

CALYX

PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL

Waldorf Education since 1980

Volume 42, Issue 1
Winter 2021



Zaiah Manspeaker, Grade 8

**PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL**
431 East Court Street, Viroqua

COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

1-12 Re-Enrollment
13 Kindergarten Morning
22-26 Parent/Teacher Conferences
No Classes

MARCH

1 School Resumes
12 Kindergarten Morning
20 Raffle Drawing

APRIL

2-11 Spring Break
12 School Resumes
17 All-School Workday
24 Kindergarten Morning
30 May Day Celebration

MAY

6 Pentathlon
28 Closing Day
End of Year Picnic
Graduation

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Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School
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FEIN 39-1357578

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501(c)3 corporation supported through tuition,
gifts to the school, and fundraising events.

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or sexual orientation.

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A Grandparents Day Meditation:

If For You Valentine

I think there is nothing
In the world more beautiful
Than the faces of children
All children all their faces
Before it dawns on them
The world's darker parts
Even when shattered
They are more beautiful
Than all the world's pictures
If for your beauty is still holy
And alive and you are old enough
To have lived to see it.

Peter Rennick, Alumni parent

SCHOOL NEWS

WELCOME

This year three new families and five new siblings joined the school, for a total of ten new students. Below is a list of the families, where they are from, the names and grades of their children, and the parents' occupations/interests. Please join me in welcoming new families and students—we are happy that you are here!

-Jordan Brudos, Enrollment & Outreach Coordinator

New Families

Evan & Sarah Dvorsak – Viroqua, WI
Loyal – Kindergarten
Willa – Grade 2

Evan and Sarah have lived in the Driftless region for five years and reside on a small homestead outside of Viroqua. Evan's work is in small-scale farm-sourced food import. Sarah is a bodywork therapist. As a family, "we enjoy time together in the garden, taking walks, biking, singing and cooking and camping."

Jeff Hahn & Mia Haessly – Washington, D.C.
Lila – Kindergarten
Cece – Grade 2

Mia Haessly and Jeff Hahn recently moved from Washington, D.C., to Viroqua for the 2020–2021 school year to be closer to Mia's parents in rural Readstown, and so that their children can go to PRWS. "We've heard such great things about [the school] during our many prior visits to the area. Playing neatly into the D.C. stereotype, we are both attorneys— Mia for the Smithsonian Institution, and Jeff for the U.S. Department of Labor. We are really excited to be a part of the PRWS community!"

Aaron Rosselle & Eileen Karpfinger – Oakland, CA
Miré – Grade 6

Aaron and Eileen moved from Oakland, California, where they lived and worked for twenty years. They are both chiropractors. Miré has homeschooled in a Forest School all but last year (fifth grade). Eileen decided it was time to come home to where she grew up. "We had planned a few years down the road, but COVID has sped up those plans! We will be here for sure through this semester, but likely through the whole school year. We are so thankful to be brought into the fold of PRWS. You guys are hard to leave!"

New Siblings

Anna Rose Krieger-Fritsch – Kindergarten, daughter of Beth and Tom Krieger-Fritsch
Oberon Ruder – Kindergarten, son of Susana and Chris Ruder
Macsen Welch – Kindergarten, son of Christina and Jason Welch
Eli Moser – Grade 1, son of Morgan and Dave Moser
Solomon Thomas – Grade 3, son of Michelle and Chris Thomas

STAFF & FACULTY UPDATES

Kwynn Molini, Office Manager



Kwynn Molini is our new office manager. She began her new job just as in-person learning was suspended last spring. She brings a wealth of good energy as well as administrative and people skills. She has been an important collaborator on the administrative staff as new policies and practices were developed in the process of preparing to return to school this fall.

Jennifer Casselius, Business Coordinator



Jennifer Casselius began the work of Business Coordinator last February. As a small business owner she is well suited to serve the school in this role. Starting midyear meant that there was a lot to learn in a very short period. Through the spring and summer Jen assisted in the re-enrollment process while learning the other facets of this complex job. Her professional skills have made her an excellent person for the job.

