

Ignite your child's love of learning

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Raising happy and resilient children in a fast-paced world
April 26 10:30-12:00
 Join teacher Nina Moore for a practical and valuable discussion. Geared for parents with children in preschool to grade 3...but all welcome!

Spring Concert
May 2 5:30 pm
 At Millennium Place
 All parents welcome to come enjoy presentations from children in grades 1-9. Mark your calendars!

May Fair
May 11
 Our traditional celebration of spring! More details next month.

Save the date!
May 25
 Gala Wine evening
 More details soon!

[Open House](#)
[Next tour: Apr. 24](#)
[8:45-10:00 am](#)

Special Edition newsletter:

The Work of the Waldorf Teacher

What does it mean to be a Waldorf teacher? What is the commitment, what is the training? How does the Waldorf teacher contribute to the spirit, the intention of a school?

These questions often go unasked and unanswered for us as parents of Waldorf students, simply due to the busy school days, and the natural focus on our kids schoolwork and development.

But when we dig a little, and start asking

questions about the amazing work that is being done every day before, during, and after classes...the morning and evening academic and spiritual preparation...the collegial work and support of the faculty as a whole... the reaction is often a quiet "I had no idea".

Speaking personally as a Waldorf parent, I am so grateful for what our teachers bring to our school, and my children...

They inspire me daily.

- LS, editor

The Giving Tree Annual Giving Campaign



April is officially "Friends and family month" for our campaign... please share our fantastic plans to create beautiful **bright spaces for our kids next year, and lets raise that total...**
 Check us on facebook too: www.facebook.com/WhistlerWaldorf

The Unique Collegial Environment of a Waldorf School

Mr. Aegir Morgan

At the Whistler Waldorf School we take pride in our collegial approach to working together as a faculty. We recognise that the success of our school in delivering an inspiring and insightful education depends upon our commitment to work towards a common purpose or vision.

We approach the daily tasks of teaching and running the school as a collaborative process and recognise that through working closely together we become nourished and enlivened and are then able to nourish and inspire the children placed in our care.

My role as Principal is both broad and collaborative. As well as making sure that we follow the procedures and policies set out by the Ministry of Education, my role is to ensure that we are effectively providing a dynamic Waldorf education to the students at the school. With support and input from the faculty I am charged with holding an overview of the work

taking place in our school and supporting an environment that enables teachers to be free to do their work with the students in the classroom, while feeling supported by their colleagues, and vitally engaged in the life of the school.

In faculty meetings between the years 1919-1922 Rudolf Steiner said, **"The Waldorf School can only prosper if the faculty is in harmony"**.

How does this happen in our school? It begins with our weekly faculty meetings. As we strive in our commitment to meet the needs of the developing child, we draw support and ideas from our **colleagues' rich experiences and diverse backgrounds**. Through the meaningful exchange of ideas, joys and struggles we are able to deepen our relationships with one another and in turn work with the children in a cohesive way. As a Waldorf teacher, the opportunity

to reflect on my work, to share with colleagues my teaching challenges and successes in a warm and supportive environment deepens my ability to effectively guide and enrich the lives of students I work with.

Our teachers attend conferences and workshops during our Professional Development days, engage in continuous teacher study, and reflect weekly on our work in the classroom...all these practices support our own teaching, and support a strong collegial working environment. As Steiner said, a strong healthy relationship between faculty is the lifeblood of a successful Waldorf school, and I feel we are blessed with a team of open, talented, and dedicated teachers.

