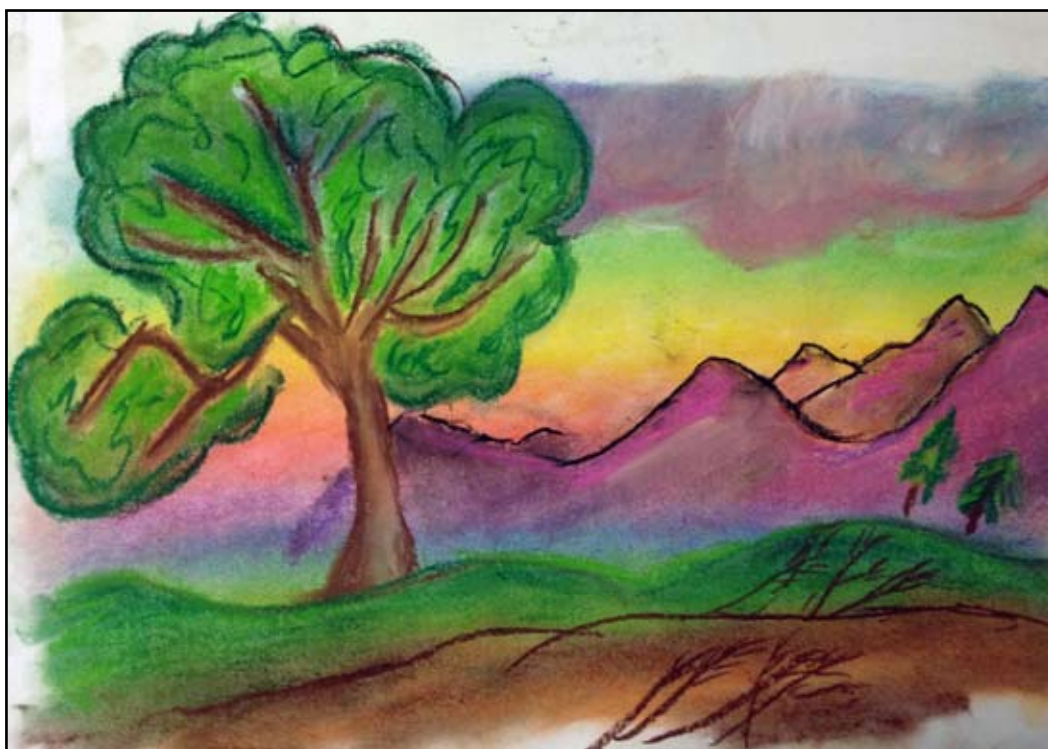


# CALYX

PLEASANT RIDGE  
WALDORF SCHOOL

Waldorf Education since 1980

Volume 37, Issue 2  
Summer 2016



*Artwork by Grade 7*



**PLEASANT RIDGE  
WALDORF SCHOOL**  
431 East Court Street, Viroqua

## COMING EVENTS

### AUGUST

- 1-31** School Office Hours:  
9 to 12, M–Th
- 20** All School Work Day
- 23-26** Faculty In-Service
- 26** Waldorf School Journey—  
New Parents
- 27** Parent Engagement Meeting

### SEPTEMBER

- 7** First Day of School!
- 9** Welcome Back Picnic
- 14** WOW—WaldorfOpenWednesday
- 16** Faculty In-Service—NO CLASSES
- 25** New Family Brunch
- 27** All-School Meeting
- 30** Michaelmas Festival

**CALYX** Volume 37, Issue 2  
Summer 2016

#### Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School

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FEIN 39-1357578

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## Poetry and Job Satisfaction

We have been developing our long-range plan this year, articulating topics and activities that we want to focus on in the coming years that will move Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School forward. In an effort to enliven this work, the faculty worked artistically with the question: What does job satisfaction mean to you? We paired up and spent a few minutes sharing our thoughts on the topic with our partner. Our partner then created an acrostic poem, a form in which the initial letter of each line spells out a word, and in this case, a word that characterized the other’s themes.

—Marianne Fieber, Administrative Chair

*For Cinna Derocher, By Ronald Schirmer*

**F**inding your most  
**R**ead, authentic  
**E**mpowered self  
**E**xperiencing your life by  
**D**oing what needs to be done & what you want to do  
**O**ut of your own, self-directed  
**M**omentum

*For Jenny Allan, By Mary Christenson*

**S**ocial connections are Golden  
**U**nderstanding between colleagues  
**P**eople who support me in my needs  
**P**urposeful work for the world  
**O**pportunities for inner development  
**R**elationships built in trust  
**T**ime for fun in the workplace

*For Mary Christenson, By Jenny Allan*

**C**ombining work and fun and continuing growth as colleagues  
**O**ngoing sustaining, upholding one another  
**M**oderating-meditating-managing  
**M**ultiplying the principles behind Waldorf Education—pay forward  
**U**nderlying principles  
**N**urturing Humanity and navigating truth together  
**I**ndependent schedule if needed  
**T**rust building within community  
**Y**ou-Me-Us = WE

*For Lerie Alstad Van Ells, By Amy Morse*

**T**rust  
**R**espect  
**U**nderstanding  
**T**hankfulness  
**H**onesty

**A**uthentic  
**N**ature  
**D**esire

**B**elief  
**E**nvironmental  
**A**bundance  
**U**nrelenting outdoors  
**T**houghtful  
**Y**outh

*For Aaron Schmidt By Geri Shonka*

**R**espect for each other  
**H**onor yourself  
**Y**earning for balance  
**T**hankful  
**H**ealth and wellness  
**M**ake each day count

# SCHOOL NEWS

## Goodbyes

### Anne-Marie Fryer Wiboltt

Anne-Marie is a ray of sunshine on cloudy day. From her easy smiles and hugs to the smiley faces she puts on every note she places in colleagues’ mailboxes, she exudes a spiritual presence filled with light and love.

