

# CALYX

PLEASANT RIDGE  
WALDORF SCHOOL

Waldorf Education since 1980

Volume 38, Issue 2  
Winter 2017



*Serena Laurdan, Grade 8*



## COMING EVENTS

### APRIL

- 10-17 Spring Break
- 18 School Resumes
- 27-28 Ronald Koetzsch Visit
- 29 All-School Work Day  
Play and Puppet Morning

### MAY

- 5 May Day Celebration
- 5-6 Eighth Grade Play
- 11 Pentathlon
- 15-19 Second Grade Play
- 17-19 Sixth Grade Play
- 26 Last Day of School  
Eighth Grade Graduation
- 30-31 Faculty In-Service Days

### JUNE

- 1 Faculty In-Service Day

## Annette Park

Annette Park crossed the threshold on October 21, 2016, after a struggle with cancer. She had been a part of the Pleasant Ridge community for over 25 years. During the years that her five children attended Pleasant Ridge, she was an active and involved parent and also served during part of that time as the school bookkeeper.

When Annette left her job at Pleasant Ridge, she decided to create a local business that would offer Waldorf materials and supplies to schools and families. Many of you are familiar with her amazing business, Paper, Scissors, Stone. Her dedication to providing high-quality materials has been a wonderful service to her customers. She loved doing all the research necessary to make sure that the materials and supplies were well-crafted and of excellent quality, going so far as to seek out small family businesses in Wisconsin, New York, Ohio and Canada to make beeswax, chalkboards, painting supplies and main lesson books to her exact specifications. We who have been able to use the Paper, Scissors, Stone products have been blessed by her inspiration.

Annette's strong, quiet, and capable presence will be dearly missed by her family and friends. She leaves behind her loving husband, Stephen, and her five children—Adam, Aaron, Hannah, Isaac, and AnnaThea—along with their partners, spouses and children.

*The article below was written and posted on Facebook by Annette's son Aaron (Class of 1999).*

October 28, 2016

by Aaron Park

My mom died a week ago today. It's hard to believe it's been that long already. I'll be pausing for a moment at 3:30, her time of death. I miss her so very much.

Throughout this period of grief, beginning even before she died, my family and I received immeasurable help and support from our truly amazing community. Far too many people to thank in one post, but you know who you are.

I feel really lucky to have had the mom I had (thanks, Mom), and to be part of such an outstanding community that is capable of rising up to meet the challenges and complications of such a difficult time.

Thank you to everyone in my family, both biological and logical, and in the community for helping to make this experience meaningful, rich, and healing. I am not afraid to cry, or to laugh. Thank you.



# SCHOOL NEWS

## Celebrating the Season of Inner Light Ringing in the New Year

The days grew shorter, the mornings were darker. It was the time of year to turn inward and create our own light. Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School celebrated the dark by bringing warmth and light to the cold and dark days of winter through a number of rich and reverent celebrations.



On December 5 and 6 the children walked the Advent Spiral, a worldwide Waldorf school tradition. It is a meditative labyrinth walk to set the mood of stillness, reverence,

and contemplation of the holiday season, even amidst the hustle and bustle that surrounds us as we move about the world beyond our school walls.



On December 13 our eighth grade students, under the direction of Catherine Thalhammer, brought the Swedish celebration of Santa Lucia to our school. Lucia is the saint of vision, particularly inner vision. Her celebration comes at the time of winter solstice, honoring the change from increasing darkness to increasing daylight. Lucia represents hope and light in the time of darkness, and she brings warmth and sustenance in times of need. On the morning of Lucia Day each year, the eighth grade students, dressed all in white, visit each classroom, bringing song and light. One of them leads the procession, dressed as Lucia, wearing a crown of light.

On December 15 the community was treated to a performance of The Shepherd's Play in our school gym. This is a traditional Oberufer Christmas story that has been enacted for decades at Waldorf Schools throughout the world. It is a gift we offer each year to our students, families, and community.

The Festival of Light was held on December 16. It is a reverent and celebratory annual festival involving all the students. The festival helps us all to cultivate peace in our hearts before departing for winter break and all the wonderful family celebrations of the season.



2017 began with a bang at Pleasant Ridge! In mid-afternoon on January 1, a group of students from Daegu and Jeju Island, South Korea, arrived by chartered bus from Chicago. Sumi Lee, South Korean teacher and niece to community member Loma Huh, once again organized the trip and accompanied the students. Loma worked tirelessly, along with Enrollment Coordinator Jordan Brudos, to support the visit. The students came during their school holiday, staying for three weeks and participating in grades two through eight.

