

CALYX

PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL

Waldorf Education since 1980

Volume 39, Issue 3
Summer 2018



Koi by PRWS Alumna, Ivy Shonka

COMING EVENTS

AUGUST

- 1-31 School Office Hours:
9 to 12, M-Th
- 21-23 Faculty In-Service
- 25 All School Work Day

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Opening Day—Grades 1-8
- 6 First Day for Kindergarten/
Cubby Day
- 7 Welcome Back Picnic
- 14 Faculty In-Service—NO CLASSES
- 25 All-School Meeting
- 28 Michaelmas Festival
- 30 New Family Brunch

OCTOBER

- 12 Grandparents & Special Friends Day
- 31 Halloween/Enchanted Forest
- 31 Faculty In-Service—NO CLASSES

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Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School

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(608) 637-7828
FEIN 39-1357578

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gifts to the school, and fundraising events.

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To the Eighth Grade Class of 2018

by Jenny Allan, class teacher

You filled my heart and life
with an unexplainable joy

The closest I can come to explaining that is
You became a part of me.

And you always will be.

Tonight you are sitting up there as if on a springboard!

The classroom was a place where Grace poured out all over us
And light filtered in like a prism
And woke us up to physics and poetic rhythm
Math sheets we practiced and the multiplication table
You found yourselves rather, mathematically stable
Chemistry and physiology and explorers galore
We learned what is truth and/or simply folklore

With lengthy listening ears
And with the crystal clear sight of an eagle
Of a heart that yearns to care
And finds ways to include the new one, even tonight
Who makes room for others
Who doesn't give up when things get tough
Who makes the day light up with their smile
Who creates excitement around learning
Who problem solves and finds outside-the-box answers
Who studies well and hard and on time...
Who is thoughtful, respectful and loving
Who is thorough in their work
Who is dedicated to being awesome
And all the while, laughing, loving,
Finding home in everything.

Bringing comfort is something that is special. You all have it.
An incredible amount of compassion, love, understanding and
empathy, and this, by all accounts, is just about everything.
I am so very proud of you.

GRADUATION

Editor's note: This year's eighth grade had three class teachers over its journey through the grades. Parents and teachers in a Waldorf school hold an ideal of the class teacher beginning in first grade and continuing with these students through all eight years. But this class encountered a series of different factors: the combining of this class with the next higher grade to compensate for small class sizes; the addition of a second teacher (Ronald Schirmer and then Jenny Allan), which allowed more enrollment into the class; a maternity leave from which the teacher chose not to return; and lastly, the re-dividing of the combined class into two as middle school approached. The teachers overlapped during most years and our school experienced the power of team teaching while giving new teachers a supportive mentoring environment. Hints of these dynamics are at play in the following excerpts from the celebration on May 25. The evening proved to be an expression of heart forces from all the speakers, including the students, and a celebration of the love that pervaded those years in this class. We eagerly look forward to seeing what unfolds in the lives of these students over the next few years.

Class Tribute

As my eighth grader prepared to graduate from PRWS this spring, I began to wonder what her and her peers' experience meant to them as the last day approached. I could see and was hearing about how much they meant to each other. There were statements of "I love him/her" and "I will miss him/her" left and right. I felt the same bittersweet feelings. It's not that they were all "besties," and at times significant conflict had arisen, but they had worked through it all and come out the other end with genuine love for each other.

For better or worse, this time brought me back to my own eighth grade graduation. My memory of it is that I felt sad that, after all the time I had spent with my teachers and peers, I came away with very little feeling of connection. What was missing? I wondered. This question led me back to the Waldorf principles of developing the whole child and guiding classroom leadership with the head, heart, and hands.

My daughter's class had seen three different class teachers. For various reasons, these changes became necessary, and while this could have weakened the class bond, it in fact may have made it stronger. When I asked other class parents what they felt this class meant to their children, they pointed to values such as compassion, kindness, and creativity. It was the teachers' modeling of these values that helped guide us through the changes we had to endure as a group. They showed the children directly how to go from their head (judgment) to heart (compassion for another's situation). Parents also did their part to support change with grace. Our class benefited from the upheaval that came because we all learned that change can be okay if you handle it with love.

My own experience in middle school had similar pieces to what my daughter's school experience did. I had some good teachers, some friendships I enjoyed, plays, music programs, and some "alternative" teaching methods (for the '80s). What I didn't have was a philosophy of education where the teacher is given license to teach with head, heart, and hands connected. In essence it means teaching with love.

