

CALYX

PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL
Waldorf Education since 1980
Volume 40, Issue 1
Fall 2018





COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 13 Santa Lucia
- 21 Festival of Light (noon dismissal; winter break begins)
- 27 Alumni Reunion

JANUARY

- 7 School Resumes
- 18 Epiphany/MLK Festival

FEBRUARY

- 4-8 Re-Enrollment Week
- 9 Kindergarten Morning
- 18-22 Parent/Teacher Conferences & Winter Break
- 25 School Resumes

Our Newsletter Name

by Pat Cwierniak

Reprinted from *Calyx Newsletter* Volume I, Number I, September 1979

We have happened upon the name for this Pleasant Ridge School newsletter by a blending of reflection and active searching. Although a name is often little more than a means of labeling and permits easier communication, we wanted the newsletter name to be something special to the persons who are contributing a good deal of energy to the formation of this living school.

Calyx, as we observe in nature, is the circle of petals that protect the inner parts of a flower in its early development. At some pre-ordained moment, the bud opens and the calyx continues to support the blossom in a more subtle, often invisible fashion. In each blossom, the function of the calyx remains the same, but the variety in the shapes and mandala-like patterns they exhibit causes one to wonder at this remarkable, natural process.

Calyx, as you will soon begin to understand, will be written and edited to provide support of a different nature. I am enthused about the direction it can take. I'll leave this first message on a reflective note. I'd like to let you give some thought with me as far as what *Calyx* can become. My own thoughts I'll share in the next publication, I hope you'll share yours with me as you feel inclined.

The adventures ahead with Pleasant Ridge School will be exciting; I am dedicated and delighted to be part as editor of the *Calyx*.

Calendar of the Soul

AUTUMN

When to my being's depths I penetrate,

There stirs expectant longing

That self-observing, I may find myself

As gift of summer sun, a seed

That warming lives in autumn mood

As germinating force of soul.

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Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School
431 E. Court Street, Viroqua, WI 54665
info@pleasantrydwaldorf.org
www.pleasantrydwaldorf.org
(608) 637-7828
FEIN 39-1357578

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Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, economic ability, or sexual orientation.

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SCHOOL NEWS

WELCOME

This year we have ten new families joining the school, two returning students, and four new siblings—for a total of twenty new and returning students. Below is a list of our new families, where they are from, the names and grades of their children, parents' occupations/interests, and what drew them to Waldorf education. I have included a list of students who are returning after a semester or more away, and new siblings of current or former students as well. Please join me in welcoming new and returning families and students—we are happy that you are here!

-Jordan Brudos, Enrollment & Outreach Coordinator

New Families

Brian & Kwynn Molini – Cross Plains, Wisconsin

Sana – Kindergarten

Brian works at Southwest Tech. His interests are health, wellness, and the outdoors. Kwynn is a stay-at-home mom. Her interests are camping, plants, and cooking. They are interested in Waldorf education because it incorporates nature and each child is valued as an individual. They also love the community!

Brendan & Kate Froeschl – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Owen – Grade 5

Levi – Grade 2

Prior to arriving in Viroqua, the Froeschls were involved with the Waldorf School of Pittsburgh. Brendan was the facilities manager and Kate was a classroom assistant in the early childhood and handwork programs. Brendan enjoys working on house projects and woodworking. Kate's interests include handwork, cooking/baking, yardwork, and reading.

Laila Johnson – Viroqua, Wisconsin

Daniel Yildirim – Viroqua, Wisconsin

Walter – Grade 2

Jonel Kiesau – Hillsboro, Wisconsin

Iris – Grade 6

Elsa – Grade 3

Jonel is the Education Coordinator for the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Her interests include reading, writing, and travel. The family has home-schooled using a Waldorf-inspired program but they are drawn to the warmth and rhythm that PRWS offers.

John & Melissa Madura – Midland, Texas

Madeline – Grade 6

Leo – Grade 3

John is helping run Trillium Bed and Breakfast in LaFarge, as well as teaching violin lessons and commuting to play in the Midland-Odessa Symphony in Midland, Texas. Melissa is the new choir and strings teacher at PRWS and is also playing in various local symphonies, as well as the Midland-Odessa Symphony. They are interested in Waldorf education because of the way it teaches the whole child while encouraging the necessity of community.