- Mr. Morgan, Principal

Whistler Waldorf School—Faculty 2012/2013

Nina Moore, Preschool

Tracy Graham, Kindergarten

Orsa Horvath, Kindergarten Assistant

Evan Ragland, Grade 1

Riva Karklin, Grade 3

Mollianne Reynolds, Grade 6

Aegir Morgan, Grade 7, Principal

Susan Strauss, Eurythmy, English

Kera Willis, Special needs assistant

Crystal Brown, Special needs assistant

Peggy Vogler, Development Director

Karina Pena, Preschool

Alison Hahn, Kindergarten

Katherine Fawcett, Music

Joanna Berringer, Grade 2

Pierre Richer, Grade 4 and 5

Ali Franklin, Math, Science and resource

Christine Cook, Grade 8 and 9

Sylvie Pare, French, Games

Eniko Janos, Special needs assistant

Diane Riley, Administration Assistant

Vicky Bunbury, Administrator

Laura Street, Communications Director

Waldorf Teacher Training

Ms. Mollianne Reynolds

When I originally chose to begin my Waldorf teacher training 12 years ago I didn't have a clear idea of the breadth of study that takes place in this training. When I think back, I mainly thought that I would be learning a new method to approach the variety of subjects taught in a school. As a Waldorf student, this is how I thought Waldorf Education differed from other schools. As the weeks and months passed, however, it became very apparent to me, that this training was going to be a far more transformative education for me than I had originally thought.

The studies were or rather are not simply to a different approach to teaching the subject matter, but involve a thorough study of child development, of human development, of the nature of humankind and our relationship to the world around us. These studies cover how the curriculum is laid out across the grades, as well as the method of instruction in the different subjects depending on the age of the child and the unique classroom constellation that each teacher might encounter before them. So, whilst we studied Steiner's texts on Theosophy and The Study of Man, we were reading Steiner's Education of the Child and adjacent to that, his book on methodology and practical application. This allowed us to develop an understanding of the holistic approach to education. Combined with these studies, many of my classmates, myself included, also gave our attention to specific fields of study: sports, foreign language, handwork, music etc. It is important to recognize that all these fields play a role in educating and nurturing children, and will require the teacher to bring the subject matter to life in a way appropriate for the children.

Waldorf teacher training not only demands that we study the subjects (humanities, language arts, math and sciences, and specialty fields), the children and the world around us, but ourselves as well. The children are going to learn as much from what we are teaching as [who](#) we are as individuals. Working on our own biographies and learning to recognize our own temperaments and soul qualities also helps us as educators. One quickly recognizes when doing the Waldorf teacher training, that personal development and our ability to recognize the needs of our students, our classes and the needs of all schools, is vital in order to bring a meaningful and relevant education that meets the needs of all the children.

For this reason, there are regular workshops and conferences offered at training institutes in many areas. Some workshops are subject or grade specific and are meant to refresh teachers in regards to the subject matter, the methodology and the ages of the children or purpose of the subject. For example in the summer, there may be workshops on teaching literacy in the early grades, or teaching sciences in the middle school. In addition to enlivening the subject matter, it is an opportunity for the teachers to discuss current themes or "trends" they see in the classroom or in society that may influence the classroom environment. Other conferences are on broader themes in education, self-development or new impulses in education. A

recent conference I attended in Sacramento last year was one example of this. There, many lectures were offered on the healing potential of Waldorf education for all ages and workshops on practical arts that help us to achieve this transformative aspect of the curriculum. Our most recent February conference inspired us to really contemplate what makes a school a Waldorf School. Are the painted walls and the woolen dolls the essentials to a Waldorf classroom? Are we remembering to delve deeper than that to really get at the heart of the subjects and the education?

Which leads me to say that Waldorf teacher training never really ends, it involves constantly contemplating yourself, the class and the lessons. It takes place not only during active study at workshops, conferences, and colleges, but at home, in the classroom, and in the world. It is a continuous weaving of introspective study, active research, careful observation and open discussion about ourselves, our students, and our world so that we can nurture and support our children into the future.

- Ms. Reynolds



Some key differences between teaching in a public school and a Waldorf school

M. Pierre Richer

I have been asked to write about the differences and similarities between the traditional educational approach and the Waldorf approach based on my teaching experience in both systems. Before starting my new career at the Whistler Waldorf School two years ago, I taught French Immersion in North Vancouver for 5 consecutive years (Gr. 6/7) and two years for the Howe Sound School District and the Francophone Program.