My middle school teachers probably cared a lot about teaching children the love of learning and the subjects themselves. However, that is only part of what a child must learn at this time in their lives; the head part. Guiding children with heart and hands as well just might be what was missing way back when I left middle school.

Thankfully, my daughter, her peers, and many PRWS alumni seem to echo similar sentiments that reflect just how the tenets of Waldorf education can lead to deep, life-long connections. We are so grateful.

—Jess Leinberger, class parent

To Ms. Ximena and Ms. Jenny

Ms. Ximena

When you welcomed me to join the combined class back in 2012, I did not understand the depth of trust you were imparting to me. You cared for these young people as if they were your own. Everything we did in class was carefully thought through, everything enlivened with imagination, humor and love. Working by your side for two years was a priceless blessing. It is impossible for me to determine how much of how I now understand about working with children comes from you. My sense of gratitude for that, as well as for your friendship and counsel, is infinite.

Ms. Jenny

When we chose to separate the two classes and work independently, I knew you had a heart connection with this group that would come to your aid in trying times. You took this group into your heart and gave them all of what your heart could provide. You helped them discover a group identity unique to themselves, something they would later come to feel true pride in. You also left them the gifts of your light-hearted and joyful ways. I am grateful for our time working together, I am humbled you entrusted me to take this eighth grade year on, and I am grateful for your friendship and wisdom.

—Ronald Schirmer, class teacher



SCHOOL NEWS

Farewells

Monika Sutherland

There are scarcely words to express how much the music program at Pleasant Ridge means to the faculty, the students, and the parents. And in this special field, the faculty's admiration and appreciation for Monika Sutherland's contributions to the school knows no bounds.

When I joined the faculty of PRWS, Monika was the faculty chair as well as a music teacher extraordinaire. She welcomed my husband and me into the community of the school as well as into her circle of friends, as I have seen her do for many others joining our school family. I remarked on her devotion to the students as well as her caring attention to the faculty circle. It was a joy to watch the way she gently introduced the little ones to their "flutes" and to singing so that they all could develop the feeling that they are musical. Each year she brought new challenges to her classes, always careful to, first and foremost, nurture their love of music. In the upper grades, each student's interests, talents and gifts were recognized and supported in the chorus and orchestra. I saw real joy in my students' eyes when Monika would enter the room to practice songs for our play; they felt held and appreciated, always.

Monika leaves a legacy of love and devotion for music, a nationally recognized reputation for her teaching methodology, and a passion for bringing out the best in the students in her charge. She will be missed but her star will shine bright in our hearts with each future festival and concert.

—Bernadette Link, class teacher

A Tribute to Mrs. Sutherland

While being an inspiring musician, fantastic teacher and an understanding friend, Mrs. Sutherland made her way into all of our hearts. For me it started from a very young age: I remember watching her conduct my older siblings' orchestras and choirs, act in faculty plays, and loving the amount of energy she put into them. I could not wait to be her student. I believe that all students gain great respect for her from a young age, and I know you guys [fellow students] would agree that as individuals and as a group we have not lost one bit of that respect.

Mrs. Sutherland also has a beautiful way of reaching out to students, especially upper grade students, by indulging with us in some pop culture, and sharing stories that we can relate to from her experience as a parent and as a teen throughout our Waldorf days.

The last thing I will mention is all the "behind the scenes" work. She has found many new opportunities for me and others, and she then guides us through them. I remember every year feeling super stressed and nervous at solo and ensemble, but when she would come into the warm-up room to tune my cello and check in with me to see how I was feeling, most of those nerves would go away.

We are all extremely grateful for the hard work and respect you



put into our music program and community. Thank you for sharing your gift of music with our school for over a decade. We will miss you!

—Sylvi Shonka, eighth grade student
(given at the final Spring Concert)

Cynthia Olmstead

This spring Cynthia Olmstead announced her desire to pursue a new business opportunity at the Driftless Brewery, so we are losing a vital staff member. Cynthia joined the PRWS Development Office in 2004, bringing her experience in non-profit leadership and prolific administrative and financial skills which strengthened our development work. We are very grateful for her grant writing that brought funding for many improvements to the school in the physical, administrative, and program realms. During her time here the school celebrated two significant anniversaries, became an accredited school, found more stability in our funding, and strengthened our full Waldorf program.