Dan Sullivan & Colleen Coyle – Aurora, Illinois

Jarrett – Grade 4

Dan is the Midwest Regional Field Service Manager for Multiquip Inc., a construction and power equipment company. Colleen is an archaeologist who also provides publishing services (research, drawing, and editing) to colleagues. They began their Waldorf journey five years ago at Four Winds Waldorf School in Warrenville, Illinois. Having been educated in

Quaker schools, they searched long and hard for a similar educational opportunity for their son. They are very excited to be able to continue their Waldorf experience with the Pleasant Ridge families and community.

Fred & Lisa Anderson – San Marcos la Laguna, Guatemala

Grace – Grade 5

Most recently, Lisa and Fred have been educators in Costa Rica and Guatemala (Fred, environmental education; Lisa, English as a second language). They are currently job-seeking in the areas of education, archaeology, anthropology, and German- and Spanish-speaking opportunities, but they are also open to creative and new opportunities. This past year Lisa taught English as a third language at an indigenous Waldorf school in Guatemala, where Grace also attended. The experience was very positive, and they fell in love with the curriculum, its life skills, and the various levels of intention that it fosters for Waldorf families.

Rodney Cain & Amy Kalkbrenner – Shorewood, Wisconsin

Piper – Grade 7

Rowan – Grade 5

Rodney, a former healthcare executive, is currently developing land for a future education and retreat center. Amy is a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Public Health, where her research is in children's environmental health. Their desire for a focus on wellness and a positive environment for their daughters' education led them to pursue a Waldorf education.

Mark Lovecky – Winchester, Virginia

Virginia Tromp – Winchester, Virginia

Sky – Grade 8

Mark is employed by Howard Shockey and Sons General Contracting and Virginia is a stay-at-home mom. Their interests are art, gardening, music, hiking, cooking, and traveling. They chose Waldorf education in their transition from homeschooling because it allows the children freedom of thought and nurtures the growth of their spirit. The connection to nature and the community is also something they love.

Students Returning

Satya – Grade 3, daughter of Kristina Gullion and Tom & Susan Gullion
Arabella – Grade 5, daughter of Franz Funovits & Cree Max

New Siblings

Otis – Kindergarten, son of Austin & Hallie Ashley
Colton – Kindergarten, son of Dan & Stephanie Brown
Ely – Grade 2, son of Todd & Colleen Canavan
Isaac – Grade 8, son of Jason & Jennelle Thimmesch

SCHOOL NEWS

Robin Kottke, Development Director



Please help us welcome Robin Kottke as she steps into her new role as Development Director for Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. Robin brings a wealth of professional experience that she developed over seven years at ATHENA International, a nonprofit organization focused on women's leadership and based in Chicago. She also has honed the skills of caring, observation, and service during her years as a nurse. She is

recognized by many for her positivity, her involvement in community, and her strength in building relationships.

Robin and her husband Steven moved to Viroqua four years ago to send their two daughters to Pleasant Ridge. Over these years their involvement and dedication to the school has deepened, preparing Robin to bring the enthusiasm and energy of a parent into her new commitment with the school. We look forward to her capable leadership in the realm of development and fundraising as she guides volunteers and colleagues in our programs, and to the new initiatives she will foster. We are so grateful and excited to have Robin join our administrative team!

—Mary Christenson, outgoing Development Director

Melissa Madura, Music Teacher

Please help us welcome Melissa Madura, incoming strings and choral teacher. Melissa will be teaching fourth and fifth grade strings, sixth through eighth grade orchestra, and upper grades chorus.



Melissa has a bachelor's degree in viola performance and a master's degree in performance with an emphasis on pedagogy. She also brings an extensive history of teaching in a variety of settings. Most recently, she was the orchestra director and music appreciation teacher at St. Ann's School in Midland, Texas, and was on the faculty at the University of Texas–Permian Basin as instructor of viola and chamber music.

Raised in the Viroqua area, Melissa has recently returned home with a family of her own after living in Texas for the past 13 years. Melissa and her husband are delighted to join the PRWS community along with their two children, who will join the 6th and 3rd grades this year.

Welcome, Melissa Madura and family, we're so glad you're here!

—Robin Kottke, Development Director

Magda Bermudez, Cherry Blossom Kindergarten Assistant

The Pleasant Ridge Early Childhood Program is sure to be an even sweeter place to learn, work, and play with the addition of Magda Bermudez, our new Cherry Blossom Morning Kindergarten Assistant.