Her sunny disposition and warm presence were a great help and comfort to me as I started out at PRWS, and even now I can’t think of Anne-Marie without smiling. The first year I taught at Pleasant Ridge, Anne-Marie was a continuous source of support and inspiration. She was carrying the class ahead of mine and we worked closely on a daily basis. That fall was especially warm and sunny, and we spent many a pleasant recess time on the playground behind the Old Main Building and the First Grade Cricket House (where the present-day Rising Sun Clinic is located), conversing about the day and our teaching while keeping a watchful eye on the children as they played. It was idyllic.

One of the things I most admire about Anne-Marie is the deep striving she brings to all of her work. When Leo Klein came to work at our school, she studied with him to improve her already masterful artistic skills. Many of us have been fortunate enough to purchase her beautiful paintings and drawings. When she transitioned from teaching in the grades to teaching in the kindergarten, she took up the new work with enthusiasm and determination. To listen to her interact with the kindergarteners through song and story was a calming and therapeutic experience for any adults who were fortunate enough to be near.

Anne-Marie has many other wonderful qualities, but what has always stayed with me and inspired me is the enthusiasm and warmth with which she meets the world and everyone around her. She has been a supportive colleague always, even when we had differences regarding school matters. With Anne-Marie, you know that you are always held in love. The depth of her love for and commitment to the school and to her colleagues is a gift that will sustain the school for years to come, even as her everyday presence in the kindergarten comes to an end.

Thank you, Anne-Marie, for all that you have given to the school and to me personally. Your retirement is well-earned! Blessings on whatever work you will take up now. It will be truly blessed by your loving kindness.

—Maureen Karlstad, Former PRWS Class Teacher



Rosemary Kindergarten Colleagues: Amanda Rubasch, Anne-Marie Fryer Wiboltt, Heidi Burke

### Heidi Burke

Heidi Burke has been my colleague and friend for the past eleven years. Together with her two children and husband Dan, Heidi came to Viroqua in 2006, one year after our family moved here. Both of us new to Viroqua, balancing teaching, motherhood and commuting husbands, we bonded early on.

Heidi brought with her a passion for teaching young children and a commitment to working in a holistic and nurturing early-childhood environment. With the children in the Rosemary Kindergarten, she was in her element, bringing warmth, humor, balance and beauty. Heidi has a teacher’s soul and is always striving to grow, learn and deepen her connection with her work. Shortly after coming to Viroqua, she began the Waldorf Foundation Studies course, and some of my earliest memories of Heidi are seeing her quietly studying at our local café, clearly engaged inwardly in developing herself as a teacher.

I will always appreciate the memories Heidi and I have from our serendipitous connection in our mutual second home, Door County, and our many conversations on the shores of beautiful Lake Michigan. Looking out at the water, our conversation would invariably flow to our life as Waldorf teachers, our work with the children and our shared passion for it. At those times, I experienced Heidi’s deep commitment to working with young children and the wisdom and depth that she brings to this field.

Thank you, Heidi, for all that you have contributed to the children of Pleasant Ridge, the parents, the faculty, and the greater community. I wish you happiness as you move into the next chapter of your life.

—Monika Sutherland, Music Teacher

# SCHOOL NEWS

## Goodbyes *(continued)*

### Amanda Rubasch

For the past three years our daughter Amara has marked each school week by two of her favorite days: buns, butter, and jelly day, and soup and bun day! And according to Amara, no one makes a better bun than Miss Amanda.

Besides joyfully maintaining the healthy food program for this kindergarten class, Miss Amanda is also a wonderful storyteller and has greeted us every morning with sweet hugs and smiles. Even on days that start off a bit tender, as parents we have been blessed to know that our daughter was arriving into a circle of children and grownups who know her deeply and gently honor how she is each and every day.

We wish Miss Amanda the best and feel so grateful to have had her in our daughter's life these past few years.

Much love to you, Amanda!

—Denise and TJ Semanchin,  
PRWS Rosemary Kindergarten parents

*(Ed. note: Amanda has been the assistant in the Rosemary Kindergarten for the past three years. She has chosen to leave the school at the same time as Anne-Marie Fryer and Heidi Burke, the dear kindergarten teachers with whom she has worked. We wish her the best for her next steps and hope one day to welcome her back if her journey leads her once again to our doors.)*



### Natalie McIntire

For the past two years I have had the privilege of working with Ms. Natalie McIntire in the upper grades end of the hallway. Natalie came to our school to see the Class of 2016 through their last two years at Pleasant Ridge. From early on it was clear we were fortunate to have such a grounded, dedicated, and bright individual to help guide this class. Over time it also became clear that there were many other aspects about her to love and appreciate.

As a fellow teacher she was inspiring to be around. Often she would visit me in my classroom on a Sunday afternoon to get feedback on some idea she was working over. I was always impressed with her capacity to do research, stay organized, and create well-thought-out lessons. Moreover, she was so enthusiastic about the work she was doing at any given time, in spite of the challenges inherent in having to be constantly learning new material. It was not long before I found myself looking up to her and attempting to emulate a number of her practices.

Another praiseworthy trait of Natalie is her generosity. Whether it was on one of those arduous Sunday afternoons, when the energy was waning and we were both overwhelmed and homesick, or a precious prep period in the middle of a busy school day, Natalie was ready at any second to drop whatever she was doing and spend any amount of time listening to my questions and offering a helping hand. This seemed to stem not solely from a sense of duty but more from an understanding of what it is to be in that place of need together with an empathetic, altruistic sense of wanting to help.