I am deeply grateful to Cynthia for the collaboration we achieved in managing a diverse and sustainable program of non-tuition funding, while continually improving and adjusting to the needs for marketing, web presence, financial management of grants—and surprises!

One of the projects that Cynthia led each year is the school's Directory and Handbook. The business directory at the back of the book, comprised of ads, provides the income for producing the handbook and an additional \$6,000 to operations. Gabrielle Daniels, a parent who worked on it with her, said this recently:

I want to officially thank Cynthia for her rock star work on this directory each and every year. I literally could not have done this volunteer work without her tireless efforts to make it happen, her ongoing above-and-beyond efforts to get and keep advertisers (year after year after year), her awesome communication with me and others, and her procuring of the software and computer equipment I needed to do this work. She set good timelines and stuck to them—without which I would not have been able to do this volunteer work as I have a narrow window of opportunity with my own work schedule—and she, along with many hardworking staff over the years, made this project happen.

We wish Cynthia all the best and will miss her!

—Mary Christenson, Development

Lisa Geary

Lisa Geary has been assisting in the kindergarten for more than two years. She has been a critical part of the beginning of the new Cherry Blossom classroom. Lisa's artistic sense, building skills, humor and dedication have been appreciated by all of us in the kindergarten. We also very much appreciated her bread and soup!

Lisa is leaving the school to focus on developing her farm business. We are sending her blessings on her new adventure but we are very sad to see her leave the kindergarten.

Thank you, Ms. Lisa, for your kindness and patience and sense of humor. We are all going to miss your quiet and delicate presence. Come back to visit us!

—Marinella Pro, Cherry Blossom Kindergarten teacher

Middle School Music

Three of our middle school students made it into the Middle Level State Honors Orchestra: Ada Lenarz, Peter Levin, and Emma Krings. This is an amazing accomplishment. Auditions are held each year in six locations around the state of Wisconsin, and it is very competitive. Of all the students who auditioned in La Crosse in April for honors band, orchestra, and choir, only these three were accepted. They will be participating next fall in an orchestra festival held in Madison, joining students from all over the state for this two-day event of rehearsals culminating in a concert.

New Arrival

Second grade teacher Carrie Treviranus and fourth grade teacher Aaron Schmidt, along with their son Santiago, welcomed a new family member on March 12 with the birth of Benicio Abraham. The family is doing well. Thank you to all of the community members who supplied them with delicious meals!

Rube Goldberg Machines



During the 7th grade physics block, the students presented their Rube Goldberg machines during a Friday assembly. A Rube Goldberg machine is a machine intentionally designed to perform a simple task in an indirect and overly complicated way. Peter Levin's machine delivered an egg to a heated frying pan after cracking it.

May Day



DEVELOPMENT

From the Development Director



Waldorf education teaches students that we live in relationships—lots of them—and that humans make creative contributions to the development of culture and society. Taking that perspective, Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School thrives due to the bounty and quality of relationships we have estab-

lished over many years. As a living system, our school continually develops and regenerates itself through the efforts of the families, the staff, and extended relations. We know that your generosity is also essential for the school to thrive, and we thank you!

One special person we want to acknowledge is Bill Schultz, former owner of Village Market. He saw the opportunity to offer support via our Scrip program and did so for over 20 years. Scrip fundraising is mutually beneficial; businesses donate 5 % of their customers' Scrip purchases back to the school. We expect to develop some type of Scrip program with the store that has taken over that space, Quillins-Viroqua. Other long-term Scrip businesses include Nelson's Agri-Center, Kwik Trip, and Bill Brooke Realty; see our website for the complete list. Now that summer is here and the school office has limited hours, people may purchase gas cards, Scrip, and purchase certificates at Parrish Music on Main Street.

Another way to help us build long-term sustainability for Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is to join the Legacy Circle: a program for making planned gifts via your will or other estate plans to bequeath cash, stock, bonds, or mutual funds insurance to the school. So far eight people have named us in their will; we invite you to join them! Please call the Development Office to discuss your questions and intentions.

We are most grateful to all who gave during the Spring Appeal, helping to meet our financial goals for another school year! Through our activities we try to reinforce the health-giving, self-renewing relationships between our members. Together we carry vision, build heart-centered relationships, and do the work that needs doing.