Magda received her bachelor of arts degree in 2014 from Hampshire College, where she created her own interdisciplinary course of study including education, poetry, mythology, and nonfiction filmmaking. Since graduating, Magda has worked with children in many capacities, from teaching at a forest school in Central Park in Manhattan, to teaching nonfiction filming to high school and undergraduate students at Hampshire College's Creative Media Institute. Magda is also a Thoreau College Founding Fellow.

Raised in the small forests and meadows down the road from Walden Pond, outside Boston, Massachusetts, Magda attended the Waldorf School of Lexington. She is grateful for her Waldorf upbringing, which allowed her to grow through play, inquiry, and imagination.

Magda looks forward to returning to her Waldorf roots and creating the same nurturing environment she was fortunate to experience in her own childhood. Having taught as a substitute at PRWS last year, Magda is already a familiar face in our kindergarten. We are delighted to welcome her to our early childhood team!

—Robin Kottke, Development Director

Back to School Picnic

Many thanks to alumni parents who provided music and acted as callers at our Back to School Picnic and Dance. It was a joyful time for all!



CURRICULUM

Fourth Grade Play Through the Grades

The backbone of the fourth grade language arts curriculum in Waldorf schools is most often pulled from the stories of Norse Gods, Frost Giants, Norns, and that Great World Ash tree Yggdrasil, gathered from the ancient Icelandic saga, the Edda. Practice in cursive, grammar, composition, spelling, punctuation, and drama are all drawn out of this source material—from the Dawn of the Gods at Ginnungagap, through to their twilight, Ragnarok. Additionally, fourth grade teachers very often use those Norse myths as the source of their class play. They are dramatic, silly, fast paced, filled with adventure. We all love the myths, and look forward to the “traditional” fourth grade play.

However, last year, after something like 20 years of Norse myths play attendance, I was feeling slightly less inspired to dust off the old Hlidskjalf and Mjolnir. And then! My class of fourth graders found their way into the stories of Native people in the Great Lakes region.

We began with the land and the way it is—how the forces of nature changed and shaped it (or didn't, in the Driftless region!), what plants and trees want to grow here, and the animals that make their homes here. Then we studied the people who came and went, came and stayed. We talked about how they lived on the land, and how they lived (or didn't) with each other. Finally, we talked about the arrival of Europeans: trappers, missionaries, geographers, soldiers, miners, farmers, and politicians. We talked about Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830.

We talked about the Ho-Chunk leader Red Bird, and the Sauk war captain, Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak—Black Hawk. And Seamus asked, “Are we doing this as our play?!” and someone else said, “I bet we are!”

So I started writing. I borrowed Gitche Manitou's mythical call to all the People to live together as one, from Henry Longfellow's Song of Hiawatha (an epic poem modeled after the Finnish Kalevala and written in its same trochaic tetrameter). I used Black Hawk's own words, and if you are paying good attention, I also snuck in a little bit of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar.

The play depicts the life of Black Hawk from his youngest days through to his end, in Iowa, far from his beloved Saukenuk. Along the way we meet his parents, hear a Miwok creation story, and meet the clans of the Sauk people. We hear of the decision to break the treaty and return to the Sauk homelands, gardens, and burial lands. And finally, we hear of the legendary chase back across southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois, as Black Hawk tried to lead his people away from the pursuing American militia and army, to the western shore of the Mississippi River.

The fourth graders met this play with the firm resolve that they were telling an important story; that it was a story they wanted others to know. When they bump up against contradiction, injustice, and “meanness,” it pierces the veil of beliefs about “the way it should be.” They see the world, still, thank goodness, as a place of wonder and joy where most anything is possible. May it ever be so.

—Mr. Aaron Schmidt, Class Teacher

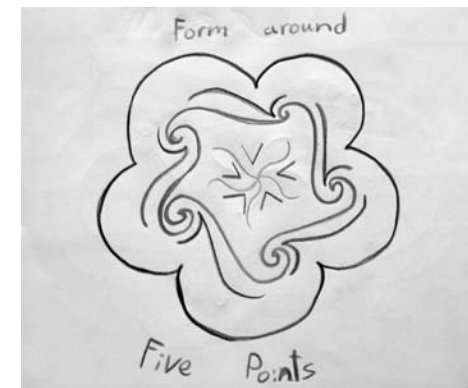
Excerpt from the play The Life of Blackhawk

Written by Aaron Schmidt and performed by his fourth grade class

O my children! my poor children!
Listen to the words of wisdom,
Listen to the words of warning,
From the lips of the Great Spirit,
Gitche Manitou, who made you!

