

CALYX

PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL

Waldorf Education since 1980

Volume 41, Issue 2
Spring 2020



Artwork by Maureen Karlstad / Anam Cara is Gaelic for Soul Friendship

APRIL

- 3** Spring Concert (*cancelled*)
7-8 Eighth Grade Projects (*postponed*)
10-19 Spring Break
28 All-School Meeting (*cancelled*)

MAY

- 1 May Day Celebration (*cancelled*)
7 Pentathlon (*postponed*)
22 Closing Day
Eighth Grade Graduation
26-28 Faculty In-Service Days

Please check the school website at www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org for calendar updates.



Spring Verse

When out of world-wide spaces
The sun speaks to the human mind,
And gladness from the depths of soul
Becomes, in seeing, one with light,
Then rising from the sheath of self,
Thoughts soar to distances of space
And dimly bind
The human being to the spirit's life.

Calendar of the Soul

Rudolf Steiner (translation by Ruth and Hans Pusch)

CALYX

Volume 41, Issue 2
Spring 2020

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

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 corporation supported through tuition, gifts to the school, and fundraising events.

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

In our efforts to reduce paper use, you may request an electronic copy by emailing cynthia@pleasantridgewaldorf.org.

Editor, Mary Christenson
Copy Editor, Loma Huh
Design, Geri Thompson Shonka
Printing, Proline Printing, Viroqua, Wisconsin

SCHOOL NEWS

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

We celebrated the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on January 20. The day began with a school-wide assembly in conjunction with our neighbors from Youth Initiative High School. Students presented poetry and reflections around the significance of this day. Dr. Calvin Morris, a civil rights leader and PRWS grandparent, shared stories about meeting and working with Dr. King. He and his daughter, song leader Dodie Whitaker, spoke about the transformative power of song and solidarity in the ongoing quest for equality. Our visiting South Korean friends participated too, adding to the richness and immediacy of the presentation.



Later, the classes took up other experiences. For example, the fourth grade students thought deeply about how each of them will carry forward Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy of love. They then shared their commitments with their classmates and enlisted their peers to stand up for what is right and to make the world a more just place for all.

To the Class of 2019 Students and Parents,
with Gratitude

The Class of 2019 generously donated their remaining 8th grade trip fundraising proceeds to a great need in the school: new chairs. Class teacher Carrie Treviramus was able to order 20 chairs in 4th and 5th grade sizes, and 5 desks to fill in the gaps in the middle grades. The chairs were ordered in fall and arrived, to much anticipation, this January, 2020.



From the Heart of the 4th grade, and
on behalf of all 4th grades hence:

We thank you for your hard work in fundraising, and for the gift of these funds.

We feel supported in strength, held in comfort, and graced with a bit more beauty.

—With Love, the Class of 2024



Visiting Students

For some years now Pleasant Ridge classes and families have welcomed visiting students from South Korea in January, during their school break. This year we welcomed eleven students for four weeks. Some students were returning to their classes from previous years and for others this was their first visit. This is an amazing cultural opportunity for both the students

and the host families alike! Students come to experience what the typical American life is like, and they look forward to being immersed into family life – from meals to family outings! Through the generosity of Loma Huh, who helps to facilitate language training for the visitors and cultural sensitivity for PRWS students, we have had another successful program.



CURRICULUM

Science Through the Grades

The earliest science blocks to appear in the curriculum of Waldorf schools are animal studies in the fourth grade and botany in fifth grade. Physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, physiology and meteorology do not enter the scene until grades six through eight. At a glance, it may seem as though there is no science being taught in early childhood or the early grades. However, while no formal science lessons are presented in these beginning years, the children are being immersed in scientific experiences that are laying a foundation for later scientific work in the classroom. These experiences are nested primarily in the abundance of contact with nature, opportunities for free play as well as for moments of quietude in the school day, storytelling, and the way in which the teachers mindfully choose to converse with the child about the world he/she sees all around.