Three key observations come to mind when I reflect upon the differences between Waldorf and the traditional public system. The first is the materials the students use within the Waldorf schools; the text books, notebooks, and writing utensils. During my years of teaching in North Vancouver I used standardized textbooks and exercise books such as **"Math Make Sense"** and **"BC Science"** where all the information needed to cover the curriculum was found neatly packaged and ready to be used by both teacher and student. The Waldorf philosophy does not have a one-size fits all approach. Instead the children are encouraged to summarize their learning through illustrations and writing resulting in individually created workbooks. At first, I found this approach challenging and overwhelming.

As a teacher used to following pre-designed teaching materials, I was now required to think about how I was to present new subjects and concepts which included visualizing how these concepts would be interpreted by each student and what the material would look like when my students drew them in their own books. The Waldorf approach **views the student's imagination** and ability to think critically and analytically as important components of the learning process. As a result, while creating lesson plans, I was empowered to be more creative in the way I presented new

information to my students through the use of stories, music, poetry, movement, and other tactile ways such as modeling beeswax. This method of presenting information kept each lesson unique and engaging for the students. After a few weeks of embracing these new teaching methods, I saw the quality of the learning environment that resulted and no longer felt overwhelmed by creating unique lesson plans, though I still felt challenged in a positive way each day. Over the last two years I have rarely seen a child that does not want to take out his or her main lesson book and start creating a new page. During my years in teaching in the traditional school system, I recall seeing less enthusiasm accompanied by several eye rolls and **hearing "not again" when I would** ask students to take out their text books. I attribute this to the fact the students were bored of the monotony and repetition of the same pre-designed books and exercises.

The second difference between my previous teaching experiences and how I teach at Waldorf is that I no longer assign grades or issue report cards in the subjective one-side manner that I did in the traditional schools. Instead, Waldorf teachers at the elementary level write detailed evaluations of each child, **highlighting the student's progress** in all subject areas while areas of concern are discussed with the parents on a regular basis throughout the year.

A third difference is that a Waldorf teacher stays with the same group throughout the primary years. This difference creates a sense of stability and security for the children. The teacher gets to know his or her students very well. As the students and teacher already have a strong relationship from the previous year, they are able to jump right into the curriculum sooner and in a more profound way at the beginning of

each year. The teacher is aware of **each student's learning styles just as** the students are aware of the **teacher's expectations. I have experienced** this benefit this year, as it is my second year teaching the same students. As of the first day of class in the second year, I had a clear **understanding of each student's temperament** and learning needs and was able to effectively tailor my lesson plans to deliver the curriculum to them in a fun and engaging way, while meeting their needs.

Of the three differences that I mention above and the several remaining differences that I have not mentioned, I can say that through all my years of teaching, one factor that I have witnessed and that is true to all of the schools in which I have worked is this; the key to a child having a successful education is the level of parental involvement that accompanies each child. This fosters a three-fold collaborative approach to teaching and learning in which the students, the parents and the teachers are united. By having parents that are willing to learn about his or her **child's developmental stage and the learning needs** that accompany those stages, the student is fully supported at home as well as in the classroom. The continuity and stability that results from this quality of collaboration allows a child to grow and thrive to their fullest potential.



The path of self-development for a Waldorf teacher

Ms. Riva Karklin

The personal development and inner work of the teacher is an important part of the preparation for all aspects of the school year. From the Main Lesson blocks, to the weekly planning, to each evening's reflections and meditation; taking the time to focus our energy inwardly is a valuable practice for Waldorf teachers.