I have given you lands to hunt in,
I have given you streams to fish in,
I have given you bear and bison,
I have given you roe and reindeer,
I have given you brant and beaver,
Filled the marshes full of wild-fowl,
Filled the rivers full of fishes:
Why then are you not contented?
Why then will you hunt each other?

I am weary of your quarrels,
Weary of your wars and bloodshed,
Weary of your prayers for vengeance,
Of your wranglings and dissensions;
All your strength is in your union,
All your danger is in discord;
Therefore be at peace henceforth,
And as brothers live together.



DEVELOPMENT

From the Development Director



The Development office has been a bustling place these past few months! Starting my training in summertime was ideal in that it lent space and time to ease into this new role and to work closely with both Mary Christenson and Cynthia Olmstead, who have carried the PRWS

Development Department for the past 24 and 14 years, respectively. These are big shoes to fill – two pair at that! I'm grateful for their leadership and legacy of love that will continue to live on in our school and community.

It's truly an honor to serve the school more formally in this new role. I find that my experience in the nonprofit sector routinely guides my work at PRWS, as does being a parent in the school and a Viroqua resident for the past four years. Each of these roles inspires me to give back to this school that has been so very good for not only my daughters but my whole family.

This summer I was fortunate to participate in the Art of Administration: Spirit of Leadership training at Hawthorne Valley Waldorf School in upstate New York. I also attended the AWSNA Conference in Washington, D.C., which focused on Social Justice: Exploring Race, Place, Class, and Gender in Waldorf Education. These were rich and illuminating experiences, and great opportunities to meet and connect with others doing similar work in their schools and communities across North America. It also afforded an opportunity to delve more deeply into and share the biography of our school.

Soon we will be celebrating, along with sister schools across the globe, the 100th anniversary of Waldorf education, as well as the 40th anniversary of PRWS. Our presence here today rides on a legacy of gifts that have been paid forward to ensure this beautiful education is available to all families who commit to being here. Now it's on our watch to keep the school's vision and mission alive and thriving—and to pay it forward just as others have done for the benefit of our children.

At the all-school meeting, we introduced our Annual Fund campaign goal: **100% Participation in 100 Days**. Whether yours is a gift of \$10 or \$1,000, all gifts count and make a full Waldorf education at PRWS possible. There really is no lower or upper limit—our goal is simply 100% participation in the Annual Fund by all whose lives are enriched by PRWS, in an amount that makes sense for your family. I am proud to report the majority of our board of directors, faculty, and staff have already given or pledged a gift. Way to go, board, faculty and staff! Your participation is testament to your deep commitment to our school and its future. We invite all who have benefitted from the school to join us.

To ensure we reach our goal of **100% Participation in 100 Days**, please give a gift or make a pledge by sending a check to the school (or online at www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org/donate) by **December 31st**. Perhaps you'd like to give a gift in a student or beloved teacher's honor, or in memory of a loved one.

There are many options, and I'm happy to discuss them with you. Together we can do so much! Thank you for your participation.

With gratitude,
Robin Kottke, Development Director

"When we cast our bread upon the waters, we can presume that someone downstream whose face we may never know will benefit from our action, as we who are downstream from another will profit from that grantor's gift"

—Maya Angelou

DONORS

Many thanks to those who have supported our school July 1, 2018, through October 1, 2018.

Lerie Alstad Van Ells
Daniel & Stephanie Brown
Mark & Jordan Brudos
Lyle & Catherine Brummer
Martha Buche & Jim Pattison
Peter & Gabrielle Daniels
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Robin & Steven Kottke

Ronald Schirmer
Geraldine & Raymond Jessmon

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www.BillBrookeRealty.com

ALUMNI

A Journey Based in Wonder

by Cora Rose Lewicki

I remember when we received our first flutes. Not the long, tan ones that the big kids had. These were the dark brown ones, with only a few holes for each hand. Receiving our first flutes was a coveted rite of passage, and I still remember the melody of the first song Mr. Rice taught us.

I remember kindergarten with Moira and Roberta. I remember listening to the story of how the children came to their families on the day of their birth. I remember taking walks in autumn through the streets of Viroqua, collecting the most colorful leaves to then carefully press back at the kinderhaus. It was on East Decker, two houses down from the Old Main Building.