At the welcome orientation and tour, students and their host families enjoyed getting to know each other over pizza from Dave's Pizza Shop, as well as other treats.

After their first night in Viroqua the South Korean students, along with almost 100 others from our community, enjoyed a PRWS Ski Day at Mt. La Crosse. The weather stayed pleasant long enough for us to experience the thrill of some excellent skiing. Many thanks to Jordan Brudos for coordinating this wonderful social event.



At the Friday, January 6 assembly, the Korean students presented a humorous play they had prepared about a king with donkey ears, ending with the message that "You are beautiful," exactly as you are. The PRWS parents and students then sang a traditional Korean song, "Arirang," to welcome the visitors. Many of the Korean students also participated in the Martin Luther King Day assembly on January 20.

Each student lived with a local family during their three weeks here and attended classes at Pleasant Ridge each day. Caring friendships quickly formed between these visitors and their hosts and classmates. When they left on January 23 it was hard to say good-bye, but we hope to see some of them again next winter.

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*In our efforts to reduce paper use, you may request an electronic copy by emailing [cynthia@pleasantrydwaldorf.org](mailto:cynthia@pleasantrydwaldorf.org).*

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# SCHOOL NEWS

## PRWS Basketball

The Pleasant Ridge eighth grade boys' basketball team recently concluded a very successful season. Playing against more experienced teams such as La Crosse Aquinas, Westby, and La Crosse Central, the boys played competitive, joyful basketball and even won some games! Throughout the season, many parents, officials, and coaches commented on how hard our team played and how well they conducted themselves. Lars Bergan is proud to have been their coach and is very grateful for the help of the other coaches: his sister Kate Bergan and YIHS teacher Shawn Lavoie.



Front Row: Caspian Stevenson, Hugh Spann, Jesse Porter, Jackson Rott, Elliot Nicholes, Ansel Brenneman.  
Back Row: Kate Bergan, Shawn Lavoie, Isaac Porter, Ben Ashley, Blake Peterson, Nolan Peterson, Lars Bergan

## Welcome Santiago

Carrie Treviranus (class teacher, grade 1) and Aaron Schmidt (class teacher, grade 3) are the proud parents of Santiago Goldfinch Schmidt, born October 18, 2016. Mother and father are back in the classroom as grandparents step in to help out with Santiago. All are doing well!



## Shannon Landis

Shannon Landis, the Violet Kindergarten lead teacher, spent four days in the hospital in February due to complications of the flu.

We invite members of our community who are interested in offering financial support for her time away from work to recover and her medical bills, to please consider a contribution to the Shannon Landis Emergency Relief Fund. Checks are payable to PRWS and mailed or dropped off in the front office. Thank you!



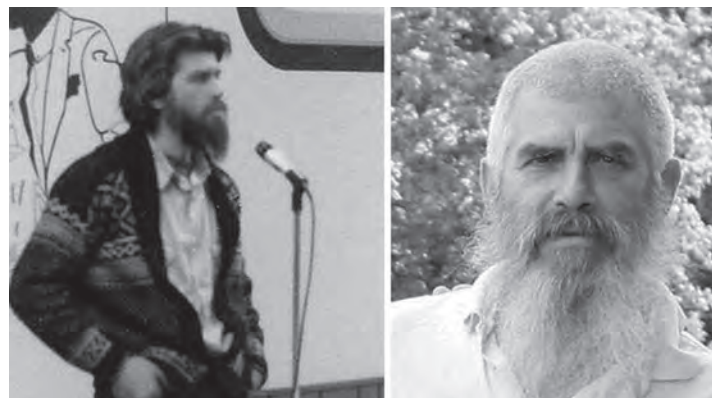
## In Memoriam: Dave Engel

Our hearts go out to the whole Engel family: Marta, Lilly, Toby, Josh (Teresa & son Otto), and Noah (Ximena & sons Yasmani and Rafael). Dave was such a wonderful part of our PRWS and larger community. As one of the founding organic farmers in our area, he helped form some of the most innovative companies and organizations in the organic community. He served our school as a father, board member and volunteer and he and Marta have long supported our school as alumni parents. We will miss you, Dave. Blessings on your family.

The family is holding a memorial at the Sugar Creek Bible Camp on April 8th: 2:00-6:00 p.m.

Dave's obituary and memorial scholarship fund can be found on the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) website here : <https://mosesorganic.org/supportorganic/engel/>. Dave is shown below left at the first MOSES Organic Conference in 1990 and right, more recently (photos courtesy of MOSES website).

