

Parent Council Meeting Minutes April 12, 2013

Welcome and Verse from Calendar of the Soul - Mary Salfi/Jenny Thompson

"The Importance of Community Mindfulness"

Community Development Coordinator read the Rudolf Steiner verse that is on a plaque on the ground as you enter the school through the acknowledgment plaza:

A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living.

In a community such as a Waldorf school, where so many of the parents have been called to enter into community life with each other, it isn't always easy. We all care so deeply about the community we are trying to create. And yet, just by virtue of being together and working through the sometimes tough issues that we are grappling with, we polish each other and make each other better as spiritual beings. Parent Council is like that where we see each other and are seen by each other, and therefore enter into community life where we are, perhaps unconsciously, working on ourselves and each other. In many ways, we teach each other to be human in a world that feels increasingly uncivil. The Kindergarten teacher brings a picture of the three-year-olds as hard-edged rocks that are put into a jar for the year and shaken up. Over time, these hard-edged rocks polish each other, learn social skills and learn to compromise and create something bigger and more beautiful than each individual rock. In the College of Teachers they are studying "Awakening to Community" by Rudolf Steiner, which says, among a great many other things, that there is an awakening of the consciousness soul through a connection with others.

Another parent said they really appreciate being a member of this community and feels nourished by it in her own self-work.

Board of Trustees Update with Krista Douglass

Krista Douglass, a parent of three students and one of the Parent Council's Board of Trustees representative, brought an update on what the Board of Trustees is working on. The Board meets monthly and is responsible for reviewing the yearly audit of the school's finances. Members of the Board are represented on all Board committees, such as Building and Grounds, Parent Council, etc. They will review and vote on any security measure that comes from the Campus Security Task Force, whose members are still trying to go through the process of getting three bids for every recommended piece of work that needs to be done to the school. They are also involved with the Campus Master Plan and the work being done through the Strategic Planning Committee with the building of the new gym/festival hall. That project is in a silent phase right now, with Development Director Ben Drotar. They are going to hire an architect to do the schematic design, they will put out the RFP and go through the usual process for competitive evaluation processes.

Introduction to Anthroposophy with Rev. Jim Hindes

Rev. Jim Hindes, the pastor of the Christian Community Church and a member of the Denver Branch of The Anthroposophical Society came to give a brief introduction to [anthroposophy](#) and

tell us about Rudolf Steiner. Rev. Hinder said his wife, DWS Middle School Teacher Vicki Hinder, laughed and laughed when he told her he only had 20 minutes to explain anthroposophy to the Parent Council. It's quite a task but Rev. Hinder said he would try. Rev. Hinder said he has a much larger talk humorously titled, "Who Was Rudolf Steiner and What Does He Want With My Child?" that he would be happy to give at a future date. Rev. Hinder went through his biography and how he came to learn about anthroposophy and ultimately become a priest in the [Christian Community Church ~ Movement for Religious Renewal](#). Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy, a philosophy of human wisdom, gave lectures on a great many topics and people often asked him for practical indications on everything from the best way to farm, to educate children, to reconfigure religion, which at that time, people felt, had been corrupted by religious leaders of that day. Steiner's ideas came from a time when the 1st World War devastated the youth of an entire generation. People came to Steiner and said "There's got to be a different way to do civilization." Out of these requests, Steiner presented full ideas on Waldorf education, biodynamic farming, and the a Movement for Religious Renewal (The Christian Community Church) and every a new art (Eurythmy) which incorporated geometry into movement. Steiner's ideas have been attacked from the left and the from the right. Anthroposophy has a pillar of freedom. It is not dogmatic (you must do this) but believes that everyone has his or her own path. Ultimately, Steiner contemplated on the meaning of life. And the easy answer is that the meaning of life it to learn how to learn and learn how to love. Steiner gave specific indications on developing our own capacities for spiritual intuition and moral development through the [six-specific exercises](#), including meditation. However, Rev. Hinder said there are also lots of ways to go wrong with this kind of practice and one must guard against vanity, being hypercritical and egotistical.