When children play freely in the outdoors they are interacting with a wide variety of phenomena that inform them of the workings of the natural world. Children who have constructed a teeter-totter out of a log and a plank are experimenting with mechanics. They experience differences in friction when climbing different trees in different kinds of weather. On a rainy day, a study in buoyancy is underway as children attempt to engineer sailboats out of bark, sticks, and leaves. Elsewhere on the playground, water displacement is being encountered by students eagerly jumping in puddles in their rain gear. When the water has settled, Mother Nature offers a demonstration on light reflection.

It is equally important for children to have moments of pause and quietude, both in the classroom and outside. Doing so allows them space to behold whatever is before them with focused fascination. A patch of melting ice on the street corner is a micro-watershed, to be revisited later in a sixth grade geography block. Exhausted in her snowsuit, the child who lies to rest in a snowbank and stares for two minutes at a blue jay in a tree overhead is practicing a fourth grade animal study. Watching rainbows emanate from a dewdrop on a spiderweb informs the child about light refraction, to be revisited in seventh grade physics. Marveling at hoarfrost, tremendous cumulus clouds, or varying shapes of snowflakes is planting seeds for meteorology in eighth grade. Changes in weather, seasons, moon phases and sunsets all have quiet stories to tell the children about the world they are coming to know.

The way we choose to speak about these encounters is an important piece of the learning process. The child's ability to be drawn into an observation is a powerful experience, in which they are internalizing what they see in a very deep and memorable way. Their wonder and reverence for what they see holds their attention and they become remarkably observant. They do not need words

to appreciate what is happening, and an abstract explanation can end this natural inquiry abruptly. It is common in our culture to want to offer explanations for everything the child takes interest in, and to answer any question they ask with a technical description, adjusted as best as we can to their level of comprehension. Though well-intentioned, I am not convinced this always achieves the end we might hope for in our children.

I would like to suggest a different approach, one intended to encourage the child to continue in their natural, observant, non-abstract way of perceiving. This is best typified in how the early childhood teacher engages the students. First, we strive to speak only as needed, avoiding the excessive small talk that is so common in the adult world. When asked questions, we find ways to respond without going into abstract explanations or ideas that are not immediately observable (like describing vibrating molecules when a child asks about hot and cold water). It is often a returned question that leads to a deeper insight in the student. For example, rather than doing your best to explain what you know of light when asked why the sky is turning pink, a simple and sufficient reply could be, "Well, what else do you notice is happening out there right now?," or better, "Let's watch for a while and see if the sky will tell us," or even "I wonder..." followed by contemplative silence.

This is not done for the sake of being cryptic nor keeping them in the dark. These responses return the attention to the phenomena at hand, and without a defining idea to put an end to their inquiry, the child is left to continue paying attention and appreciating the mystery before her. At times it can certainly be fitting to give a simple answer to a child's question, but if we first consider whether it could also be a good time to ask them to look more closely or perhaps leave the question for a later day, we are providing an opportunity for their innate, quiet wisdom to come to the fore and lead the way for them.

When the students arrive in the middle grades science classes, this capacity for observation, focus, and insight will be called upon to understand experiments and demonstrations. Concepts are developed out of direct observations, by way of recall and conversation. The students' enthusiasm is galvanized by a rich past of personal connection with the natural world and its workings, and the teacher will know when to call upon these memories to help cultivate a living connection to the material being presented. This effort to nurture wonder, curiosity, and attentive focus, mingled with a sense of human connection with the natural world, is at the heart of the science curriculum in the Waldorf school.

—Ronald Schirmer, Class teacher, grades one and two



Growing For Good

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School purchased a local business, The Flower Basket, in September 2015. That year three employees, supported by many volunteers, followed in the footsteps of the previous business owners to provide cut flowers for sale, grow geraniums for the Viroqua cemetery by Mother's Day, and propagate thousands of bedding plants for the Spring Garden Center.