From generosity we are led to the final of many unmentioned qualities of Natalie that warrant recognition: her giant heart. Time and time again, Natalie has demonstrated to her students, her class parents, and to myself and her colleagues, an incredible capacity for patience, understanding, listening and love. She cares deeply for others and shows it every day in her personal interactions and her work.

It has been enjoyable, heartening, and humbling to work alongside Ms. Natalie McIntire. We have been lucky to have her with us and she will be missed. Whatever she chooses to do next will be blessed by her presence and good heart.

—Ronald Schirmer, Class Teacher



### Joel Daelandé

Eight years ago Joel Daelandé (known then as Barbara Danner) arrived to Viroqua from Milwaukee with three of her daughters to begin leading a class at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. We came at the same time, from the same place, seeking all that Viroqua affords. Since that time, Viroqua has done its thing, so simply revealing what it is we need to learn to grow and change, often in completely different ways than we expected.

From the beginning, we were teachers together: Aaron, Joel (Barbara), and Carrie, the lower grades three of A-B-C. In placement, I was neatly sandwiched between these experienced two, Mr. Schmidt and Ms. Danner (now Ms. Daelandé), a perfect learning ground for my newness. I remember going into Joel's classroom and seeing the way she had beautifully captured the gesture of a human being in action on the chalkboard, the evolving veil paintings drying along the windowsill, and the thickening beeswax candles cooling on wooden dowels in preparation for Candlemas time. I particularly admired how she brought out what was essential in everything she did. Her students, for those six years as class teacher and then two years in other capacities, experienced her deep commitment to teach the whole human being, and her fierceness to strive to be better, no matter how tough the road.

This May, I watched as these students graduated, and Joel was in the row of teachers, watching humbly alongside us. Joe Lenarz, class parent, paid tribute to this class and its teachers with a story of challenge and perseverance, and the kind of success that only follows strife. One of Joel's former students, Grace, spoke for the class before they recited one of Joel's original poems: "Ms. Daelandé taught us how to communicate. And for that I am grateful."

You have only to sit in the presence of one of Joel's students, or any one of her five amazing daughters, to experience the impact her way of communicating—her poetry, her sweet "lark lass" voice, and her clear speech—has made.

From the faculty side, we enjoyed Joel's collegiality for a full eight years, the last two as our faculty chair. We looked to her for leadership in creative pursuits and also in our growth as colleagues. Many an assembly, a festival, and a Shepherd's play was deepened by Joel's vision and leadership, and her talents.

On a personal note, Joel's loyal friendship has seen me through the most joyous and heartbreaking moments of life. She gives the gift of deep listening that doesn't seek to change the experience of the other. And for that, I am deeply grateful.

I remember reading the Calendar of the Soul together each morning before heading off to teach the children, setting the intention for the day and the season. Life continues to call us. March forth, Joel, march on.

—Carrie Treviranus, Class Teacher



## Carol Willis Memorial Fest and Potluck

Carol Willis, wife of Peter Willis and mother to PRWS alumni Glen, Summer, Avery, and Scot, and grandmother to alumni Ayana and Eli, crossed the threshold in late winter of this year, with her big, beautiful family beside her.

On June 18, 2016, her children hosted a memorial service at their homestead in Westby, Wisconsin. Here is a copy of the invitation:

*Join us for a get together in celebration of the life and times of Carol Cash Willis, mother, grandmother, friend, sister, teacher and all around wonderful human being! The idea is to bring together friends and family to eat, drink and be merry while providing a space for anyone who wishes to speak some words, sing a song, dance a dance, etc. in honor of our dear Mom.*





# SCHOOL NEWS

## Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School Welcomes Students from South Korea

For three weeks during January 2016, Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School hosted eight students from Daegu, South Korea. The students ranged in age from 9 to 14 and were welcomed as guest students in grades three through eight.

Community member Loma Huh introduced her niece Sumi Lee, an English teacher in South Korea, to Administrative Chair Marianne Fieber-Dhara in January 2015, and plans evolved throughout the year to create a structure to support this visit and make it a positive experience for students, teachers, and the school community. Before the Christmas break, Loma made presentations to our students, teaching them the Korean alphabet and a few words in that language.

Our visitors arrived in Chicago on January 1 and were met by Youth Initiative High School students DongMin Son and HeeJun Seo, who helped them acclimate to aspects of American culture. On Sunday, January 3, the day before school resumed in the new year, a van brought them from Chicago to Viroqua and PRWS. After a tour of our school and an orientation, there was a simple reception, students were introduced to their host families, and the adventure began.

On their first Friday here, the students were introduced to the entire community at an assembly, where they enacted a traditional folk tale from South Korea with simple staging. Other presentations included music, a demonstration of how to cook ramen, and the lightning speed at which Kyeong-un could solve a Rubik's cube. The students integrated in many sweet ways with the life of our school, and we are grateful for the teachers, classmates, and host families who opened their hearts to these young people so far from their home.

Besides attending school with their American classmates, the Korean students also received English lessons from Sumi and Loma to support their growing command of the language. Four older students visited the Youth Initiative High School as well and were hosted in our community.

Host parents included Jordan and Mark Brudos, Nan Marshall and Jim Kangas, Caroline Vaillancourt, Cyndy Hubbard, Lynn Kronschnabel, Joel and Julie Turino, Dodie and Gino Whitaker, Anne Hughes, and Kathy O'Rourke and Matt Shortridge. The Schaefer-Bocks also offered housing in their Tobacco Warehouse Airbnb, which provided a convenient meeting place for the students.

Very quickly the three weeks were over and the Friday farewell assembly was bittersweet. We had made such wonderful friends and it was hard to say goodbye. As the van pulled up to prepare for loading, there were final hugs, tears, and lots of warmth.