Growing for Good

We want to honor and thank Stephanie Brown and Angie Lemar for their over-the-top leadership of Growing for Good operations and management this year. Seldom do people who do everything with seeming ease get the recognition they deserve for the extra hours and stress such an effort has added to their lives. Our startup business needed their skill, attention and love, and we are very grateful for all they have done.

We also want to thank Mark Shepard for generously giving his time and expertise in permaculture design at Growing for Good. Most recently he has guided the effort to dig trenches and establish swales that will direct the water flows on the property, and with his knowledge of food-bearing woody plants, we are slowly growing an edible landscape.

Moving On

After 24 years of working alongside some of the most committed people I've known who carry a vision for child-centered education, the time has come for me to move on to my new chapter—and for a new voice in development at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School.

It has been the greatest honor of my life to be a part of this movement with you, and to help PRWS develop into a notable, accredited school in the Waldorf School movement. We are led by vision to serve as many families as we can and to protect our children's right to a healing, joyous school experience. We are known for having strong heart forces; for creativity in the face of seeming scarcity. We have excellent teachers, staff, dedicated parents and healthy children. We are a small rural school with a deep commitment to community that makes us strong. The dynamics of inevitable polarities bind us together and make us resilient when we face them with generosity of soul for each other.

What a profound privilege it has been to work with my colleagues on the faculty, board, parents, and also friends of the school—to stand with you, to work with you, to celebrate and grieve and build hope with you. We strive to work out of beauty, goodness and truth. I have every confidence that PRWS will continue to grow, thrive, and lead the way in guiding beautiful, innocent, precious children to become creative, empathetic, and capable adults. Thank you all for everything you have done and will do to build and strengthen this gem of a school.

I look forward to spending more time helping to develop Growing for Good and working with the Development and Alumni committees. I am also looking forward to spending more time with family, gardening, and studying.

Please welcome Robin Kottke, who brings to this role the enthusiasm of a school parent for the past four years, her experience in the non-profit sector (with ATHENA, focused on women's leadership), and the caring of a nurse. She is recognized by many for her positivity, her involvement in community, and her skill in building relationships.

—Mary Christenson, Development



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Matt Shortridge Carpentry
Sime Furniture
Tapestry Yoga
Viroqua Public Market
Viroqua Village Market
Your Best Voice Studio

ALUMNI

Weddings:

Merla Wainscott (2007) and Joe Coen
Ben Caldwell (2005) and Amanda Cubells
Emily Woody (2007) and Nathan Wiebe

Births:

Anna Jo Doerr (1994) and Shawn Lavoie, a boy, Anson Sol
Reed Doerr (1993) and Francia, a girl, Kosmo Sky
Josh (1995) and Teresa Engel, a boy, Leo Henk
Sam Vanderhyden (1993) and Adley Bertsch (1997), a girl, Evangeline Lark
Julia Hundt Ugo (1997) and Adrian Ugo, a girl, Uma Bloom

Graduations:

Ivy Shonka (2014) graduated from Laurel High School. She received the Viroqua High School (VHS) Artist of the Year Award as well as All State hockey awards for her performance as goalie for the VHS hockey team. She will attend St. Olaf College where she will study Art and Science and play Division III hockey.

Hugh Hofmann (2011) graduated from Western Technical College with high honors in the Digital Media Production Program, receiving his associate degree. Hugh was acknowledged on the President's List during his four terms and won an award for achieving 100 hours of volunteer time in one year.

Students from the class of 2014 will be attending these colleges:

Lawrence University, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Luther College, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Pitzer College, Marquette University, Kubert School of Art, St. Olaf College, Los Angeles College of Music, Carthage University, Northland College, Augsburg College, Winona State University, and University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

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*Receive the children in reverence; educate them with love;
let them go forth in freedom.*

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Enclosed is my contribution of:

☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other \$_____

Name _____

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☐ Please call me about making a special gift of stock, or to include PRWS in my estate plans/will.

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Please make checks payable to:

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Thank you for your support!

Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. PRWS tax ID# 39-1357578

Graduating class of 2018



Front Row (l to r): Joy Hubbard, Alani Toledo, Delphi Starn, Sylvi Shonka, and Emma Krings.
Back Row: Amalia Gullion, Raia Meyer, Ethan Zimmermann, Kalil Krumenauer, Lucia Nannini, and Ronald Schirmer.

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