

**8:45 am**

**Welcome, Opening Verse from Calendar of the Soul and Connection Circle**

Parents were asked by Jennifer Parker, communications person, on behalf of the marketing committee, to go around the circle and explain what draws them to Waldorf education. Here are the testimonials:

"My son goes by his own drum and they really nurture that instead of try to squash it."

"We first came to The Denver Waldorf School for our children, the warm atmosphere the whole child education, but we've stayed because we get so much out of it as parents. We are so happy to have this education and community as part of the fabric of our family life."

"The importance they place on routine for the children is something that's been really critical for us because of our hectic schedule. We are trying hard to make that routine a part of our lives."

"I appreciate that the teacher is really in control of classroom and I really appreciate that there is this strong humanities curriculum that produces strong, critical thinkers."

"The curriculum is thought out from preschool through high school. It weaves. It's a whole system from preschool through high school."

I really like the sledding on the hill out back! Educating the "whole child" is a common buzzword for school these days but Waldorf is the only education that truly cares about the whole child, how they're moving, how they're feeling, how they care for the earth."

"The reverence for the spiritual aspect of the child fit in with our family."

There is this bridge of nurturing between the home life and school life there is harmony in the school. The children are happy here. You can walk down the hallway and feel the difference. We wouldn't send him to any other place."

"We love everything about Waldorf. From our first visit to the school my husband and I were struck by how intentional the curriculum is and that extends to everything the children do."

"All the staff and faculty themselves recognizes that it is not only the children who are in the process of constantly unfolding to becoming better people, but everyone in the community."

"Originally we were drawn to the warmth and homelike atmosphere of the preschool Kindergartens and how everything is so thought-out. But now, with a child in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, it is the connection between the teacher and the child that is just astounding to me. Their relationship grows over the years. He has grown beyond needing us as parents all

the time to needing that other adult connection as almost a father figure whom he can trust.”

“I love the way the Waldorf teachers have been able to meet my daughter where she is. I see her teacher doing that all the time and I learn from it as a parent.”

“Waldorf is truly developing the whole child. There's such a love for learning because it's not being pushed down their throats in such an aggressive way.”

“People always comment about my children that they can listen to instruction and focus and be in the world. Life is not just passing them by like so many other children who are just glued to their phone. They are engaged and interested in the world.”

“What I've learned is how routine is essential for the health of the child. We use that in our day-to-day lives and it has helped my child so much. They understand and can rely on the fact that at certain times of the day, certain things will happen.”

### **Board Update ~ Krista Douglass and Dan Opyd, Board Representatives on Parent Council**

Krista and Dan gave parents an overview of the last Board of Trustee meeting where they discussed the Capital Campaign, a new campaign that will be spearheaded by Ben Drotar, Development Director, to raise money to build a new gym/performance space in the back of the building.

The RFP has gone out to architects to create a schematic drawing of what this potential new building might be.

Dan said the marketing committee is rolling out a new marketing campaign and as part of that the new school website is up with a new parent calendar that parents can check out to see visually all the school events, class events and other events. There are several new pages, including:

- ~ a new Waldorf Blog
- ~ famous Waldorf alumni
- ~ Our School History page
- ~ What is Anthroposophy?
- ~ Who is Rudolf Steiner?
- ~ Waldorf vs. Montessori
- ~ Waldorf In The News
- ~ Building a Waldorf Community
- ~ Healthy Snack & Lunch Ideas
- ~ A new page featuring our New Videos!
- ~ DWS Alumni Association
- ~ DWS School Store and Merchandise
- ~ New Sports pages for Cross Country, Basketball and Volleyball
- ~ New Cultural Exchange Program

- ~ New camp pages including the Summer In The City Program
- ~ new page featuring Senior Class Project presentations

~new pages for special subjects, including:

- ~ Eurythmy
- ~ Woodwork
- ~ Spanish
- ~ Russian
- ~ Music
- ~ Handwork

Also, new this year we added the online Waldorf classifieds to our website.

The Board representatives talked about the new Bluebell Garden nursery which will open this Fall, if everything goes according to plan.

They talked about how the board is interested in cultivating fresh talent for committees, so if you are interested in volunteering on a committee please contact Judy Lucas. The school is always in need of the talents and expertise of the community to serve.