This was a truly wonderful opportunity to build bridges with another culture and expand our connection to others sharing our planet. Sumi, Loma, and Marianne have already begun planning for another visit next January. Sumi teaches English in Daegu and works hard on her students' behalf to make this winter break trip possible for them. We look forward to meeting more Korean friends in January 2017.

—Marianne Fieber, Administrative Chair



## A Murmuration of Butterflies

Music, eurythmy, speech, and, song for the upstart spring. Artistic offerings from grades 5-8 on April 8, 2016.



## May Day



## Class Plays

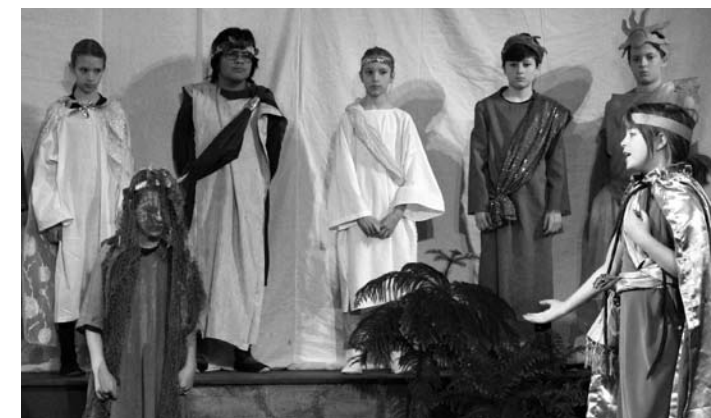
### First Grade – Satchkin Patchkin



### Second Grade – Gilly of the Goatskin



### Fifth Grade – Gilgamesh



Not pictured:

Third Grade – Rise of Noah

Fourth Grade – A Wedding at Jotunheim

Seventh Grade – Robin Hood

### Sixth Grade – The Hobbit



### Eighth Grade – Sherlock Holmes



CALYX

# CURRICULUM

## Pentathlon

Hail Apollo!  
Let my javelin soar like the rays of  
the sun  
Let me have the strength of your steed  
And the grace of an eagle  
Oh Apollo - Help me in this event  
So that I may shine like you.

—Orion Vina Tromp, Grade 5



## Working with Worms

Worms! This word might bring forth images of fishing, gardening, the sidewalk after a rain-storm, or even a shiver. For the fourth grade class this word now means much more.

To kick off our first zoology block, the students worked with Ms. Erica Hill-Pfeiffer at the Flower Basket on repairing and creating worm tubs. During our first visit, Ms. Erica taught the students about the anatomy, habitat, and diet of red wiggler worms, as well as the practice of vermiculture.

Then the fun really began! On our next visit Ms. Erica opened the worm tub and showed everyone the rich, black soil. She explained that the worms were getting crowded and needed more room to move and more available food. We started with two empty tubs and were ready to begin filling them with dirt. Ms. Erica quickly explained that the worms actually didn't need any dirt and what we were seeing was the castings created by them and not soil! That black gold would be used to fertilize many different plants in the gardens and in the Flower Basket.

So instead of shoveling dirt, we raked leaves and gathered up the newspaper, cardboard, and compost we had brought with us. First we spread out newspaper. We gently lifted out mounds from the tubs and separated the worms from the castings. During this process the students found many small, white or clear balls. Ms. Erica was delighted to tell us that these were the worm eggs, and so many eggs meant happy worms!

While this was happening, another group layered the new tubs with soaked cardboard, damp leaves, and newspaper. Compost was added to the layers for the worms to eat.

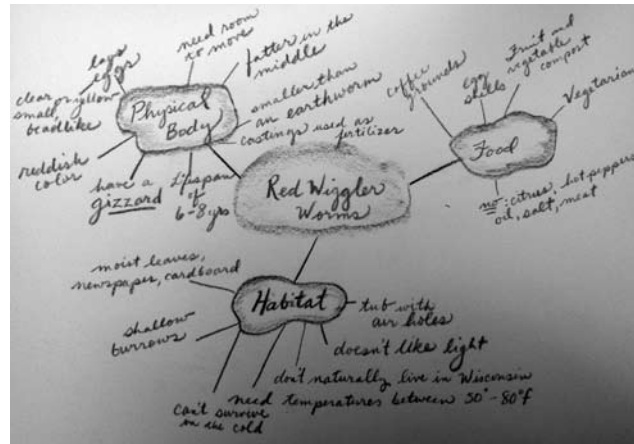
When we had separated out a good amount of worms, the students placed them into their new habitats. The children enjoyed watching how much more active the worms became when they had room to move! We then covered the worms with another light layer of leaves and newspaper to protect them from too much light. The castings were brought into the Flower Basket for use or sale.

The fourth grade repeated this process and successfully created two new habitats in addition to refreshing the existing tubs. We revisited the worms throughout the fall, bringing compost from our classroom and kitchen.

Our experiences were integrated into the classroom work with the introduction to mind-mapping. This is one tool that can be used in prewriting, to visually organize our thoughts, without the more formal structure of an outline. We created the mind map on the blackboard as part of our main lesson. From that map, each student wrote their own description of the red wiggler worms and our work with them. Their writings were descriptive, thoughtful, and well organized. It was wonderful to integrate the students' experiences and fieldtrips back into the classroom in such a well-rounded and enjoyable way.

The students enjoyed working with the worms, and we are so grateful to Ms. Erica for sharing her expertise with us. It was truly a pleasure to work with her!

—Christina Hotchkiss, Class Teacher



## Seventh Grade Science

(Ed. note: Below is an email exchange between Ronald Schirmer, seventh grade teacher, and Julie Staflien at Elegant Stone Products in Viroqua.)

Saturday, April 2, 2016

Greetings,

My name is Ronald Schirmer. I am the seventh grade teacher at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. I came to your business on a Saturday about a month back seeking a donation of marble for a chemistry experiment we were going to be doing. I have since lost the business card of the woman who helped me out that day, but I really appreciated her generosity and willingness to help. If this message could be passed on to her and shared with any other interested parties, I would be grateful.