As my classmates and I grew older, I remember getting lost in other worlds together: Norse mythology, Greek mythology, the Old Testament. The stories filled our world and were not separate from our learning, but rather thoroughly integrated. I remember learning to paint with watercolor, practicing shapes with yellow until I was skilled enough to commit to darker colors. Music, art, languages, and storytelling were ever-present, deeply engrained in the everyday of my early childhood.

I attended PRWS from kindergarten through fifth grade, during some of the most formative years of my childhood. The impact of that education has reverberated throughout the rest of my life. At the heart of this impact is an inclination towards creativity and a deep love of wonder.

I am a songwriter. On an otherwise winding life pathway, songwriting has been a constant. While songwriting is my form of processing life events, seeing and knowing the world is a passion of equal measure. My heart is the happiest when I am en route to a new country, about to experience a different way of life. This serious case of "itchy feet" led to a move to China in 2016, and shortly thereafter I met José Luis. A photographer and painter, José has been to over 70 countries, making my travel bug look like child's play. We immediately connected over our shared passions, and a little over a year later we left China with big plans.

We started Art We There Yet, an ongoing initiative to create art and music inspired by the diversity of peoples and landscapes across the world. The initiative would include a two- to three-year journey across North and South America, aboard a school bus converted into an art and recording studio. With a lot of hope in our hearts, we launched a campaign to raise the funds for the studio, and a beautiful community of friends, family, and strangers came together to make it happen. As I write this piece, we are in the process of purchasing the bus. Only yesterday we test-drove two buses. By the time this issue of the Calyx is published, we will have found the right one and will already have begun the conversion.

The Bus Trip Across the Americas will begin next year and will pass through at least 23 countries spanning North, Central, and South America. I will record a series of albums with musicians

along the way; José will create a series of photographic portraits challenging stereotypes and highlighting diversity across both continents. We will produce a documentary film, a book, and an exhibition of works from the journey. And something that is very important to both of us: we will provide free arts education and public art in underserved communities along the route.

The arts education component is a key priority for us, as we were both blessed with the chance to explore and grow through the arts. José was born and raised in Nicaragua during the revolution, and opportunities to study the arts were very limited. Despite this, his parents made sacrifices to provide art supplies and to support his participation in a music program. As for me, my adolescence was filled with piano lessons, musicals, band, choir, and Spanish classes. All this was built upon a foundation laid down at Pleasant Ridge, a time that was precious and profoundly formative.

Some may not see the value in letting a child live in wonder, lost in tales of gods and wood nymphs. Some may not see why it is important to paint and sing and dance daily, or why children should start learning languages in kindergarten. But for me, I feel the value in it. Now, as a grown woman making my way through the world, I feel how natural it is to pick up a new creative craft, be it graphic design, web design, videography, or audio production. I am grateful for the ease with which languages come to me; it has made my entrance into a Nicaraguan family a beautiful and enlightening process rather than a difficult one.

And the wonder. It really is about that wonder. My parents taught me to be curious about the world, and the constant exposure to stories opened up a realm of fantasy and dream-building in my mind. It is that untethered corner of the mind that imagines all possibilities and, madly in love with adventure, seeks out the most daring of them. It is that corner of the mind that embraces and finds delight in even the most harebrained ideas. Like driving across two continents in order to see the world through the eyes of an artist.

PRWS ALUMNI REUNION

Thursday, December 27, 2018, 6-9pm
at The Rooted Spoon Culinary Kitchen, 219 S Main Street, Viroqua

Please plan to stop in and catch up with past teachers, students, and friends of PRWS. Weigh in on plans for Alumni events and initiatives as we gear up for our 40th Anniversary celebration and Waldorf 100, the worldwide centennial anniversary celebration of Waldorf education. Food and drink will be served, and the bar will be open for drink purchases. A \$10 donation is requested. Thank you for helping spread the word to your old PRWS pals!

RSVP: Contacting Robin in the Development Office:
robin@pleasantrydewaldorf.org or 608.637.8504



ADVENTURE AWAITS: ROAD, RIVER, AND TRAIL!

FIRST PRIZE –Value \$21,000
Brand new 2018 Chevy Spark from Sleepy Hollow Chevrolet

SECOND PRIZE –Value \$1,000
Two GIANT brand bikes with custom fittings from Bluedog Cycles

THIRD PRIZE –Value \$800
Kayak Package from Rutabaga Paddlesports

\$20 PER TICKET

Raffle drawing will be held at the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School on Saturday, March 23, 8:00pm
431 E. Court St., Viroqua, WI 54665
Need not be present to win.
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