By July 2016, we discovered that the year-round floral department was costing us more money than it brought in, and we needed to regroup. We decided to close that department, which occurred just as the garden center was closing for the rest of the summer, as typically happens when purchases dwindle to a trickle for the season. Unfortunately, the community thought we were closing our doors entirely. There were many misperceptions and misunderstandings.

However, the geranium and coleus mother plants were tended and eventually moved into the greenhouse to overwinter along with succulents and houseplants. Each year since then, we have had many staff changes as we attempted to find the right balance of spring garden center, geranium contract, and special holiday offerings, while gaining a better understanding of the business flows and responding to the mounting needs of the buildings and grounds. That left little or no time to develop the new projects that we had envisioned early in the planning process.

In 2017 we rebranded the business Growing For Good and began to develop other projects, such as Growing For Good Compost, the Holiday Store, Growing For Good Microgreens, and a partnership with Forest Ag. In the spring of 2018 Mark



Shepard helped to design and execute the land plan, which involved building swales to manage water flow on the property. This was followed up with installing permaculture plantings. All the while, the faculty and parents explored ways to engage the children in gardening activities, and Youth Initiative High School students provided an abundance of service hours helping to develop the gardens. Each summer a few community neighbors adopted garden plots and we held a few summer-camp gardening classes.

We have become painfully aware of the enormous maintenance required for the grounds and the aging infrastructure. For example, last April we lost three hoop-houses to the late heavy snow, and we had to make major repairs to our heating system. At the same time, we are open to finding new income streams for the enterprise. For two seasons we have rented table space in a greenhouse to growers who need the space to start their plants.

We are immensely grateful for the loyal staff and volunteers, the granting agencies, programs like VARC, and YIHS students who have supported our development, as well as the GFG Steering Committee volunteers who struggled to discover an adequate and effective governance model.

Fast-forward to 2020, a year of reviewing, planning, cleaning,

preparing, and recovering from various setbacks. The PRWS board joined forces with the GFG steering committee to review and renew our vision for GFG. We recently developed a new task group governance structure. Thoreau College has asked to collaborate through their internship program by providing work hours that GFG needs in exchange for space to grow products for their needs; the first season of collaboration is already under way. We are in conversation with other producers who wish to rent greenhouse space. We are planning to grow greens for the PRWS hot lunch program. We continue to develop our GFG Compost pickup program. As always, the options are bountiful while the needs of the aging structures are also growing!

We know that while change can be uncomfortable, it is essential for growth. Changes can also be misunderstood, and it takes time to adjust after a change is made. Finding a balance between planning and action has been one of our biggest lessons.

If you would like to be a part of this dynamic endeavor, please contact Stephanie Brown at Stephanie@growingforgood.org. Watch our progress at growingforgood.org. And thank you for your patronage of our programs!

—Mary Christenson,
Growing For Good Task Group



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:

(608) 637-7900
221 N. Main • Viroqua, WI 54665

www.BillBrookeRealty.com

DEVELOPMENT

From the Development Director



Over the last few weeks so much has changed in the world. It has felt as though we are in a time out of time as our normal daily rhythms and routines have been upended by the rapidly evolving state of affairs and response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here at Pleasant Ridge, the past few weeks have been a whirlwind of transition and collaboration as faculty, staff, and parents prepared to support student learning and engagement from afar. Although we're sheltering at home, it continues to "take a village," as it always has, and perhaps more so now than ever. One of the most beloved aspects of Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is the strength of community that has been built up here. That won't change now. Daily we are finding creative ways to be in community, to draw upon and deepen our connections to one another. Just last week found us streaming our annual raffle drawing via Facebook Live so folks could "gather" to celebrate together, in real time, the winning tickets and all the good the raffle makes possible. While it didn't look even remotely close to the celebration we'd originally planned, it felt so very good to gather in this way and move forward with the event amidst so many other cancellations.