Personal development can take on many forms and is a truly personal experience for each teacher. Artistic exploration, playing music, singing, or meditating are all ways that Waldorf teachers can quiet their thinking and experience nourishment on a soul level. Rudolf Steiner gave recommendations on how to develop what he called "inner qualities". It is said that developing these qualities is essential for human beings to reach their fullest potential and focusing on them or reviewing them on a regular basis can be helpful to a teacher's inner development. They are as follows:



Ms. Karklin's chalkboard art in progress

- 1) Controlling one's thoughts and creating logic and order in the mind
- 2) Listening to your self and following self-initiated actions
- 3) Regulating one's actions to

weather the ups and downs of life in a healthy way

- 4) Seeing the goodness in everything
- 5) Meeting new experiences with openness, and
- 6) Creating balance in one's life.

Developing these six qualities can be applied to all aspects of life; in the classroom, at home with family, at work with colleagues, etc..

Focusing on one quality per day or one quality per week is a practice that some teachers like to do. We practice following self-initiated actions for one week or try to see the goodness in everything. EVERYTHING! Is it difficult to do this? Yes, it can be. But the positivity that radiates out is palpable.

The inner work of a teacher is just that, it's work. It's work that never ends, work that we take very seriously, and work that we value immensely.

- Ms Karklin

Music's Magic Ingredients

A mentor of mine once told me that music class is a delicate balance between creativity and discipline. I believe this is true, and I would add that it also requires open-mindedness and risk taking. In order to make music, you must be willing to mistakes, to perhaps even **sound foolish. It's risky business.** But the results can be magical, especially when shared with others. I love the fact that at our

school, *sharing* is a huge part of our musical intention. At Friday assemblies and festival gatherings, there is always a musical element—singing, perhaps a small ensemble performing violin or flute. Our school drama productions usually incorporate song, and the seasonal concerts feature music that has been practiced and polished. Senior violinists perform mini-concerts for even our youngest classes, and the School Band provides

an opportunity for children with extra-curricular musical interests to jam together.

This 'community' and 'sharing' aspect of music is not something that should be taken for granted. On a personal note, the power and joy of sharing music with others is something **that I didn't discover until relatively recently.** As a classically-trained Royal Conservatory of Music pianist, my experience of music had always been on an

Ms. Katherine Fawcett

individual level. Preparation for music festivals and exams was a solitary pursuit. Regrettably, I was never a member of the band in my high school, the church choir or any summer music camps. I hated duets. Recitals were to be tolerated.

For a long time, I didn't want anyone to hear me play the violin, the instrument I took up later in life. Sure, I was comfortable with the discipline and creativity aspects of my music—the open-mindedness and risk-taking, not so much.

Last summer I attended a music camp on a Salt Spring Island, sponsored by Fiddleworks. It was the kind of thing I would have violently rebelled against when I was younger. It featured workshops for: world music

choir, contemporary Scandinavian violin, Metis music, guitar improv, tradition Irish fiddle, percussion, mandolin, ukulele, as well as endless impromptu ensembles for all levels of musician.

We started each day with "all-camp orchestra," where we brought our instruments (and our voices) to a big barn on the sprawling organic farm that was fiddle camp. There were over 100 musicians, from kids with tiny ¼ sized violins to ac-

complished cellists, teen protégés, old hippy folk guitarists, a few teens who looked like **they'd been dragged there by** their parents, and some seniors who just wanted to sing. The first morning, I had my doubts. I wondered how this could ever be pulled off with so many different levels and instruments and with no sheet music (everything there was taught by ear). I remember thinking that the barn would



have sounded better if it was full of animals.

But as the week progressed, magic happened.

Riff by riff, section by section, morning after morning for a week, we learned the music.

We practiced. We listened to each other, we made mistakes and we somehow pulled it together, eventually uniting voice and vibe.

On the final night, we gathered at Ganges Harbour to perform a concert for the whole town.

