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# PLEASANT RIDGE WALDORF SCHOOL

Waldorf Education since 1980

Volume 41, Issue 1 Fall 2019



Eighth graders usher their first grade buddies across the rainbow bridge on opening day.



# **COMING EVENTS**

### **OCTOBER**

- 11 Grandparents & Special Friends
- 30-31 Parent/Teacher Conferences. No Classes
  - 31 Enchanted Forest

### **NOVEMBER**

- I Faculty In-Service, No Classes
- 8 Martinmas Lantern Walk
- 16 All-School Workday
- 21 Fall Concert
- 27-29 Thanksgiving Break

### **DECEMBER**

- 6 Holiday Faire Set-up, Noon Dismissal
- 6-7 Holiday Faire
- 9-10 Advent Spiral
- 13 Santa Lucia
- 20 Festival of Light, Noon Dismissal
- 23 Winter Break Begins

### IANUARY

- **6** School Resumes
- 10 Korean Student Welcome Assembly
- 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Assembly
- 24 Grade Eight Eurythmy Performance
- **30-31** Fifth Grade Play



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# Michaelmas

O Nature, your maternal life I bear within the essence of my will. And my will's fiery energy Shall steel my spirit striving, That sense of self springs forth from it To hold me in myself.

Calendar of the Soul Rudolf Steiner (English translation by Ruth and Hans Pusch)



# SCHOOL NEWS

# WELCOME

This year we have ten new families joining the school, two returning students, and twelve new siblings—for a total of twenty-six new and returning students. Below is a list of our new families, where they are from, their names and the classes of their children, parents' occupations/interests, and what they are looking forward to here at PRWS. I have included a list of students returning after an absence and new siblings as well. Please join me in welcoming these new families and students—we are so happy that they are here!

-Jordan Brudos, Enrollment & Outreach Coordinator

# **New Families**

## Justin & Melissa Bolstad - Viroqua, WI

# Harlow - Kindergarten

Justin and Melissa have lived in the area their whole lives. Justin grew up in Cashton, and Melissa in Viroqua. Justin works at UW-L in the IT Department and Melissa is a nurse at the Gundersen Clinic in Viroqua. They love to spend time with their families, being outdoors, and watching their children grow. Justin and Melissa are looking forward to the community here at PRWS, and the consistency and routine for Harlow.

### Graham & Jennifer Cassellius - Viroqua, WI Emmons – Kindergarten

Graham and Ien moved to the area four years ago when a new work territory opened up for Graham. Jen is a wedding photographer who mainly works in the La Crosse and Eau Claire areas but never turns down an opportunity for a destination wedding somewhere exciting. Graham has been with Alliant Energy for over ten years, working with their farm customers from Tomah to Spring Green. When Graham isn't talking energy efficiency on someone else's farm, he is working on theirs, tending to the laying hens and hazelnut fields. They are looking forward to joining the great community of Waldorf families and hearing about all of Emmons's adventures when he gets home.

### Losie Filipiak – Cassville, WI Nora – Kindergarten

Josie recently moved to the area from Cassville, WI. She works for a cleaning company. She and Nora are looking forward to meeting people and making new friends.

### Minh-Quan Huynh & Sarah Boecher - Scituate, MA Vivienne – Kindergarten

Minh works in Marketing at Organic Valley. Sarah is a packaging production artist at Organic Valley and children's picture book designer. They are looking forward to making new friends!

## Thomas Weiland & Jessica Rizzolo - Soldiers Grove, WI Porter – Kindergarten

Tom & Jessie have lived in the area for about ten years, after moving from La Crosse, WI. Tom works in construction and Jessie is in nursing school. They love hiking, kayaking, anything outdoors. They are looking forward to being in the PRWS environment and community.

### Iason & Christina Welsh - Madison, WI Carmody – Kindergarten

Iason and Christina moved to Viroqua this summer from Madison, WI. Iason is a turbine field engineer at GE Wind. Christina is a critical care nurse. They are grateful to be a part of such a strong school community.

### Dave & Morgan Moser - Portland, OR Mira – Grade 2

The Mosers moved from Portland, Oregon, to Westby this past May. Morgan is originally from Colorado and Dave is from the Midwest. Morgan has been a homemaker since Mira was born. Prior to that, she worked at an energy efficiency firm in Portland, which is where she and Dave met. Dave is a mechanical engineer working for an industrial energy efficiency firm based in

Oregon. He works from home and travels occasionally for projects. As a family, they like to ride bikes, go swimming, play board games, read books, and travel. They look forward to meeting new friends.