I have attached three photos that warrant some description:



Photo 1, the lime kiln: What looks like a muddy little chimney sticking out of the ground is a kiln we built in my backyard on N. East Ave. It was built into the slope of the ground for better insulation. We used pavers instead of chimney brick so we spent considerable energy sealing all of the cracks with mud, which the kids thoroughly enjoyed doing. A fan was placed in front of the little tunnel leading into the kiln to encourage air flow.

Into this kiln we poured 76 lbs. of charcoal, in the middle of which we placed the two small samples of marble you provided us, plus some seashells, chalk, and a bit of limestone...all objects made primarily of calcium carbonate.



Photo 2, watching the kiln: The students gathered around the lime kiln as it began to burn. We left it to burn all day and all night, returning the following day to retrieve the objects from the ashes. The kiln potentially heated anywhere from 1,200° to 2,000° during that time.

Photo 3, a dish of white stuff, a drawing and a brick: On the right in this last photo is a Pyrex dish full of a mess of white, crumbly material. When the marble was pulled from the ashes it had retained its shape but was no longer marble. It had a chalky dull finish and crumbled easily in the hands. This material was now calcium oxide, commonly known as "quicklime," a "thirsty" element, highly receptive to water. When we returned to the classroom and placed water on it, a violent, hissing, and convulsing reaction appeared in the material, which yet again transformed the substance into

calcium hydroxide, commonly known as "slaked lime" (after it has "slaked" its thirst). The students were startled and amazed by this. We took this slaked lime and mixed it with sand from our playground, turning it into crude cement, which we used to cement a few bricks together (as seen in the photo) and to make sculptures with just for fun. The slaked lime that was left over in the dish (in the photo) is slowing taking CO2 out of the air and transforming itself back into calcium carbonate.

Other experiments were carried out with the water left over from the reaction. All in all, the students thoroughly enjoyed this three-day project, got to participate in a mini version of a major industrial process, and will likely never forget this experience down the road.

Not every day in my classroom can be quite like this, but I am grateful for the days when the opportunity to be out of our seats and doing peculiar, hands-on work present themselves. Your contribution to our class allowed all of this to take place. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,  
Ronald Schirmer, Grade 7 Teacher, PRWS



Ronald,

I am so pleased to see how your students are getting a first-rate education with you at Pleasant Ridge. With permission, I would love to share this on our social media or website. Of course, I may have to edit out faces of the children. I will not share without your permission. Nevertheless, thank you so much for sharing with us the learning experience. You have made my day!

Regards,  
Julie Staflien  
Estimating/Customer Service, Elegant Stone Products, Inc.



## Gardening in Third Grade

“Look at our garlic sprouts!”

“Our garlic babies!”

Rain-booted feet swished through the dewy grass of The Flower Basket grounds one Tuesday morning as the third grade ran down the slope to check on the fruits of their autumnal labor. The children stood smiling as they looked out over six sprawling garlic beds that they had carefully planted last October. The six-inch sprouts reached above the packed-down straw that the children so carefully blanketed over their work before the snow came.

Each bed contains three rows of garlic, which were strategically planted six inches apart, clove by clove, then sprinkled with worm castings for fertilizer before being tucked in and covered with straw. Guided by our gardening coordinator, Erica Hill Pfeiffer, the children worked in small groups rotating jobs: breaking garlic bulbs into cloves and sorting them by size, raking, digging trenches, planting, fertilizing, distributing straw, and cleaning up. Erica’s knowledge of gardening and her ability to work with and guide the children are valuable assets to this budding garden program.

My class first encountered Erica in September during the Fall Festival celebration. After spending the morning busily preparing apple crisp for the harvest feast and then filling up on the school-wide-created meal of soup, bread, and apple crisp, we set off to The Flower Basket to do some service work. Erica met us behind the greenhouse, where she had a very large container of worm castings that needed to be put into flower pots and then hauled inside. The students set to work and quickly organized themselves for efficiency; some filled pots, some moved pots, some hauled them into the greenhouse. Erica was very impressed with how hard they worked and how well they cooperated! When she asked us to return to help plant garlic for the school kitchen, we gladly agreed. Over the course of three mornings (six hours total), we planted 864 cloves of garlic!

Springtime planting needs called us back to the greenhouse, where little flower sprouts needed to be transplanted into bigger pots. The children willingly and joyfully filled flats with rich dirt, then filled them with tiny plants, and carefully placed them back into the warm greenhouse to grow more. Currently, the third grade is planting squash, gourd, and corn seeds to be transplanted into the garden in late May.

Gardening and farming are key components of the third grade curriculum, so this work with Erica is very timely for us; it goes right along with the organic social studies and science curriculum we are working on in the classroom during Main Lesson. Practical outdoor work is so good for the students, and they are such eager helpers. We are so grateful to Erica for her knowledge of gardening and working with children. She is truly a gift to our school! My class and I look forward to continuing our work at The Flower Basket for the duration of our time at Pleasant Ridge.

—Amy Morse, Class Teacher

## Why Strings

**String Instrumental Instruction in the Waldorf Curriculum: Why is it included and how does it support the students in their development? (Part I)**

*(Ed. note: The following article is Part I of a wonderful and thorough description of the music program at Pleasant Ridge. Part II will be published in the next issue of the Calyx!)*

In my job as a Waldorf music teacher, there are few things as exciting as the enthusiasm of the fourth graders beginning to learn to play a stringed instrument. At our school, this is a fourth grade rite of passage, but the preparation begins as early as first grade.