Music...(continued)

With the ocean behind us and a crowd of people on picnic blankets before us, we took deep breaths and drew bows across strings, plucked, strummed and sang. Five days earlier, we were strangers in nervous silence. Then there was chaos and uncertainty, dissonance and struggle, and finally harmony and beauty. That night, we all took risks, pushed our

limits and created something new. Something out of nothing.

And I know **I wasn't** the only one who felt the salty summer air become just a little sweeter.

At Whistler Waldorf, we are all musicians on

the path of creativity, discipline, open-mindedness and risk-taking. And when we find the right balance, we are able to make magic too.

- Ms. Fawcett

Faculty meetings with a difference

Mr. Aegir Morgan

At the Whistler Waldorf school we have two regular after school meetings per week.

During our Wednesday meeting all teachers, Administrator Vicky Bunbury, Director of Development Peggy Vogler, and Director of Communications Laura Street, meet to discuss upcoming events, practical items and any issues relating to the general running of the school.

This meeting is an opportunity to share ideas on elements of the school which affect all realms and for us all to feel connected to the work of groups outside of our day to day area of working. In the busy environment of a school, this meeting ensures that we remain aware of all relevant aspects of school life.

We end the meeting with a study relating to Waldorf education. Often this is a reading of a lecture by Rudolf Steiner (the founder of Waldorf education) or an article related to an aspect of the schooling or philosophy. This regular study ensures that we all, educators and administrators, retain a living connection to the ideas and intentions which underpin a Waldorf school and keeps us in touch with what we are aiming to deliver to the children of the Whistler Waldorf School. Often we will engage in enlivening discussion and debate which will help to bring certain concepts to light or deepen our understanding of the tenets of Waldorf philosophy.

The Thursday meeting is our pedagogical meeting and is attended by all teachers. The intention of this meeting is threefold.

Firstly we share our personal experiences, insights, successes and struggles from the week. A Waldorf school has a strong emphasis on collegial working and we ac-



knowledge that our teaching is strengthened through the sharing and discussing of our work with the children in our care. Through sharing our challenges as well as successes we aim to create a weekly 'teacher training seminar'. As Waldorf teachers we acknowledge that in order to be an effective educator one must strive to be in a continual state of training; that is, striving to change, develop and become increasingly aware of our strengths and weaknesses as teachers in order to meet the children in a living and relevant way.

Secondly we share insights and observations we may have gained

of particular children that week, both from our lessons and day to day interactions with the students. In this way we aim to get to know the children more fully and remain aware of anything the children may have experienced or expressed that has relevance to our task as teachers.

Thirdly we bring a specific child into our consciousness. Every week we choose a child to focus on together in order to gain an intuitive insight into their development, again so that we can work more effectively with the students in our classes. Sometimes this can be a child who has struggles in certain areas but more often than not we choose children that we feel could benefit from more mindful observation and focus from us all. As class teachers we focus daily on the individual children in our classes but when this is done with the whole faculty a deeper, more insightful picture can often emerge.

Through our meetings we strive to work more closely together in order to ensure both the smooth running of the school and the delivery of effective, insightful, observation-based and relevant educational practice.

- Mr. Morgan

The Inner Work of a Waldorf Early Years Educator

Ms. Nina Moore

The work of a Waldorf early year's educator is to nurture the natural reverence, love, and gratitude young children have for all things in the world.

Young children learn primarily through imitation. If imitation is key to education at this age, it is of utmost importance that an early years educator strives to develop their own reverence, love and gratitude for all things. For it is not only our outer action that children will imitate, but also our inner attitude.

So how do we outwardly show these qualities?

We create beautiful environments for the children, with natural materials, that are lovingly cared for. We show our care through real, meaningful work, and pay attention to the smallest of details.

We show reverence through observing a special moment when we light a candle at mealtimes and before a story. We fold our silks and cloths with gentle care.

We create time for experiences in nature: garden work, nature walks, and going outside whatever the weather, just for the opportunity to experience the beauty of the world! We encourage awe and wonder of the world through nature stories and magical tales!