Mandy Palen, Grade 6 Class Teacher

It is with great joy that we announce Mandy Palen has accepted the position of class teacher for the sixth grade class.

Mandy and husband, Mike, have been parents in the school for the past four years. Their son, Finley, is in fifth grade. Mandy has been working at PRWS as a kindergarten assistant for the past three years. Before moving to Viroqua, she amassed a wealth of knowledge and experience teaching middle and high school students for several years.

Mandy is a bright light with a passion for teaching and Waldorf education, and we are so glad she felt and heeded the call to lead this group of children.



SCHOOL NEWS

Annie Caldwell, Grade I Class Teacher



We are over the moon with joy to welcome Annie Caldwell (2010) as she returns to Pleasant Ridge as the first grade class teacher. Her warmth, enthusiasm, and deep appreciation for Waldorf education make her an ideal teacher for this group of children, whom she joined mid-year. Annie holds a great love of class plays, world and children's literature, and is excited to bring these to life for her students.

Annie was born and raised in Viroqua and attended PRWS in Maureen Karlstad's class from 2001-2010. She lived in Madison for the past five years and studied abroad in both Ireland and Italy. She decided to prepare for Waldorf teacher training two years ago and is now in the very final stages of completing a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, with a minor in Psychology, from Edgewood College in Madison, WI. Annie is a strong advocate for social justice and renewal, and particularly passionate about elevating and empowering marginalized voices.

Annie is delighted to be back and honored to take up this new role. She is the daughter of Robert Caldwell, a class teacher who graduated his class in 2007, and Sarah Caldwell, who has served the school community by teaching parent-child classes.

The faculty and the parents of the first grade are extremely grateful for Beth Krieger-Fritsch for the incredible work she did with the class as long-term substitute teacher since the fall opening of school while we searched for the teacher to apply. She and Annie have worked together to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

Silver Lining Crew

A silver lining in the cloud of the pandemic is that our school was all the more beautiful when we returned in the fall.

While classes were moved to distance learning and our building was temporarily closed due to COVID-19, an amazing opportunity arose to utilize that time to take on several building enhancement projects that the Facilities Committee had had on its to-do list for a long time.

Thanks to a very generous donation by PRWS parents Jim and Tammy Olson, owners of E3 lighting company, Jim and his E3 crew set to prioritizing the list and checking tasks off between April and September. Along the way other people joined the efforts, including faculty, current parents, alumni parents, and alumna Perla Grenier, all while maintaining social distance. Early on we dubbed this dynamic crew the Silver Lining Crew!

The projects included beautifying indoor and outdoor spaces, addressing safety concerns (like adding fencing and replacing broken fence areas), property maintenance, and preparing for

the eventual return to school in the fall. Indoors, the crew skim-coated and painted hallways, two classrooms, and a large wall in the gym. They refinished all the cubbies outside each classroom. All school entrances were repainted and bathroom sinks were fitted with foot pedals to allow for "hands-free" handwashing. The ventilation system was tested for airflow and adjustments made to ensure the best circulation for each room.

Outdoors, several fences were replaced or strengthened, and a permanent fence was installed for the Parent-Child program, using beautiful wood and craftsmanship. Asphalt was removed to extend the grass play areas and to improve broken-up areas. Dead trees were removed at Growing for Good and at the main campus. New cement steps and a sidewalk were poured outside the west entrance, a project co-sponsored by Citizen's First Bank.

Thank you, E3! We will be enjoying the fruits of this labor for many years to come! Thank you also to the core work crew: Brendan Froeschl, Marc LeMaire, Todd Osman, Apple Corbin, and Perla Grenier. Also, a big thank you to Dan Johnson of Midwest Earth Builders (and Red Tail Distilling) for donating the use of his skid steer to the crew for many days.

SCHOOL TRADITIONS

Many of our school traditions have had to be postponed, redesigned, or offered virtually due to the constraints we are experiencing during these Covid-19 times. Ever creative and drawn to the "essential purpose" of these beloved customs, the faculty, families, and students have found alternative ways to celebrate and mark these traditions. Here is a snapshot of our efforts since last spring up through December.