### Renate Markle - Nevada City, CA

Luna – Grade 3

## Maitreya - Grade 4

Renate recently moved from Nevada City, California. They love hiking, crafting, dancing, and exploring. They are very excited to be here and look forward to joining the "incredible community" at Pleasant Ridge!

### Tom & Beth Krieger-Fritsch - Taos, NM Mae - Grade 4

Tom and Beth recently moved from Taos, New Mexico, but both are originally from the Milwaukee area. Tom is a chiropractor and recently opened up Watershed Chiropractic and Wellness, and Beth is a Waldorf Teacher who currently stays home with their youngest child, Anna. As a family, they love to bike, ski, run, read, and hike. They are excited to be back in a Waldorf community and "really excited for Mae to be with a fun, robust class, and with a fantastic teacher!"

### Chris & Michelle Thomas - Viroqua, WI

Helena – Grade 4

Sophia – Grade 7

The Thomas Family moved to Viroqua in August 2018. They have homeschooled their children up to this point. Chris is an accountant and Michelle a stay-at-home mom. They enjoy going on adventures together, making/crafting, cooking/baking, camping, playing games, being with friends, and meeting new people. They are looking forward to getting to know the Pleasant Ridge community and making new friends.

# Students Returning

Hazel - Grade 4 and River - Grade 7, children of Mike Elliott & Emily Magnan

# **New Siblings**

Olan - Kindergarten, son of Keith & Kathryn Ashley-Wright

Rio – Kindergarten, son of Kyle Bartelt & Mandy Herrick

Leo - Kindergarten, son of Kelly & Aurora Boyd

Freyja - Kindergarten, daughter of Joshua Gerrity & Erica Gerrity

Reuben - Kindergarten, daughter of Simon Stumpf & Ashely Kiehnau

Persephone - Kindergarten, daughter of Shawn Lavoie & AnnaJo Doerr

Luke - Kindergarten, son of Eric Levermann & Martha Karlstad

Wren - Kindergarten, son of Mike Elliott & Emily Magnan

Griffin – Kindergarten, son of AJ & Alyson Morgan

Lodin - Kindergarten, son of Amy Petrozzini

Olive - Grade 1, daughter of David & Jenelle Boyer Hazel - Grade 1, daughter of Mike Moon & Eva Schulte

# SCHOOL NEWS

# Staff Updates

This year we bid farewell to Chris Leinberger, who has been the school's Library Volunteer Coordinator for the past six years while her granddaughters were PRWS students. Now her youngest has graduated and so has she. Chris gathered and led many friends who volunteered their time to read to and teach students in grades 1 through 6. She has a knack for reaching out to a wider group of community members who have enriched the experiences for the children. Thank you so much, Chris, for your steadfast leadership and organization of so many projects (especially shelving) that make the library a pleasant place to be.

Julie Turino, chef for the hot lunch program, is also stepping away after many years of service. However, we will still have the pleasure of seeing her in the kitchen for a while as she coaches our new chef, Josh Witte, on the particulars of the program. Julie began working in our kitchen over a decade ago when her two children attended PRWS, and continued in the role when they moved on to Youth Initiative High School. During her tenure we updated most of the equipment and added a walk-in cooler/freezer with the assistance of grant funding and leadership from Julie's husband Joel Turino. We are very grateful for Julie's long commitment to nourishing the children at PRWS.

We also bid a fond farewell to Trevor Dach and Sol Jansen who were steadfast helpers to Julie and Jim Hallberg in the kitchen. They were super employees.

It is wonderful to welcome Diane Banner back to the school as the new Library Volunteer Coordinator. Diane is very familiar with the school as she has served as a grades teacher for two years, the enrollment coordinator for several years, and a substitute teacher for many years. David and Diane's daughter Katelyn graduated in the class of 2000. Thank you, Diane, for joining the school again and bringing your wealth of skills and warmth of heart to all of us.

Last spring we welcomed Barb Andree, grandmother to one of our students, to fill the Friday front desk position. Barb had been a faithful volunteer in that position and we are happy to have her on board. Barb jumped right into the administrative tasks (which was a big help to Nan Marshall), and she works wonderfully with children who come to the office for assistance. Additionally, Barb will be assisting Diane Banner in the library, especially in the winter months while Diane is away. We appreciate your presence, Barb!