In a Waldorf school, students are hearing and participating in music every day, beginning in the early childhood classroom. Circle time has the students singing and moving to music; gentle lyre or flute playing accompanies stories and rest time. Early-childhood teachers sing to greet the children each morning and during transitions throughout the day.

Beginning in first and second grade, while music continues to be woven into the fabric of the day, exposure also becomes more formalized. Students learn to play and reverently care for a variety of instruments, including wooden flutes, lyres, and tone bars. General musical concepts—fast and slow (rhythm), high and low (pitch), and soft and loud (dynamics)—are taught in age-appropriate ways. Musical games and listening activities begin developing their musical ear, and a mood is created such that our shared musical experience comes out of a listening space. Most of all, they experience the joy of making music together.

By third grade, the students generally have considerable skill in singing and in playing the wooden flute. It is usually in this grade that I will see them “air playing” a stringed instrument, sometimes holding their flute under their chin to pretend it’s a violin, and often talking to each other about which stringed instrument they want to play. Little by little the excitement builds.

“I want to play violin!” a third grader will announce to me out of the blue. Others will stop me in the hall to secretly tell me what string instrument they want to play. “When will we get to choose our instruments?” they ask.

Choosing the instrument is largely an intuitive process. The string family has four main instruments: violin, viola, cello, and bass, in order from highest to lowest tonal range. At our school, we begin by offering a choice between violin or cello, one higher-pitched and one lower-pitched instrument. Viola and string bass come in fifth grade or later. The viola is a cousin to the violin, pitched slightly lower and with a darker sound but using the same basic position of holding the instrument and bow. The stringed bass, or upright bass, is played standing and is better suited to an older student; while the setup is different from cello, it is not a difficult transition once they grow into it.

At the end of third grade, the students visit one of the upper-grade orchestra classes and are given a demonstration during which they are able to hear each instrument played individually and hear them played as a group. After the demonstration, the third graders are invited to go up to one of the older students to see the instruments up close. This is where I see the first glimpses of what I call the “inner knowing” of the child in terms of what instrument they are drawn to. Without hesitation, each third grader makes a beeline for one of the instruments, and as I watch from the sidelines, I notice that they stay with that first chosen instrument. No one appears to be “shopping around.” They are interested in seeing the one they feel drawn to.

I have long wondered what draws a person to a particular instrument. When I was a college student in a music conservatory setting, surrounded by music students, I observed that musicians and their instruments seemed to go together. It isn’t a temperament or personality match but something else. Over the years of watching fourth graders choose their stringed instrument, I haven’t been able to draw any specific parallels between a particular type of child and the instrument they choose. At the same time, it’s clear that what the children choose feels very “right” for them. I’ve seen both very grounded students and very animated students choose cello, and the same for violin.

In making their choice, the students seem attracted to a particular instrument, perhaps because of a soul quality or soul resonance. Perhaps the particular tonal resonance is “what they need.” I am there to support them in their choice and make sure they are listening closely to this voice inside themselves. In my years of experience, almost without exception, the students stay with their originally chosen instrument for the duration of their experience at school.

In a Waldorf school, with our eye on the developing child, we choose activities and experiences that support them in their development. As teachers, our goal is not necessarily to develop future professional musicians or artists or actors, but rather to help develop healthy and whole human beings.

How does playing a stringed instrument support them in their development?

The introduction of Waldorf students to string instruments generally coincides with the time of their nine-year change. As children approach their tenth year of life, they undergo a transition in which they begin to let go of their dreamier selves and see the world through a more realistic lens. This is often the first time they experience themselves as completely separate from others, particularly their parents. They begin to recognize the fallibility and mortality of humans. They begin to have their own rich emotional lives with a deeper and wider range of emotion.

The sound of a stringed instrument has a strong connection to the heart and the emotional realm. Music played on any instrument can be experienced emotionally, but often it is the strings’ sound that pulls at one’s heartstrings, so to speak. The plaintive sound of the cello can be heard in the most moving part of a

movie; the soaring sound of the violins in a Brahms symphony can take one’s breath away. The sound of the bow pulled across strings resonates in one’s core. When played well, a stringed instrument can closely resemble the human voice, which most closely reflects the soul of a human being. Rudolf Steiner said of the experience, “The human being feels how [his] whole organism is being enlarged; processes which are otherwise only within the organism are carried over into the outside world...when the child learns the violin, the actual process, the music that is within him, is directly carried over and he feels how the music in him passes over into the string through his bow.”

—Monika Sutherland, Music Teacher



# ALUMNI NEWS

## Class of 1992

**Sam Vanderhyden** and **Adley Bertsch (1997)** have known each other since they were children. They nurtured a deeper relationship while sharing their love of mountain climbing. They were married in a mountain ceremony last summer. This spring Adley received her Waldorf teaching certificate at the training institute in Eugene, Oregon. She has accepted a position to teach first grade at Shepherd Valley Waldorf School in Niwot, Colorado. Sam is working for Mountain Project (now a part of Recreational Equipment, Inc.). They recently moved to Boulder, Colorado.

**Aaron Bland** married Emily Rupp on July 29, 2013. Their child, Mara Rose, was born on January 21, 2016. They live in Ashland, Oregon.

## Class of 1997

**Mike Danforth** and Brittnee Chester were married on July 23, 2013 near Madison, Wisconsin. They live in Madison now; Mike moved there from Chicago to be with Brittnee and now he is also closer to his friends Hadley Hodges, Ray Pfeiffer and Jahsea Calkins (also PRWS alumni).

**Rose Hendricks** and Ty Mack welcomed their second child, Nash Booker, on April 9, 2016. He was born on the same day as his brother Griffin. Rose and Ty live in Driggs, Idaho. Rose teaches history at Driggs High School. Ty and his business partner Jared are owners and bakers at 460 Bread, a wholesale artisan bakery in Driggs.