If you have any photos of Dave during his PRWS days as a parent and board member and would share them with us, please send an email to Cynthia here at [cynthia@pleasantridgewaldorf.org](mailto:cynthia@pleasantridgewaldorf.org).



# CURRICULUM

## Understanding Our Children and the Role of Authority

by Bonnie Wideman, Class Teacher, Grade 3

*(Ed. note: The following excerpt from a longer article is reprinted from the Winter 2000–2001 issue of the Calyx. It is as timely today as when it was first written!)*

As first grade was the year of imitation and spontaneous enthusiasm for everything (the mundane as well as the special), second grade was the year of obedience and hard work. By that time my students had “the form” of our school day well in hand and they seemed to find strength and comfort in it. They were ready to work hard. Great strides were made in the second grade year: learning to read, writing in cursive, learning the times tables, drama and music, painting the animals from the fables. In second grade it was easy for the children to “follow the rules”; obedience was given. In fact, at times it was hard to console a child who was feeling bad about having done something unacceptable. I would have gladly stayed in second grade!

Here we are in third grade. Early in the year a few parents asked me, “What about this nine-year change? What should I expect?” Well, since Christmas, it's become evident that this is a class in the middle of a time of change. They seem to be ready to challenge authority. ...

If there's one thing students need from teachers and parents at this age, it's that we are willing to stand strongly with them as guides, as authorities. Just as “imitation” was the key word for first grade, and “obedience” the key word for second, “authority” is the key word for third grade.

Rudolf Steiner speaks at length about the child's need for authority. In his lecture “The Fundamentals of Waldorf Education” he places great importance on it: “The experience of authority becomes the main educational principle for children between the change of teeth and puberty—a principle that develops naturally to become the basic relationship between teacher and pupil.” This is the key tenet of Waldorf education that we're looking at here: the experience of authority becomes the main educational principle for grades 1 through 8! Sometimes it seems as if this issue of “authority” is the very hardest aspect for today's American Waldorf teachers and parents to understand. For those who are around my age, our ego-dominated formative years may have been strongly influenced by anti-authority cultural waves. Does the saying “Don't trust anyone over 30,” by Abbie Hoffman, sound familiar? Perhaps coming to grips with what it means to be a true authority for our children is the special task of my generation.

My authority as a class teacher is a gift my students give me. I have to earn this position of authority; it isn't just something I can demand. They give me their love and their trust. I believe I am only entitled to this love and trust if I am striving—striving to provide for them what they need in the way of a moral guide as well as a purveyor of knowledge, striving to make myself a

better person for their sake. They don't need to believe that I am always right, but they need to believe that I seek after truth. They don't need to believe that I know everything (though I did find it helpful in first grade that one of my students thought I could read his mind!), but I want them to see that I seek knowledge with joy and enthusiasm. If I look for goodness and beauty in life, I help them also to do so. I don't expect that my students will always obey me just because I have this position of authority with them; they have to test the limits of right and wrong from time to time to find out for themselves, or just to make sure I'm doing my job.

There's one more important aspect to my view of what constitutes “the adult as authority.” To be what our children need as authorities, we too need to recognize our submission to a Higher Authority. This is something the child will get a sense of, something that will have a strong influence on his or her outlook on life in later years.

On this subject, I would highly recommend Steiner's lectures published in *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I*, a collection of lectures on educational and social questions, given throughout Europe in 1921 and 1922.\*

\*This collection of lectures is available online at [https://www.rsarchive.org/Download/Waldorf\\_Education\\_and\\_Anthroposophy\\_1-Rudolf\\_Steiner-304.pdf](https://www.rsarchive.org/Download/Waldorf_Education_and_Anthroposophy_1-Rudolf_Steiner-304.pdf)

—Bonnie Wideman, Class Teacher, Grade 3

## Review

### “Strengthening the Foundational Senses”

A series of articles by Connie Helms

Waldorf kindergarten teachers often talk about the four foundational senses and their importance in the early years of childhood. This well-written series of articles does a wonderful job of describing the foundational senses and their importance to the healthy development of the young child.

The first article gives an overview of the four foundational senses outlined by Rudolf Steiner—Touch, Life (Well-Being), Self-Movement, and Balance. It then focuses on the sense of Touch. Subsequent articles talk about the remaining three senses.