The board reps said the Board approved \$12,000 in new security spending recommended by the Campus Security Task Force. The money will go toward the following:

- ~ The Denver Waldorf School is instilling an internal emergency notification system to alert classrooms in the event of a “lockdown” situation. This alert system will also alert first responders to a security threat and bring police and ambulance immediately to the campus.
- ~ Beginning in the 2013-2014 academic year, the second set of doors in the main entrance of the school will be locked during non-peak hours at the discretion of administration staff.
- ~ Beginning immediately, parents and guardians of The Denver Waldorf School now have the choice to sign themselves up for emergency texts from the school.

[Click HERE](#) to sign up for a blast text from The Denver Waldorf School in the event of an urgent emergency.

Every parent and guardian who wishes to receive a text about their child in the event of an emergency must first sign up [HERE](#). An urgent emergency consists of an evacuation, lockdown, lockout or shelter-in-place situation.

<http://bit.ly/12WGHIG>

### **College of Teachers Report, Mike Baker, Woodwork Teacher**

Mr. Baker reported the College of Teachers discussed a 5-year staffing plan. There is a movement underway to employ a full-time spatial dynamics person. It's a combination of gymnastics and dance. "It's Eurythmy on steroids!" Mr. Baker said.

### **New Parent Mentoring Program**

After a discussion about how to best welcome new families into our community, it was decided that a pilot program of the New Parent Mentoring program would be instituted to welcome new families in 2013-2014.

It was decided that the Parent Council representatives of the preschool/Kindergarten classes (Larkspur, Woodrose, Morning Glory) would extend themselves in a welcoming gesture this summer to the new families in the class. Jennifer Parker will be sure to communicate to the entire class the emails and contacts for the new families so that they can be included in private summer get-togethers. These families can also be welcomed in the Newsletter so that other families who are interested can reach out and welcome them. Several parent council reps volunteered to call or email these new families and welcome them in some way to the community, whether it is having them over for tea or a play date or just a call or email.

It was discussed that a more robust program, with older families being matched up with newer families could be implemented in the future.

It was said that class get-togethers held before school starts where parents mingle and students and siblings play together is critical for building community. There was a discussion about how we can do more of these community-building type of events with food outdoors. It was said that the Walkathon is a spring community event and fundraiser in one with the Maypole dancing, face painting and a reasonably priced, fairly nutritious lunch provided.

Mr. Baker commented that the neighbors often tell him what an anomaly our community is ~ that the parents want to be together after school and hang out and talk while the children run around. He likened it to a protective membrane that can sometimes appear tough to integrate into.

The parent council co-chair said the fastest way that she found to integrate into the community is to volunteer. Another mom said she had a completely different perspective on the class and the community when she was working versus not working. She said she couldn't remember some of the class trips even because life was so busy and hectic. Others said one's perspective and personality (outgoing versus introverted) really plays a part into how you feel about the community. Another mom said it really takes one full year to wrap your mind around the events that the school offers and what the class teacher offers by way of get-togethers and what springs up organically. Birthdays, it was said, are a great way to invite the class over and get to know everyone. One parent pointed out it can sometimes be hard to coordinate a birthday party with everyone in the class to be socially inclusive. Another parents pointed out that if things are kept simple, say a potluck in the park, community gatherings by way of birthdays can be easier.

### **Parenting By Connection Classes by DWS Parent Kristen Volk**

Parent Kristen Volk brought her study of Parenting By Connection, parenting classes designed to transform behavioral challenges in children. Volk teaches Parenting By Connection classes and asked the parent council co-chairs if she could talk about it

because she wants to spread the word about this great concept. The basic concept is, when connection is broken between the child and the parent, parents have to restore this imbalance by reminding the children they are loved. Volk went through a couple tools, such as “The Vigorous Snuggle” to restore that connection or pillow fights to release laughter and regain thinking. Tickling, though, is not helpful because the child needs to feel powerful in the situation. There are more tools and more information on the website: “Hand In Hand Parenting.”

<http://www.handinhandparenting.org/about-us>

### **The Walkathon is Saturday, May 4 by Ben Drotar, Development Director**

Ben came to the Parent Council and invited everyone to the Walkathon fundraiser and spring event. A discussion ensued about the brochure which asked every person in the community to try to raise at least \$200. Ben explained that that was a suggestion by the Development Committee, that every family of four would raise \$800. The parent said she found this request “offensive” and said it promotes the idea that this is a school for wealthy people only. Another parent said the reality is that this isn’t a school of wealthy people, hence why we need to raise money twice a year in annual giving because the cost of tuition doesn’t cover the full cost of a Waldorf education.