Parents asked Rev. Hinder many questions about his own path to anthroposophy and requested further resources. Parent said they wished we could have a full parent education evening or coffee talk, perhaps next year, on this topic. Rev. Hinder left his card and contact information. Email: jhinder@earthlink.net. Address: 2180 South Madison St., Denver, CO 80210 Phone: (303) 282-6424 Website: <http://thechristiancommunity.org/denver/>

Further Resources:

The Denver Branch of The Anthroposophical Society

The Anthroposophical Society in America

Rudolf Steiner's Foundational Works

Foundations of Waldorf Education

Center for Anthroposophy: Waldorf Teacher Education and Renewal

"Renewing Christianity: Rudolf Steiner's ideas in practice" by James H. Hinder
([Anthroposophic Press](#))

[Note: This fall 2013 Ina Jaehnig is offering an intensive course for prospective Waldorf teachers ~ or anyone else interested ~ of Rudolf Steiner's foundational works. Those interested in this intensive course should contact Cassie Wilkinson for more details (cassieuc@gmail.com).]

Register for the Walkathon Now! - Ben Drotar, Development Director

The Strides for Stars Walkathon is on Saturday May 4th in Cheesman Park. Registration opens at 7:30 am. The walk begins at 8:00 am. Participants can come anytime to participate in the walk, registration will be open between 7:30 am and 11:00 am. The Walk portion of the event will end at 12 noon, with the spring celebration and lunch to follow.

-Registration is \$20.00 per person, which includes a really cool Walkathon t-shirt and a Denver Waldorf School water bottle (while supplies last so register early!).

-This year the event also includes a 5K fun run. There is no extra charge to participate in the fun run, each 5K participant will receive a 5K t-shirt (guaranteed only for those registered before April 22nd).

-Registering is easy! Go to www.stridesforstars.denverwaldorf.org. Once registered, each participant can update their person Walkathon web page, with pictures and a personal message.

Then promote your page to family and friends and gain donations to support your efforts.

-Prizes will be awarded to top fundraisers. The top prize will be a family getaway to the mountains.

-There will be fun, community events at the Walkathon including: Face painting, chair massages, croquet tournament, a maypole and other activities.

-Lunch will be \$5 a person and include a slice of pizza, salad or fruit, cookie and a drink (a great value!). Lunch will be provided by (Waldorf Parent-owned) Sazza Restaurant.

-The fundraising goal is \$50,000; we need 100% community participation; and each participant is encouraged to raise as much as they can (wouldn't it be great if every family raised at least \$800!)

-Become a Walkathon sponsor! Sponsorship starts at \$100 ~ a great value. All sponsors receive at least one complimentary registration. Visit the sponsor tab on the Walkathon website.

-Please encourage friends and neighbors to participate in the Walkathon and raise donations!
Everybody is welcome.

Media Fast Week in April ~Jennifer Parker, Community Development Coordinator

Get ready to unplug and reconnect with family, friends and community!

Waldorf schools across the country are participating in the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC)'s national screen-free week April 29 through May 5.

This is a fun opportunity (and a great excuse!) to put away the laptops, iPhones and iPads and turn off the TV for one week to reconnect with ourselves, our families and our community. Get together with friends, ride bikes, play in the park together, plan a family game-night ... brainstorm together as a family what would be fun to do. Check out The Denver Waldorf School's website for more resources on family-friendly alternatives to media and more.

Resources:

VIDEO: Media and Waldorf Education

Waldorf Today: The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Mind Over Machinery

Screen-Free Resources

Media Mindfulness...

New Parents - One parent brought that she organized a fun summer outing for her Kindergarten class and that she hoped this would inspire community-building among her class. Another parent offered her living room as a space where parents could brainstorm ways in which the community could welcome new parents.

Social Conflict - Paula Brown of the Anti-Defamation League

Paula Brown brought us materials and a mini-workshop on perceptions, social norms and how they govern our experiences. This applies to the students and the parents. Paula talked about normal social conflict, and the impact language surrounding "victims" and "bullies" have on a school climate. We went around the room and talked about our own attitudes and perceptions. She described "bullying" and gave us tips on preventing "bullying" and intervention. Bullying is the repeated actions or threats of action directed toward a person by one or more people who have or are perceived to have more power or status than their target in order to cause fear, distress or harm.

<http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Bullying-Prevention-and-Intervention-Tips-for-Families.pdf>

<http://archive.adl.org/combatbullying/>

There are more resources on the sign-in table near the main office ~ please help yourself.