—Mary Christenson, Board

# Tribute & Farewell to Christina Derocher

In the late summer Christina Derocher resigned after teaching for four years at PRWS. She is sad to leave her class but she is leaving it in the capable hands of former teachers Maureen Karlstad, Betty Link, Mark John and Drew Shonka. May they all have an enriching and exciting year.

Christina Derocher has been one of the most enthusiastic and devoted teachers I have met in my career. She loved the PRWS children and put every fiber of her being into her work. She never failed to thoroughly research every new topic she would be teaching, yet consulted her colleagues for even further insights. All of her peers enjoyed her inquisitive mind and relished the deep philosophical conversations that would arise with her. Never one to do something just because others had chosen that path, Christina could always come up with innovative ways to bring the curriculum to her class. In faculty meetings as well, she would bring a fresh, often wise perspective; she was an excellent listener and deep conversationalist.

On the lighter side, she was a lot of fun! Dance party anyone? Luckily, we'll be seeing her around as an active parent and supporter of Waldorf education. The school has been blessed by her presence and we are grateful for the years she devoted to her class and the community.

—Bernadette Link, Class teacher, Class of 2019

# Who's in the kitchen?

I have always had a passion for cooking. At an early age I spent many days in the kitchen learning from my mother. She always wanted me to become a chef. Still to this day, I look at a dish I have created and say to myself, "Is this something I would serve to my mother?" I am very thankful that she ignited that fire inside me to cook wonderful food. They say the kitchen is the heart of the home and I believe it's true. It is the place where bodies, minds and souls are fueled.



My wife Samantha is a French-trained pastry chef and we have two wonderful daughters, Sophia (8) and Olivia (6). I have worked in many different kitchens, from delis to fine dining. I have worked with regular cooks, Food Network chefs, and everything in between. It seems no matter where I go I find myself in a kitchen. Our family runs an organic market garden as well. It is very important to us to work with our children growing our own food and getting them involved with local farmers' markets. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

I am very excited to be the new chef at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. I look forward to creating some new dishes while keeping the soul of what Jim Hallberg (and Adrienne Caldwell Fox) set in motion all those years before me. I hope to get the students involved helping to grow and cook their own food. Because at the end of the day it's all about the kids. To me, it's about providing the best quality ingredients and treating those ingredients with respect to create amazing dishes to help fuel these young minds to become the best they can be. And who knows? Maybe I will inspire one of them to become a chef someday.

—Josh Witte, Chef, PRWS

# Congratulations

Davina Hemmer and David Ecklund welcomed a healthy baby boy, Solomon, on May 7. Davina will be sharing her third grade class with visiting teacher, Mark John, for the first part of the school year as she prepares to return full time.

# **Facilities Improvements**

The school grounds include four different sites and we occupy three classroom buildings that need tending. We are so grateful to Marc LeMaire for his diligent daily cleaning and care of the buildings and trouble-shooting when facility emergencies arise. We also have a vital group of folks on the Facilities committee who monitor things and ensure that improvements happen and problems are addressed—almost entirely on a volunteer basis! And we offer a fond farewell to Jon Dehlin, who led the Facilities committee and coordinated the community workdays for many years. His last two daughters graduated last spring.

The Facilities committee organizes three scheduled workdays throughout the year when parents, staff, and students come together to provide deeper cleaning and organizing, both indoors and out. They also oversee larger projects. Since late last fall the committee has spearheaded several projects that deserve our attention and gratitude to the individuals who signed on to provide the majority of the work.

A solar array was installed in late fall and celebrated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the May Day festivities on May 3. Joe Lenarz championed the project and worked with PRWS parents Alicia Leinberger and Keith Ashley-Wright to fund it primarily through grants and gifts. Alumni students helped with the installation. The array will provide significant savings in the school's electric bills and helps us to live our values.

In the spring, Mike Severson led the third grade in their building project as they helped assemble and erect a playground climbing structure. Mike designed the structure that includes monkey bars, balance beam, and parallel bars.



Brendan Froeschl beautifully updated the kindergarten bathroom over the summer. He paneled and painted the walls and installed a new vanity and sinks, making the room brighter and easier to clean. The improvements please the teachers immensely.





Jerrod Getz volunteered his arborist skills to cut down the dead pin oak in the PC yard and cut down many dangerous dead and hanging branches in the Wooded Acre—a technically challenging task.

We are blessed to have so many generous and talented parents!