The author, Connie Helms, is a private practitioner of the Extra Lesson approach in Vermont. She works with children, adolescents, and adults in need of assistance with body integration and centering. This series of articles provides parents with many simple and profoundly effective ways to help young children when they are having difficulties related to one of these senses. I highly recommend these articles to anyone who has or works with young children. The articles are available online at <http://thewonder-ofchildhood.com/2011/08/strengthening-the-foundational-senses-and-the-sense-of-touch/>

—Maureen Karlstad, former PRWS class teacher



## ALUMNI

Ximena Puig (1997) and Noah Engel (1997) welcomed their new son, Rafael Alejandro, on December 15, 2016. Labor was quick and smooth and he weighed 9 pounds 12 ounces! He was born 60 years after his grandfather Alejandro.

Amanda Walter-Wright Polson (1999) and Cameron Polson and daughter Willow welcomed their new son and brother, Gillespie Wainwright Polson, born November, 2016.

Hannah Park-Goldman (2000) and Christopher Lee Park-Goldman welcomed their son, Ezra, born on October 19, 2016. Ezra's grandma, Annette Park, former parent and staff member at PRWS, was able to see her grandson and hold him before she passed away on October 22. (See memorial notice on page 1 of this newsletter.) Blessed be.

Aurora (Brinsfield) Boyd (2001) and Kelly Boyd and daughter Astrid welcomed their new son and brother, Leo Emerson, born on October 17, 2016.

Peter Bergquist (2003) and partner Lauren McElroy welcomed their new son, Simeon Bergquist, on August 26, 2016.

Claire Champion (2006) is now working at Organic Valley.

Corinne Horan (2009) is in her fourth year of eurythmy studies at Sunbridge College in New York.

Gideon Schmidt (2011) and his partner Elliotte Witters welcomed their daughter, Avni Lilavati, born on November 11, 2016. He is the son of Aaron Schmidt, grade 3 class teacher.

Naomi Sutherland (2013) is a finalist in the Bolz Young Artist Final Forte competition. Naomi performed Debussy Danses, a harp concerto, with the Madison Symphony Orchestra on March 29 at 6:45 p.m. at the Overture Center in Madison. The performance was broadcast live on Wisconsin Public Television and Wisconsin Public Radio. Naomi is the daughter of Wyatt Sutherland and PRWS music teacher Monika Sutherland.

## The Gift of Waldorf Education at Pleasant Ridge

by Vince Hundt, 2007 President of the Board

*(Ed. note: This article is reprinted from the Spring 2007 issue of the Calyx. We are forever grateful to Vince and Dawn Hundt for the many gifts they have given to Pleasant Ridge over the years, including this wonderful article!)*

My wife Dawn and I have had children in the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School for 17 years and, back-to-back, we have been on the Board for the last 13 years. Our youngest son Henry graduated from the eighth grade in the spring of 2005 and I will be leaving the Board in a few months, this spring.

I am sad, but I am also glad. So glad that Pleasant Ridge exists and was here for us. What a gift. What a gift it has been to have this school in our lives. A place where earnest, thoughtful people come together every day, sheltering young children under their arms, motivated with a burning desire to raise these children to be whole, balanced, free human beings. Do you realize how few people have been so blessed to find such a place? Sadly, there has never been a more stark contrast between what Pleasant Ridge offers and the status quo than there is today. We see it every day in the media.

What a gift is Pleasant Ridge to our children.

Working with hands, working with songs, working with stories of heroes, children unfold slowly and gracefully to reveal the stunning beauty that is each individual human soul. Art, music, nature, theater, stories of the ancestors well told by a human voice, festivals and food; all woven together like a long, warm, colorful shawl. Slowly and patiently our children develop a reverence for each other, a reverence for their teachers and school, and a reverence for themselves.

Waldorf education at Pleasant Ridge is balanced nutrition for the whole young, unfolding, individual being. Learning each day in the smallest steps how to know yourself and to sort out what is true and what is false; what to keep, what to recycle and what to throw away. Hearing and absorbing the ancient stories of our ancestors, learning to play 500-year-old songs on simple flutes, learning to shape and draw with simple old tools and methods, planting a garden with their teacher and pulling carrots to eat them raw, dirt and all.

There is no greater achievement than to become "free." Free to be able to live and act and make choices that come from within and are not imposed by a culture that appears sometimes to have gone mad. Children today live in a pressure cooker culture where they are thrown into large institutions, expected to grow up fast, to learn abstract concepts young. A Waldorf education sets out not to train children or really to teach them, but to lead them to freedom. In 18 years I have seen the results, friends. This educational method offers a real solution to a host of social ills.