The same is true as the children and teachers have, via distance learning, "returned" to school and each other and are settling into a new routine together. Amidst so much disruption, we are buoyed and heartened by our connection to one another and the deep knowledge that, come what may, we belong to one another and will weather it, together, as a community.

This fall will be concluding a year-long celebration of our 40th anniversary here in Viroqua and the centennial anniversary of Waldorf education worldwide. As we planned and pondered various themes and types of celebrations to commemorate this milestone year, we kept returning, again and again, to a theme of gratitude.

Our 40th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration has been re-scheduled. And celebrate we shall! I hope you will be able to join us Saturday, September 12, for a sweet trip down memory lane as we reflect on the school's evolution, biography, and exciting things on the horizon. Here we will also pay tribute to Mary Christenson for her 25 plus years of dedicated service to PRWS and Waldorf education.

From our humble beginnings as a one-room schoolhouse with three students and one teacher, Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School today serves 135 children in early childhood through eighth grade. Our growth over these past four decades and the vitality of our school are due, in large part, to the collective generosity of many who recognize the value of Waldorf education.

In December we wrapped up our second annual 100% Participation Annual Giving Campaign. We once again invited the school's innermost circle (board members, faculty, staff, and the parent body) to give or pledge a gift so that we may pay this

education forward as others have done for the children here today. I'm delighted to share that 100 percent of the members of the board, faculty, and staff and 98 percent of the parent body contributed or pledged a gift. This campaign has led to meaningful conversation and insight around the power of participation and its impact on the school. It even inspired one set of PRWS grandparents to challenge their cohorts at Grandparents and Special Friends Day this fall to achieve a similar goal. And, no surprise, they achieved it!

This high level of participation is integral to the ethos of PRWS and a testament to our commitment and confidence in the school. We hope it will inspire your participation as well. Truly, there is no such thing as an offering too small or too large; showing up, in whatever capacity we're able, is key. And the children take notice! As Plato wrote, "What is honored in a country will be cultivated there."

Won't you join us by making your gift today? Participation is easy: simply complete and return the enclosed envelope or make your gift online at www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org/donate. Thank you!

In partnership,

Robin Kottke, Development Director

DONORS

Many thanks to all who have supported our school

September 8, 2019, through February 15, 2020.

Anonymous
Ruth Agar
Lerie Alstad Van Ells
Fred & Lisa Anderson
Barb Andree
Daniel Arnold & Susan Johnson
Austin & Hallie Ashley
Kathryn & Keith Ashley-Wright
Kyle Bartelt & Mandy Herrick
Linda & Clark Beier
Al & Annette Belling
Hal Bergan & Susan Hundt-Bergan
Kate Bergan
Paul Bergquist & Carole Austin
Arthur & Angie Bernstein
Mike Bieser
Justin & Melissa Bolstad
David & Jenelle Boyer
Bill Brooke
Barbara Broser
Jordan & Mark Brudos
Martha Buche & Jim Pattison
Rodney Cain & Amy Kalkbrenner
Graham & Jennifer Cassellius
Mary Lynn & Burley Channer
Steve & Mary Christenson
Alexandra & William Cole
Coletta Corwin
Chris Cox & Shauna Anderson
Michael Crotser & Jennifer Eissfeldt
Jillian Davis

Monica DeClercq & Jason Cole
Christina Derocher
Fred Dick
Anna Jo Doerr & Shawn Lavoie
Robert Ducharme
Joette & George Edgar
Skip Eissfeldt & Denise Novak
Nicholas Enjalbert & Gail Doesken
James & Janice Erdman
FAST Enterprises, LLC
Rebecca Felten
Erin Ford
George & Liz Franklin
David & Jenny Fritz
Brendan & Kate Froeschl
Linda & John Gambrell
Joshua Gerrity
Sharon & Jim Gerrity
Katie & Jerrod Getz
Ole & Judy Gulbrandsen
Tom & Susan Gullion
Hannah Hastings
Blanche & Thane Hawkins
Bryn & Rebecca Hawklove
Davina Hemmer Ecklund & David Ecklund
Hugh Hofmann
Susan & Robert Holmes
Tripp & Missy Hughes
Dawn & Vince Hundt
Minh-Quan Huynh & Sarah Boecher



