a distribution list of 1,000 people! If you are interested in advertising in the *Messenger*, please visit our website at www.summerfieldws.org/messengeradvertising, or email messenger@summerfieldwaldorf.org for more information.

Singing and Piano Instruction with Mary Beard

I am an experienced teacher, a Summerfield Waldorf founding parent and original creator of the school's instrument music program. My studio is located in Santa Rosa. Please learn more at marybeardmusicstudio.com. Contact me at marymezzo@sonic.net or 707-546-8782.

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Heathers Custom Meats offers monthly meat CSA boxes to Willowside Waldorf Families. Our ranch is just down the road from your school. We use natural and humane practices to raise our beef cattle that are grass fed and grass finished on our organic pastures. Purchase 20 pounds of meat each month for \$175. Arrange for convenient pick up at the school when you pick up your children. CSA subscription club members get great benefits including discounted per pound price of \$8.75 for great ground beef, steaks and roasts, added value items such as home-made preserves and pastries, locally-made seasonings and recipes, plus free admission to our annual Spring Open House event. Call Heather on 707-843-9936 or email heather@heatherscustommeats.com to sign up!

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