## Class of 1999

**Hanna Agar** and **Brendan Karlstad** were married on July 2, 2016 at the Agar Farm. They have purchased a house in Viroqua where Hanna will work as a commercial photographer and Brendan will do fine woodworking.

**Robin Bland** and Logan Bender (YIHS) will be married on August 27 at Nor-skedalen Nature & Heritage Center. They have moved to Boston, where Logan will work as a technology research analyst and Robin will work as a school counselor.

## Class of 2001

**Zoe Coleman** (a member of the class through 5th grade) and Joseph Ellerbusch were married on July 2, 2016, at the Coleman/Wolf family homestead in Soldiers Grove, Wisconsin. Zoe and Joseph live in Madison, Wisconsin, where they both work at Memorial High School, Zoe as a school counselor and Joseph as a special education teacher.

## Class of 2002

**Adam Cox (2002)** and **Brendan Heberlein (2007)** have started Legion GIS, LLC, a small consulting firm specializing in Geographic Information Systems. To learn more about the business, please check out their website legiongis.com. Currently they have set up shop on Main Street in Viroqua, next to Valley Stewardship Network, but with Brendan attending UW-Madison this fall, and Adam moving south, the business will grow in new directions soon.

**Morgan Fenick** is now working as the florist at the PRWS Flower Basket.

**Jeff Marshall** married Eka Imerlishvili on May 28, 2016, in Kvareli, Georgia (note: the country, not the state). Jeff and Eka met in 2006 at the European College of Liberal Arts in Berlin, Germany, a small one-year liberal arts program where they were both students. After parting ways for several years, Jeff and Eka were reunited in 2011. Shortly after graduating from college, Jeff moved to Tbilisi, Georgia, to be with Eka. After living together in Tbilisi for three years, Jeff returned to the United States to pursue graduate degrees in international relations and public relations at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York. When he completes his graduate studies, he and Eka hope to relocate back home in the United States, at least for a little while.

## Class of 2003

**Moira Koons** and Brian Samuels will be married on September 10, 2016. They are living in St. Paul, Minnesota. Moira is planning to go to nursing school. Brian works for a Subaru dealership.

## Class of 2005

**Caleb Whited-Ford** graduated with a bachelor of science degree in sports management from Guilford College in 2013. He then moved to Durango, Colorado, for an internship in intramural and club sports at Fort Lewis College. These past two years he has been attending Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, while working as the graduate assistant for recreation facilities. This May he graduated with an MS in public administration, and in June he began working as the Recreational Facility Coordinator at Northern Kentucky University.

## Class of 2006

**Eamon Heberlein** graduated from Yale University this spring. He is moving to Montana.

## Class of 2007

**Sam Caldwell** graduated from Cornell College with a bachelor of arts degree in English and computer science.

**Tatiana Sutherland** graduated from Oberlin College with a bachelor of music degree in violin performance. This summer she will move to New York City where she is enrolled in a “Dev Boot Camp,” a 16-week intensive course to learn to become a web developer.

**Erin Whited-Ford** graduated in 2015 from William Esper Studio in New York City with training in the Meisner Technique. She has been building up her portfolio this past year by acting as Candy Star in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and as a wacky psychiatric patient contemplating escape from the hospital in a short movie, Waiting Room. This summer she is getting away from the city to spend some time with her first love, horses, at a dude ranch in Wyoming.

## Class of 2008

**Lizzie Grams** graduated from UW-Madison with a major in violin performance.

**Erik Shepard** graduated this spring from UW-Madison with a geology degree. He is currently taking a summer field camp program at an ongoing hands-on geology

project in Utah. His plans are open after that. He may travel all around the country, finding great places to climb, or maybe he will teach other people how to climb, as he just completed a level one guiding certificate. Two years ago he also earned his pilot license.

## Class of 2012

**Ephraim Sutherland** (in the class of 2012 through 5th grade) was the Viroqua High School valedictorian and winner of the 2016 Rising Star Concerto Competition. This summer he will participate in the International Percussion Competition at Northwestern University. In the fall he will attend Yale University to study economics and music.

**Kenneth Hoversten** is a National Merit Scholar, the first student to be so honored at Viroqua High School since 2011.

## High School Graduations

The PRWS graduating Class of 2012, led by class teacher Drew Shonka, graduated from high school this spring.

### VIROQUA, WISCONSIN

#### Laurel High School

Will Blake  
Elizabeth Dehlin  
Molly Hopkins-Sheets  
Corin Humphrey  
Jesse Kahn  
Colin McIntire  
Rena Medow

#### Viroqua High School

Kenneth Hoversten

#### Youth Initiative High School

Isis Anacker  
Maris Bock  
Will Sherwin  
Althea Sky  
Arlo Townsley  
Lydia Turino  
Jaia Wilbour  
Lauren Woody  
Margaret Zinky

### MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Sequoyah Soltis-Anderson

# The Flower Basket

Last August the board of directors opened the way into a new era for Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School by purchasing The Flower Basket ([www.prwsflowerbasket.org](http://www.prwsflowerbasket.org)). We are guided by this vision: Inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner, PRWS seeks to cultivate renewal through the integration of education and agriculture by engaging in a unique mix of social, cultural and economic endeavors.

### Gardening

The Waldorf curriculum identifies the need for children to observe nature, to be engaged in practical work, and to be taught academics in a context (rather than abstract concepts) that is strengthened by integration with the arts. Thus, taking this opportunity to expand our budding garden program, which in turn supports more outdoor time, more purposeful and fulfilling work of agriculture, and begins to educate about the economic dimensions of our food system seemed a most logical and necessary step in the evolution of our 36-year-old school.