Eighth Grade Class Projects

The Eighth Grade year is marked by several momentous events, one of which is the Eighth Grade projects. All year long, students independently research, learn, and work with mentors on a project of their choosing, culminating in a public presentation of their work in early spring. Along the way they learn so much, not only about their subject, but about themselves as well. The week before school moved to virtual teaching in March, the students had set up their project display materials in the school hallway. Their teacher, Christina Hotchkiss, reflected, "I have been so impressed with the dedication and fortitude each of the students has displayed when challenges arose. Now, we face a challenge collectively: how to share their work in this particularly difficult time." Thanks to the help of parent Shawn Lavoie, each student was able to present their class project virtually on Zoom in April.

May Day

Families celebrated this cherished day at home. Flowers, ribbons, and willow branches for crowns were provided for pickup from school. Later, parents sent photos, which were shared in the weekly Lunchbox Express. Creating a sense of community in new ways became an important endeavor!

Eighth Grade Graduation

On a beautiful summer evening in August the graduation was held on the playground under an open-air event tent, which allowed distancing for each family and for the guests. All the elements were there: the processions, speeches, student reflections and gratitudes, parent song, student song, and reception afterwards. A new and fun element was the parade of cars that went through town congratulating the graduates! From their cars people held signs and found ways to send best wishes as these students prepared to enter high school.



Opening Day Ceremony



In spite of rain on the first day of school, the community gathered on the playground to hold the Rainbow Bridge Ceremony to honor the incoming First Grade students, parents, and teacher, welcoming them to the grades. The ceremony was as sweet as ever! Special thanks to Stephanie Pedretti for a lovely musical performance, Stephanie Brown and Justina Manspeaker for arranging beautiful flower bouquets for each student and for Ms. Beth, and to Jen Cassellius for taking photos.

SCHOOL NEWS

Pentathlon

This annual Fifth Grade tradition is normally celebrated with five regional Waldorf schools and hosted in Viroqua in May. Even though the May event was canceled, it felt important to the class, the parents, and the teachers to find a way to hold the games. Despite short notice, a Pentathlon for only the PRWS class came together in August with everyone's help. The weather was lovely, the Sidie Hollow environment was beautiful, and the students were ready.

The class parents took charge of everything, including setup and takedown, ordering and printing of the shirts, beautifying the space with flowers, organizing snacks, and coordinating with the Rooted Spoon for a delicious lunch. They also created the programs, medals, and laurel wreaths, and prepared the costumes for Athena and Zeus. Many other community members and alumni participated as city-state leaders, witnesses, and writers to express the truth and beauty of each student and the presence of Athena and Zeus.



Michaelmas

In years past each grade had a role to play in the Michaelmas play. Since that could not happen this year the Fifth Grade enacted all the roles for themselves. This was filmed and was part of the Grandparents and Special Friends video.

Enchanted Forest

The Eighth Grade Halloween offering to the community was not performed live at Hubbard Hills this year. Instead, the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School Class of 2021 proudly presented a pandemic-safe alternative to the beloved Enchanted Forest: Enchanted Stories! The students crafted Halloween-themed stories for children of all ages, which were recorded and made available for each family's enjoyment on Halloween. They also offered little gift bags for order that included special surprises from the storytellers, akin to treasures they would have shared with the children on the Enchanted Forest walk.

Growing for Good

Growing for Good has leased the greenhouses to Thoreau College this year for their new social enterprise business. They have been sprucing up the retail space, repairing the greenhouses, seeding late fall greens, increasing houseplant inventory, and stocking the cooler with cut flowers once again!