—Mary Christenson and Joe Lenarz

# **ALUMNI**

## Births:

Amanda Rubasch (2001) & Reed Fitton, a boy, Anders Zale, 7/20/19

Luke (2001) & Leidiane Jansen, a boy, Murilo, 3/9/2019

### Marriages:

Aleata (Alstad-Calkins, 2003) & David Kamailo, 8/30/19

Henry Hundt (2005) & Kaisa Cummings, 6/13/19

Zachary Wickert (2004) & Erica Kiela, 7/21/19

### **Graduations:**

Eva Pitsch (2005), Masters, Human Services, Winona State University

Madeleine Pitsch (2004), Masters, Library and Information Sciences, UW-Milwaukee

Clara Zinky (2010), BFA, Cooper Union Will Beatty (2011), RN, Madison College

Charlie Townsley (2011), B.S. in Architecture, University of Minnesota



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# **DEVELOPMENT**

# WALDORF 100

# From the Development Director



What a glorious start we've had to our school year! This school year is a particularly special one for Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School, as it marks our 40th anniversary as a school community. This significant milestone year coincides with the centennial anniversary of Waldorf

education worldwide. One hundred years ago this September, the first Waldorf school opened in Stuttgart, Germany. Today there are Waldorf schools on every continent. A year of commemorative events and celebration has commenced here in Viroqua and around the globe!

On our first day back, students and their families were met by the large-scale world map in our front lobby that the current eighth grade class constructed last spring. Attached to the countries of their origin are postcard greetings from Waldorf students across the globe. Students have been exchanging postcards via the Waldorf 100 Postcard Project, which aims to connect each Waldorf school to all the others. The display is really a sight to behold, and if you haven't seen it yet I hope you'll be able to!

Another Waldorf 100 initiative that I'm particularly excited to share with you is the creation of a Waldorf Alumn Networking Platform. Pleasant Ridge has partnered with AWSNA (Association of Waldorf Schools of North America) and Almabase to connect hundreds of Waldorf alumni across the United States, Mexico, and Canada for networking opportunities, jobs and internships, mentorships, regional alumni events, and fun! We're excited about the possibilities that will arise from connections alumni make here. To join, simply send alumni contact information to me (robin@pleasantridgewaldorf.org) and I will extend an invitation to join straight away.

Here in Viroqua, plans for our 40th anniversary celebration in the spring are under way! We continue to seek stories for the Waldorf Chronicles, a StoryCorps project whereby our school biography is recorded, shared, and preserved through many voices. How has Pleasant Ridge enriched your life? Please phone, email, or stop by anytime. We'd love to hear and help share your stories!

We give bountiful thanks for all the gifts you have brought to support the success of PRWS's first 40 years. It is the abiding commitment and investment by so many individuals and families, year after year, that has brought us this far. We invite you to join us again this 40th anniversary year. Monetary gifts are vital to our operations, funding the teachers' salaries, and ensuring accessibility for students who would otherwise be unable to attend. And as we have seen, every gift, no matter its size, is significant. Gifts can be mailed in the remittance envelope in this issue or given online at www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org/donate.

Thank you again for recognizing the value of this beautiful education, and for your continued support. I look forward to bearing from you!

In partnership,

Robin Kottke, Development Director

# **DONORS**

Many thanks to those who have supported our school March 27 through September 7, 2019.

Lerie Alstad Van Ells Dan Arnold & Susan Johnson Austin & Hallie Ashley M. Kate Barnhart & William Knox Hal Bergan & Susan Hundt-Bergan Susan & Brock Bigelow Ierry Brenneman Shelly Brenneman Bill Brooke Dan & Stephanie Brown Mark & Jordan Brudos Joseph Brummer Dan & Sally Colacino Chris Cox & Shauna Anderson Jillian Davis Monica DeClercq & Jason Cole Ion & Lori Dehlin Fred Dick Chris Dunn & Amy Belling-Dunn Skip Eissfeldt & Denise Novak Sharon & Jim Gerrity Katie & Jerrod Getz R.L. Goodhart Paul & Paula Grenier Dave Hackett & Ellen Brooks Amy & Jon Hazell Davina Hemmer & David Ecklund Peter Hodapp Jasmine & Samuel Hudnall George Idzorek & Roberta Day Idzorek Gary & Dian Krause Jean & Dan Krings Lvnn Kronschnabel David Levin & Margret Lenarz Dennis & Cathy Lund Andy & Justina Manspeaker Dayna McGuire & Daniel Yildirim Jerry & Natalie McIntire Sven Midelfort & Petra Ressler Marianne & Carlos Miro AJ & Alyson Morgan Dr. Calvin Morris Dr. Michael Mosling