The potential of what we have at our back door is being envisioned more and more. During our spring review the teachers appreciated their gardening experiences with gardening coordinator Erica Pfeiffer, who skillfully led the classes. This summer we will host our first summer camps in the garden. Students from Youth Initiative High School were hosted there for their agricultural block and helped to build raised beds. We are working with Thoreau College to craft a collaborative work arrangement that will enhance their studies and help to maintain and utilize the spaces. We also have plans for entrepreneurial projects that will involve students. In one year we have made great progress in our educational vision and implementation.

From the beginning we have been inspired by the work of people with similar social values who have articulated the need and opportunity to educate children to grow food. We look to Growing Power and Michael Fields Agricultural Institute in Wisconsin, Ecoliteracy in California, and Hawthorne Valley Association in New York. There are many more such inspiring projects; we are a small part of a huge wave that is creating a shift in how future generations will redesign our food system and think about stewarding ecosystems.

### Growing a Business

What is essential to each of these social enterprises and to PRWS is that we work in our local context, sensing what is needed, what is possible, who our logical partners are, and how our work meets the greater needs of the planet. It is an exciting time now as we build the vision and budget for our second business cycle in The Flower Basket. We feel successful in having met our expectations for this first year, having followed the existing business plan of growing annuals and perennials, maintaining a floral shop and, primarily, learning what it takes to operate the greenhouse system. Kudos to our staff: Arwyn Wildingway, Jess Krueger, Morgan Fenick and Joshua Estep! We are extremely grateful to all the volunteers who donated over 800 hours—and 70 percent of these hours were given by people not currently parents at PRWS. We see that there is enormous support for our vision from many quarters of our community.

During June and July we will be discussing some of the aspects that make this business special. First of all, it is the soil! We make our own soil, and plants grown in good soil are healthier and have more vitality. We go forward knowing that soil is our foundation and needs to be expanded upon. We also know that customer service is a strength that people appreciate. We grew 6,300 geraniums for the Viroqua Cemetery, for instance. We know that our greenhouses are a big asset in developing new aspects of growing food year-round.

Many thanks to our steering committee—Stephanie Brown, Tripp Hughes, Mike Link, Cori Skolaski, Alycann Taylor and Mary Christenson—for holding this process and its future development.

—Mary Christenson, Development Director





Once again we are closing a cycle and taking the time to appreciate all who have helped to carry the school in myriad ways. From donating time and professional skills, to supporting our events and fundraising activities, including Annual Giving, we thank you all for your generous participation. Inevitably we may not acknowledge every gift, but we do our best and try to provide a clear picture of just how many people are involved.

The final week of in-service meetings and board-faculty retreats provided a time to review, to take a step away from the day-to-day and appreciate the work we’ve collectively accomplished. Every child also participates at their age level, from the kindergarteners picking up trash in the neighborhood, to the third grade building a new tool shed, to the eighth graders who led the first graders to the Bethel Home to give May Day flowers to the elders there. Our parent leaders make our committee structure work like a well-oiled machine (although it is more like a living, breathing being). Our faculty and staff also volunteer many extra hours and know that ours is a work of love and commitment.

We warmly embrace our large circle of donors who have sent gifts of all sizes so that we can offer an affordable education and welcome the children in our midst to learn to live in community. We are deeply grateful to our business partners as well, who provide critical sustaining funding. Gifts can be made online at <http://pleasantridgewaldorf.org/support/donate/>.

—Mary Christenson, Development Director  
mary@pleasantridgewaldorf.org, (608) 637-8504

## Tribute to Tripp Hughes

*"Together we create a living school."*

In January 1994 I began working on the board of directors and know full well the level of commitment our school parents have to working for the success of the school. At this time I want to acknowledge Tripp Hughes, who has served on the finance committee and the board for eleven years and who led our ship through some narrow straits into a place of greater financial stability and resiliency. His leadership in the financial realm helped to create a budgeting process that moves the core values of the program and faculty/staff benefits forward.

Coming onto the board when the school was struggling financially, Tripp helped to implement the current form of tuition adjustment after attending a workshop with Bob Monsen where we discussed his Accessible to All tuition model. Tripp was able to grasp the big picture and then help craft a detailed plan of how to work toward our big goals in this little rural backwater that doesn’t have all the resources of a larger city. His consistency on the board and in finance allowed us to get through the transition of the 2009 dip in enrollment and build up reserves as well as strength in our budgeting process.

Tripp’s leadership style as board president was to encourage every other member to learn to lead and develop themselves because it is good for the school; it also reflects his own commitment to personal growth. Those of us who have worked with Tripp can attest to his sharp mind, his dedication to excellence, and his desire for clarity in policies and procedures.

Tripp has always been very interested in the quality of our community and the well-being of the students. This was demonstrated by the support he kept front and center for the role of faculty leadership. He understood the living nature of our school, as reflected in his words in an earlier Calyx: “The interconnectedness in our community continues as PRWS alumni now are teachers and parents at the school, while present and former parents serve on our faculty and administration. At this accessible-to-all school, each child, parent, teacher, and administration member plays an important role in the harmonious balance of keeping the school strong and vital. Together we create a living school.”

Tripp’s emails were always signed “In cooperation...” That describes him well. Thank you, Tripp, for your years of service. And we appreciate your interest to stay on the steering committee of The Flower Basket.

—Mary Christenson, Development Director

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Many thanks to those who have supported our school March 1, 2016 to June 22, 2016

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# Graduating class of 2016



Front Row: Jane Benton, Natalie McIntire, Isabella Walker, Miranda Whitaker, Tangwyn Kuhn, Alyssandra Dehlin; Back Row: Faith Canniff, Grace Turino, Irie Unity, Mahala Belling-Dunn, Celeste Thalhammer, Elisa Dubey, Emma Zimmermann, Dylan Katieb, Matthew Krings, Amory Lenarz, Tucker Hughes.

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