We urge you to give your support! Their winter hours are Monday, Friday, and Saturday, 10am-4pm; find Thoreau Gardens on Facebook

Outdoor Learning

Our primary goals this year include in-person learning and doing our part to keep our school and broader communities safe and well. Meeting outdoors is a great way to do both! The opportunity to add open-air classrooms and integrate outdoor education more fully into our curriculum has no doubt been a silver lining of these challenging times. We hope to sustain our outdoor learning commitment well beyond these pandemic times.
<https://kvrlearningoutside.blogspot.com/2020/09/outdoor-learning-highlight-pleasant.html>



Births:

Zoe (Coleman, 2001) & Joe Ellerbach, a girl, Gwenyth Diane, 9/22/20

Sue Khim & Silas Hundt (2002), a girl, Simone Hasom Hundt, 10/26/20

Fran Knapp-Rehman (2003) & Evan Rehman, a girl, Marley Enzo Rose, 10/22/20

Heather & Dallas Seevers (2005), a girl, Charlotte Rose, 11/18/20

Marriages:

Kaitlyn Banner (2000) & Bálint Néray, 9/3/20

Toby Engel (2003) & Katie Guzman, 9/12/20

Deaths:

Emily Bunting, mother of Ximena (1998) & Feliciano (2000), 10/6/20

Taryn Power-Greendeer, mother of Stella (2010), 6/26/20

Bill Greendeer, father of Stella (2010), 11/5/20

Corin Humphrey (2012), 10/9/20



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Mention the school and we will earn a donation. To look at properties visit:

www.BillBrookeRealty.com

Tribute to Emily Bunting

Emily was a Kindergarten assistant with Roberta Ducharme and Moira Hastings for many years.



Following closely in the steps of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Driftless area resident Emily Bunting left her earthly body the morning of October 6.

Many may have known Emily as a Waldorf kindergarten teacher, as a parent of two lovely daughters, grandmother to their three children, or for her work at the Viroqua Food Coop or as a market gardener, but did you know Emily as a political activist?

Emily's values included pacifism, an issue her mother had been deeply involved in; economic justice for the less advantaged; and environmental protection, especially protection of the food supply.

Emily's activism was always an important part of her life. She was always outspoken -everybody always knew where Emily stood -but she also walked the talk.

In 2014, now-retired professor of law at UW Madison Bill Whitford, who first met Emily when she was a grad student in Madison in the 1970s, invited Emily to join a lawsuit seeking to invalidate the partisan gerrymander of Wisconsin's state legislative districts which was enacted in 2011 by Scott Walker and Republican legislators. The suit was initially successful and made it all the way to the Supreme Court. Emily went to Washington to participate in activities and press interviews connected with the hearing before the United States Supreme Court, and she sat for a two-hour deposition in Madison in 2019. During much of this time, Emily was undergoing cancer treatment. As a friend of Emily's I drove her up to La Crosse for some of her 2019 treatments. Imagine my surprise at hearing how she had driven herself to Madison from Viola in the icy cold of winter to attend a two-hour deposition. She admitted she felt like she was going to collapse!

Emily's participation in the lawsuit was a product of her commitment to fairness in our political processes. The lawsuit was ultimately unsuccessful but it did a lot to bring attention to the damage caused by the gerrymander.

Bonnie Wideman, friend and colleague

DEVELOPMENT



From the Development Director

Greetings! In the face of this challenging year that none of us could have imagined, the Pleasant Ridge community of teachers, parents, and students has met each new challenge with an abundance of creativity, collaboration, and grace. Nearly every aspect of our school day and year has had to be reimagined. Among these are much-anticipated, seasonal events and traditions integral to Waldorf education and our yearly rhythm. These events and traditions have long served as a kind of collective remembering and celebration of what we as a school community hold dear.

40th Anniversary Dinner & Celebration

Planning our 40th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration (after the original event was postponed in the spring) felt especially daunting amidst so many unknowns and cancellations. As fall approached, it became clear that we either needed to postpone or forego the celebration altogether. Admittedly, the prospect of planning this event a third time felt like entirely too much. But then, well, heartstrings! This milestone was far too significant to postpone yet again, and we were all in need of some celebration, certainty, and joy!

The 40th planning committee decided to attempt something we weren't sure we'd pull off especially well: an online celebration via Zoom! Arrangements were made for ticket-holders to pick meals up curbside in time to return home and "tune in" to the live program. The learning curve was steep, but with a lot of help the event was a resounding success! All the way from California, alumnus and tech-genius Silas Hundt (Class of 2002) teamed up with his big sister Julia Hundt Ugo (Class of 1998) to help navigate a seamless event.