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# In Memory of

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Mary Christenson Jane Hachfeld Tripp & Missy Hughes Mike & Sherry Knapp Linda Mathes & Robert Cwiertniak

Ethan, Mike, & Lucy Danforth Roberta Ducharme

Anna Dlugi Geraldine & Raymond Jessmon

# Forty Years Ago

by Terry Beck, founding parent

When my wife Jean and I bought 40 acres near Avalanche in the fall of 1974 and started building a house, the back-to-the-land movement was well under way in the Driftless region. It was concentrated more in the Gays Mills area than in Vernon County. Gays Mills had a co-op that provided not only food but a center for cultural activities, and we started going there regularly for folk dancing and other community gatherings.

It was there that the idea of starting an alternative school began a few years later. Our first child was born in 1976 and we had begun to think about schools for her, so we joined the meetings of the co-op folks who were exploring educational alternatives for their kids. Although some were there out of objection to the public schools, which they saw as a terrible wasteland, that wasn't our motivation. Jean had gone to Catholic schools all the way through high school and liked them fine. I'd attended a public four-room elementary school in the little town of Asbury, Missouri, and loved it.

This group, which often met in Linda Bacon's modest log cabin, quickly put together a committee to explore different approaches to education. After looking at a number of systems, we embraced Waldorf. It wasn't long before Karen Lerch, who was operating a Piaget-based day care in Viroqua, stepped forward to be the first teacher of the proposed new Waldorf school. Linda Bacon agreed to sponsor her for a one-year Waldorf teacher training program in Detroit.

Karen (now Philothea Bezin) started Waldorf training in the fall of 1979 while the rest of us formed a 501(c)(3) corporation and bought and refurbished the Old Main Building on Decker in Viroqua. The school opened in the fall of 1980 with an initial class of three students—Rykna VanDyke, Rachel Bacon, and Nona Smith—later joined by our daughter, Emily.

Rynka's father, David VanDyke, became the first Board president, and Rachel's mom, Linda Bacon (now Linda Pritzker), became the second Board president. Linda was also PRWS's major donor, giving \$30,000 over a three-year period, an amount that may not seem to be such a great deal now but was extremely significant at that time—crucial, in fact: it accounted for one-half of each annual budget for the first three years, enough to get the school on its way.

The early years were a constant struggle to balance class size with salary for a new teacher. Many years, we simply couldn't afford to follow the Waldorf idea of hiring a first grade teacher who would stay with the class through eighth grade. Instead, there were many combined classes as well as classes that graduated at the end of fourth, fifth, or sixth grade.

As the classes began to fill and stabilize, it was clear that the Old Main Building wasn't big enough to hold kindergarten classes and all eight grades. So we bought the Cricket House next door (since demolished, the lot now home to a veterinary clinic) to house the kindergarten and began looking for a larger building for the grades.

The search was complicated by disagreement about where the school should be

located. Since we had started as a Gays Mills group, we had a lot of kids from Crawford County, and a number of parents wanted PRWS to be located on rural property, somewhere between Viroqua and Soldiers Grove. Others wanted to find a larger building in Viroqua. For several years, unable to decide on a location or to find a suitable building, we rented classroom space in the Viroqua United Methodist Church. Then, finally, the former Viroqua Elementary School became available for sale and set PRWS on a comfortable, solid foundation.

After settling into an adequate space, PRWS became much more than I had ever dared to dream. Not only is it providing a wonderful education for children and a meaningful community for their parents, but it has also been inspiration for the creation of the innovative and inspiring Youth Initiative High School and at the very center of the Viroqua renaissance: it's been a vigorous catalyst for social and economic development.



Schuyler & Cameron Hawklove Blanche & Thane Hawkins Luca, Ephraem, & Jess Krueger

Gary & Dianne Krueger

Lenarz & Kottke grandchildren Sara Kottke

Betty Link Ben Agar & Julee Caspers Agar Amara Semanchin

Thomas Semanchin

Jonah & Isabella Walker Thomas & Ellyn Walker Michael Wright & Kate Walter Paul & Kathy Fairchild

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Congratulations to Mrs. Link and the Class of 2019 as they begin a new chapter in their lives.

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