Geraldine & Raymond Jessmon
Ashley Kelso-Neary & Shawn Neary
Jonel Kiesau
Anna & Ryan Kimm
Mike & Sherry Knapp
Duane Koons & Maureen O'Connor
Sara Kottke
Sandra & John Krieger
Tom & Beth Krieger-Fritsch
Jean & Dan Krings
Jess Krueger
Shannon Landis
Legion GIS
Marc LeMaire
Joe Lenarz & Janna Kottke
David Levin & Margret Lenarz
Michael & Bernadette Link
Cathy & Paul Linskens
Dennis & Cathy Lund
Courtney Maatouk & Max Radcliffe
Melissa & John Madura
Emily Magnan
Tracy Mangold
Renate Markle
Cree Max & Franz Funovits
Calvin Morris
Dave & Morgan Moser
Dr. Michael Mosling
Marinella Pro & Mark Dubey
Marjorie & Conrad Rehbach
Elizabeth & Gregg Roberts
Kelvin Rodolfo & Kathleen Crittenden
Chris & Susana Ruder-Vasconez
John Saunders & Stephanie Pedretti
William & Sharon Schindle
Ronald Schirmer
Aaron Schmidt & Carrie Treviranus
MaryAnn & Emmett Schulte
John & June Schutz
Marty Sellers & Nancy Hartje
Samantha & Mike Severson
John & Sheila Sherwin
Matt Shortridge & Kathy O'Rourke
Donald and Adele Skolaski
Simon Stumpf & Ashley Kiehna
Steve Stumpf
Dan Sullivan & Colleen Coyle
Pete & Alycann Taylor
Jennelle & Jason Thimmesch
Chris & Michelle Thomas
Thomas & Connie Vanderhyden
Christine Violet & Hilda Richey
Viroqua Food Cooperative
Lynn Webber
Thomas Weiland & Jessica Rizzolo
Maggie Welch
Jason & Christina Welsh
Tom & Danelle Weston
Josh & Samantha Witte

In Memory of

Jonathan Balkowitsch
Nancy & John Balkowitsch

Edward Bergquist
Paul Bergquist & Carole Austin

Bob Bezin
Ben Agar & Julee Caspers Agar
P. T. Brand
Adrian & Kathleen Hendrickson

Danele Joy Cousins
Eric Levermann & Martha Karlstad

David Engel
Marta Engel
Lillian Hubble
Barbara Broser

Anita Lang & Alison Banner
David & Diane Banner

Bryan Loveless
Bryn & Rebecca Hawklove

Maurice Raifsnider
Vicki Ramsay

Karen Taylor
Paul Taylor

In Honor of

Class of 2021
Dodie & Gino Whitaker

Luca & Ephraem Cams-Hilliker
George Carns & Janet Hilliker

Mary Christenson
Diane and Gregory Splinter

Adam & Leo Cox
George Franklin & Liz Franklin

Owen, Levi, & Mira Froeschl
Julie & Kent Jensen

Davina Hemmer, Christina Hotchkiss, & Mark John
Michael Crotser & Jen Eissfeldt

Vince & Dawn Hundt
Adrian Ugo & Julia Hundt-Ugo

Chris Leinberger & Diane Banner
Kathleen Kroska

Dagny McGuire
Rosenberg Fund for Children

Ivan Messier
Susan Kelso & Mark Hirssig

PRWS Teachers & Staff
Alexander & Jennifer Wade

Amara Semanchin
Bev & Al Kiecker

Kate Walter
Marjorie Dick

Grants & Foundations

Amazon Smile & School Rewards
American Recorder Society
Mid-States Shared Gifting Group
of RSF Social Finance
Organic Valley
Paul E. Stry Foundation
PAXAM Foundation
Rosenberg Fund for Children
Waldorf Schools Fund