Being together with PRWS folk past and present felt so connecting, far more so than we could have anticipated for an event that took place via Zoom! A silver lining of this online format was that far more friends, near and far, were able to join the festivities. Our collective love of the school, and for the community that has been built here, really came through and was palpable.

Grandparents and Special Friends Day

The success of the 40th Anniversary celebration so heartened us that it inspired a similar program for Grandparents and Special Friends Day. Again, thanks to its online format, many more loved ones were able to attend than ever before, including many

for whom this was their first "visit" to PRWS. The program offered a glimpse into a day in the life of their favorite PRWS student(s), a virtual tour of our new outdoor classrooms, heart-felt messages from teachers, and class offerings from the children and teachers to demonstrate what they'd been working on: a lively poem, dance, music ensembles, a Michaelmas pageant, and even a fiery chemistry experiment!

Parents, teachers, and students alike have deeply missed whole-school assemblies this fall, and we're all missing extended families. This opportunity to gather in real time, with our extended families near and far, was a balm for our collective souls.

2020 Virtual Holiday Faire Family Gala

On Saturday, December 12, we rang in the holiday season as we always do: together as a community, though this time with a twist! Our 2020 Holiday Faire Virtual Gala via Zoom was a splendid celebration for the whole PRWS community. We enjoyed a traditional tree lighting and music brought to us from our good friends over at the Agar farm. A beautiful meal and holiday craft kits were lovingly assembled and available curbside for folks to enjoy at home. The program featured a virtual 'stroll about town' to visit PRWS teachers and families past and present in their homes, where they shared favorite holiday music, stories, and traditions with us. The faire also featured an online artisan market, and a gorgeous puppet play. We closed the evening with a community-wide, virtual dance party. Admittedly, I was dubious about this component, though we needn't have worried; once the dance tunes started, nearly everyone was on their feet, delighting in one another's dance moves and the ability to be together in this way. More than one participant noted "who knew how much we needed a Zoom dance party?" The gala program was recorded and is available via our website if you haven't yet enjoyed it.



(continued on page 8)



Listen directly from our website at www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org/podcast or via your favorite podcast player!



From the Development Director (continued)

An Update on the Financial Health of the School

Many have inquired about the school’s financial health in these COVID times. Thankfully, we began last school year with a balanced budget and some funds in reserve. This, along with the aid of a PPP loan we were able to secure, helped us weather the financial upheaval that ensued following the COVID crisis last spring. Many PRWS families have been financially impacted by COVID, which, in turn, has affected their ability to pay tuition at previous levels. At the beginning of this school year, due to increased family need for tuition adjustments and a dip in enrollment (one we fully expect to recover), we faced a \$60,000 budget deficit beyond our tuition income and fundraising goals. It’s my understanding that we’ve been here before, and I am confident that with our collective participation, we will emerge from these financially challenging times stronger than ever.

At both the 40th Anniversary celebration and the Grandparents and Special Friends Day program, we shared the triumphs as well as the financial challenge we face this year to balance the needs of the school with the needs of our families. I’m delighted to report that an anonymous donor pledged a generous \$5,000 matching gift to motivate others to give and double the impact of their donation. Two sets of inspired grandparents immediately matched that match, and the subsequent generosity from many others has made a significant impact to maximize that gift! **We still have a way to go to reach our goal for annual giving, and I invite you to join me and invest in the long-term health of the school with a gift to PRWS.** Every gift, no matter the amount, is significant. With our collective participation, together we can do so much!

There are many ways to support the work of the school. Please see the enclosed remittance envelope for options, or visit us online at www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org/giving/donate. I also welcome an opportunity to connect with you directly; please feel free to reach out any time!

We’re learning so much about who we are as a community: that together we can do hard things, together we are stronger, and—dare I say it?—we were made for these times.

Thank you for your support and partnership.

In community,
Robin Kottke, Development Director

DONORS

Many thanks to all who have supported the work of our school February 16, 2020 – January 20, 2021.

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40 YEARS





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