Ben said he would reword the brochure to read more of a suggestion.

A discussion was had about the auction versus the Walkathon. Some reminisced that the auction was a lot of fun. Ben said it isn’t dead but the auction might be once every three years or every other year. He said he likes the Walkathon because it is a relatively inexpensive event to put on with the potential to raise a great amount of money.

A discussion ensued about the best ways to raise money for the school.

Ben talked more about the Capital Campaign which has as its goal raising \$4-million for the construction of a new gym/performance space. There is an aggressive timeline of potentially breaking ground next summer.

Ben said we are reaching out to people identified in the feasibility study as potential donors. We are in the silent phase right now where Ben, or Ben and Judy, or Ben and other members of our community are sitting down with parents, alumni and others in order to discuss the possibility of being a lead donor for this project.

The vast majority of the funds are going to come from people here right now, so prepare yourself to be asked for money. This money will be in addition to the annual giving money drives each year (Colorado Gives Day in December and The Walkathon in May).

Faculty and staff have agreed to take money from their paychecks every month and they will contribute a \$250,000 gift to the Capital Campaign.

A parent asked where the money would be held.

Ben said we don't actually have any money in hand. The building would be started with bank loans based on the pledges gained from lead donors.

The RFPs are already out to gain schematics from architects.

### **Community Concerns/Updates**

The Parent Council co-chair reminded everyone about the upcoming coffee talk on Tuesday, May 14 at 8:45 am to 10:30 am.

Parent council co-chairs said Teacher Appreciation Cards are with Christa Gustafson at the main office.

Please send out emails to your classes urging people to sign the cards as a gesture of gratitude to the faculty.

Mary Salfi, Parent Council co-chair said that she would personally like to thank all of the parent council representatives who volunteered this year to help communicate within their classes about the goings-on of the school. She said it has been a great growth year. Mary said the co-chairs and board reps have been talking and many would like to see more of a parent education component to the meetings where we learn more about Waldorf education, the curriculum, anthroposophy or whatever parents want to know about.

### **Screen - Free Week Recap**

The Parent Council asked parents to go around the room and talk about their screen-free week experience.

"I am realizing how connected I am to people through media."

A parent recommended [sparklestories.com](http://sparklestories.com), audio stories written by a Waldorf teacher in a pinch.

One parent said her class teacher's media diet earlier this year really helped to solidify a media diet in their house from Sunday night to Friday afternoon to support the children's education. She said that the teacher said it was simply the class rule and so it has been easier as a parent for that to become the routine.

"We do cheat for NBA playoff games," she said. A parent said she found it hard to be off facebook or her computer for a week because she is actively involved in online campaigns against GMOs.

Another parent said that she lets her Kindergartner watch an hour of television every Saturday morning. He son repeatedly asks to watch tv all the time. Before the Saturday morning rule, this parent said her son would ask all the time to watch tv and it would feel arbitrary when she gave in, for example when she herself had to email someone or needs a break.

One parent said that when he was young, his dad pulled a plug out of the back of the TV one summer and he said the TV wouldn't work so for a whole summer. "We didn't even question it because it was there but it was broken and it was one of the best summers."

Other parents said they have a media diet where TV and computer games, etc are out during the weekday for school.

One parent said she made a more conscious effort not to be on the computer or her phones when the kids are around that week. She found it easier to say that President Obama has endorsed this particular screen-free week and he wants you to give up media for a week.

Another parent said she found it liberating to find better ways to connect. I did take the week off Facebook and now I want to limit it to only one day a week.

Another parent said it's amazing how mass media and screens and technology have become so important to our lives. "We should be in control of it," she said. "It's a tool but we should be in control of it."

Another parent said what a nice break it is to not have screens.

Mr. Baker said the media and their reach into our children's consciousness is relentless. Marketing is relentless, all designed to set off a fight or flight response in children to make them have an emotional response of "I need to have that."

The reality is that for our children, this is how they will connect with the world. That's the reality so that's why we spend so much time strengthening capacities of will and thinking and feeling to protect them and allow them critical thinking skills before this onslaught.