We show love for each other, and respect for everyone and everything.

We respect each child's developmental needs by creating time and space for uninterrupted play. We choose open-ended natural toys to nurture every child's imagination.



Young children experience everything in the world in a physical way. They can be thought of as a "sense organ" in that everything has a physical effect on them. As teachers and parents, we learn this very quickly: your

happy and calm mood helps your child have a happy outlook. When you are frustrated or anxious, your child senses this immediately, and can also have a tough time.

We learn that a child experiences, and therefore imitates our inner attitude as much as our outer actions, and so we strive to maintain a calm, joyous outlook, and to encourage the qualities of love, reverence and gratitude within ourselves every day.

It is valuable for parents to consider this too. Every small moment you can spend nurturing your own inner self, creating a little space for your own development, will have a positive effect on your young child.

A walk in the woods, time spent in the garden, a yoga class - even 5 minutes spent in nature with your thoughts is worth it.

- Ms. Nina Moore

We cultivate our inner gratitude for each other with our shared fruit for our snack each day, and through helping each other prepare food. We continue with blessings at snack and mealtimes, a shared morning verse before the teaching day begins, and showing care for our colleagues, the children and their parents and caregivers.

The Early Years Teacher's Role— Kindergarten and Preschool

Ms. Tracy Graham

When you enter the kindergarten or preschool there is a warm glow and a familiar aroma, maybe rice or oatmeal cooking in the crock pot.

The teacher has arrived early to



build and create with the open ended toys found in the room. I as the teacher take up sewing or finger knitting with quiet ease and joy.

Children are often curious **and want to 'DO'**

as they are living in their will forces most strongly at this age. From example and imitation the child learns many skills and concepts. From baking and cooking to washing dishes and sweeping, the child flows through the morning with the strong rhythm of the day. Seasonal songs and stories are carefully chosen to reflect what is happening in the outside world. Fairy tales or nature tales are told each day **to build up the child's** language skills and mental picture images.



ready for a nature walk in the forest and a play in the snow or sand pile. Everyday follows the same rhythm as

this provides the child with a sense of trust and safety.

As the day continues, the teacher is conscious of each gesture, word and movement as the child under seven feels and sees everything in their environment. The kindergarten and preschool teacher is a model for work habits, will activities, kind words, cooperation, and friendship.

- Ms. Graham

prepare for the day, cut the paper for painting, tend to the nature table and gathered all the items required for snack time. In the quiet of the morning, the teacher reviews the daily rhythm of the day and focuses on balance and calmness to center her feelings before the children arrive.

Once the children have arrived, they gather with the teacher around the table to work on a craft or prepare bread for the morning snack. With each activity the teacher is mindful of the task at hand and usually hums or sings during this time. As the children finish their work they go off to

For snack, each day there is an organic grain to correspond with the day of the week, rice on Mondays, oats on Tuesdays, etc. As snack comes to an end, the helping elves find two children to help with dishes as the rest of the class slowly cleans the room for another day. The teacher guides the children as they find their outside clothes and get



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Our Mission:

Our mission is to educate each child with reverence and respect; to nurture wonder, confidence and initiative, so they may participate in the world guided by a sense of truth and responsibility.



School Community Classifieds

This space is set aside for the school community to share their talents, needs and wants. Submissions should be sent to communication@whistlerwaldorf.com by the third Friday of the month.

Never Ending Bottle Drive! You can now request your bottle return money be donated to the Whistler Waldorf School! Just tell the attendant at the Whistler Bottle Depot you would like them to put it on the Waldorf School account!

NEWS FLASH!! Nesters Points
You can now donate your Nesters points to the Whistler Waldorf School. Just ask at the cash.

ROCK TUMBLER NEEDED Do you have a rock tumbler available to borrow, rent or possibly for sale? Please get in touch with Nina Moore if you do! nina@whistlerwaldorf.com / 604-902-9899