In Kind & Restricted

Lars & Corina Bergan
Stephanie Brown
Citizens First Bank
Loma Huh
Raymond & Geraldine Jessmon
Kickapoo Coffee
Robin & Steven Kottke
Barb & Marv McNeal
Lara Roberts

ALUMNI

Abbey Swasko (2005) graduated from UW–Superior with a Bachelor of Science degree in Sustainability Management (2018). Her capstone project was "The Study and Implementation of a Food Waste System at Swift and Union, Portland, Oregon." Abbey is currently in Barcelona, working toward a master's degree in Executive Business Management, with the hope of ultimately combining both areas of study for maximum positive impact!

Ayla Huffey Frost (2008) B.S., Psychology and Neuroscience, University of Minnesota

Anders Huffey Frost (2011) Bachelors, Business Administration and Marketing, UW-Whitewater

Here's an update on **Cora Lewicki's (2002)** Art We There Yet? project that was reported in the Fall 2018 Calyx. Cora, along with her partner José Luis Vélchez, is now on the road bringing art and music projects to schools, towns, and groups of musicians. Catch up with their art projects, murals, and music recordings on their Facebook page or at their website, <https://artwethereyet.com/blog/>.

Hugh Hoffmann (2011) is working for PRWS in the Hot Lunch program alongside chef Josh Witte.

Reed Doerr (1993) and his wife Francina welcomed a baby girl on January 16.

Lucy Danforth (2000) opened a beautifully decorated four-bedroom Airbnb near PRWS. The listing is titled "Charming Heritage Home est. 1895."

Congratulations Raffle Winners!

RAFFLE! Celebrating 40 Years RAFFLE!

of Waldorf Education in the Driftless!

First Prize:
Brand New Chevy Spark from Sleepy Hollow or \$10,000

Second Prize:
\$500 Gift Certificate at Bluedog Cycles

Third Prize:
Fly Fishing for Two from Driftless Angler

First Prize – Brendan and Kate Froeschl

Second Prize – Helen Krieger

Third Prize – L. Froeschl

Mark Shepard/Restoration
Agriculture Development
Geri & Drew Shonka
Star Valley Flowers
Vernon Communications
Wisco! Pop

SCRIP

Bill Brooke Realty
Kwik Trip

Multi Voice Music with
Dodie Whitaker
Nelson Agri-Center
Parrish Music & Gifts
Quality of Life Chiropractic
Quillin's Quality Foods
Pink Spruce Retail & Pink Spruce Photography
River of Ahz Chiropractic
River to Ridges Animal Wellness Center

Rockweiler Appliance & TV
Schlicht Auto Repair
Matt Shortridge Carpentry & Music Lessons
Simplicity Parenting Institute
Tapestry Yoga
Viroqua Public Market
Watershed Chiropractic & Wellness

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is Celebrating 40 Years!

You are cordially invited to a
special evening of gratitude and fine dining

Saturday, September 12, 2020
from 5:00 until 9:00 p.m.

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School
431 East Court Street, Viroqua, Wisconsin

The evening will include

A four-course meal

Alumni Speaker

Faculty Speaker, Aaron Schmidt
PRWS Class Teacher and Faculty Chair

A tribute to Mary Christenson
for her service of over 25 years to PRWS

Tickets are \$50 each. Advance tickets are required and may be purchased
online at www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org or at the PRWS front office.



Listen directly from
our website at [www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org/
podcast](http://www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org/podcast) or via your
favorite podcast player!

Visit us online at
pleasantridgewaldorf.org

PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL
431 E. Court St., Viroqua, WI 54665



CALYX

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
VIROQUA, WI
54665
PERMIT NO. 7