As a Pleasant Ridge board member I have asked you many times to make personal sacrifices—and you have. I am asking again, help this school. We have an \$830,000 budget [now close to \$875,000?] and have to raise every penny every year. Help keep this idea alive. Help keep this great hope alive. Please help us with a gift today. Our students will be deeply grateful as their lives continue to unfold. Chances are, if you are receiving this newsletter, you know at least one of these children or one who has already graduated.

It has been my pleasure to have been directly involved in the stewardship of this school and I have every confidence that it will continue to be supported generously through gifts like yours.

## DEVELOPMENT

## Annual Giving and Special Events

*It is aliveness that must be the guiding principle. Joy and happiness in living, a love of all existence, a power of energy for work...the need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility—these are the forces which are the very nerve of education. —Rudolf Steiner*

Aliveness! It is also the very root of the success of Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. Most likely every reader of this newsletter contributes to this energy that fuels our school. Here at the midpoint of the school year, we want to extend a hearty thank you to all of you who have made contributions to the school.

There are so many ways to give that the list is almost dizzying: Annual Giving, the Holiday Faire, Annual Raffle, purchases through the School Store and Kickapoo Coffee, the Scrip program, the school directory, the Flower Basket, and gifts in-kind. There have also been restricted gifts to support the new basketball hoop, a new snow blower, a truck for the Flower Basket, and the gardening program.

Another equally important way to give is by volunteering time. Volunteers can help in the library, the hot lunch program, with outreach activities like the farmers' market, or at the Flower Basket; serve on a committee that helps administer the school; and offer classroom teacher and office support.

If our school were a garden, the garden is diverse and strong. We are blessed with generous and faithful parent leaders and doers who help sustain and regenerate this beautiful experiment. We are encircled and nourished by dedicated donors. Together we help create the aliveness that helps children thrive. Thank you!

—Mary Christenson, Development Director



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Call Bill first when you are looking at real estate, whether you are buying or selling. Mention the school and we will earn a donation. To look at properties visit:

[www.BillBrookeRealty.com](http://www.BillBrookeRealty.com)

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Many thanks to those who have supported our school October 2 – February 16, 2017

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## In Memory of

Jonathan R. Balkowitsch  
Nancy & John Balkowitsch

Annette Park  
Steve & Mary Christenson

Barbara Von Nostitz Peterson  
Norma Herz  
Carol Siyahi Hicks  
Charles Rodriguez

## Eric Rentenbach

Paul & Jacqueline Rentenbach

## Jim Smith

Maura Otis & Barry Jensen  
(Big Shirt Small Hat)

## Karen A. Taylor

Paul Taylor

## In Honor of

Cheryl Austin's 70th Birthday  
Randy & Janelle Peterson

Ethan, Mike & Lucy Danforth  
Roberta Ducharme

The Balkowitsch Family  
Neal Balkowitsch & Donald Nelson

Beautiful Children & Wonderful Teachers/Staff at PRWS  
Pete & Alycann Taylor

August Bieser  
Jim & Donna Bieser

Mary Christenson  
Anonymous

Blake & Nolan Peterson  
Alice Peterson

Max Schulte Moon  
MaryAnn & Emmett Schulte

Rowan Heath  
Donald and Adele Skolaski

The PRWS Children  
Jim & Betsy Farrell  
Christine Violet & Hilda Richey

PRWS Faculty, Staff & Board  
Diane and Gregory Splinter

Marjorie Rehbach & Christiane Babb  
Sheila Andersen

Sylvi Shonka  
Dorothy & Jim Thompson

## Grants &amp; Foundations

Amazon Smile & School Rewards  
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Paul E. Stry Foundation  
PAXAM Foundation  
Planet Green  
RSF Social Finance  
Waldorf Schools Fund

## In Kind &amp; Restricted

Friends of VMH (Vernon Memorial Hospital)  
Loma Huh  
Eric Levermann & Martha Karlstad  
Maureen Karlstad  
Barbara & Marvin McNeal  
Cynthia Olmstead  
PRWS Class of 2016  
Geri Shonka

## SCRIP

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Driftless Café  
Kwik Trip  
Nelson Agri-Center  
Parrish Music & Gifts  
Quality of Life Chiropractic  
Rising Sun Animal Wellness Center  
Rockweiler Appliance & TV  
Viroqua Village Market

*Thank you to all of our donors and volunteers for the 2016 Holiday Faire.*



# Grade One visits parents' Sugar Shack



Eric & Shawn Meyer host the First Grade at their Sugar Shack.

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