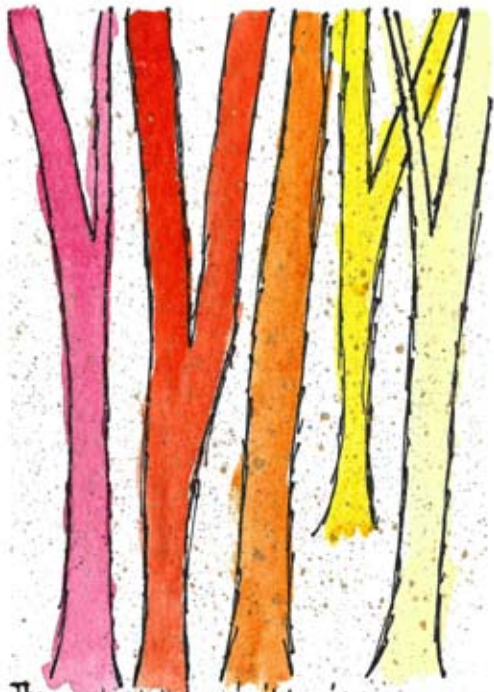


CALYX

PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL
Waldorf Education since 1980
Volume 45, Issue 1
Winter 2024



The smallest thing in its rightful place
can lead to the highest goals. - Rudolf Steiner



Each one of us has it in themselves to
be a free spirit, just as every rose bud
has in it a Rose. - Rudolf Steiner



When the human being sings he
lends expression to the great wise
ways in which the world was made.
- Rudolf Steiner



"Intuition is for thinking what observation is
for perception. Intuition and observation
are sources of knowledge." - Rudolf Steiner

COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 9 Lunar New Year Celebration
 19-23 Winter Break/Parent Teacher Conferences/No School

MARCH

- 15 Faculty In-Service/No School
 18-24 Eighth Grade Projects

APRIL

- 1-5 Spring Break/No School
 19 Spring Concert,
Westby Area Performing Arts
 27 All-School Workday

MAY

- 2-4 Eighth Grade Play
 3 May Day
 16 Pentathlon
 17 Faculty In-Service/No School
 27 Faculty In-Service/No School
 31 Closing Day
 End-of-year Picnic
 Graduation

JUNE

- 3-5 Faculty In-Service

CALYX Volume 45, Issue 1
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“All of nature begins to whisper its secrets to us through its sounds. Sounds that were previously incomprehensible to our soul now become the meaning language of nature.”

—Rudolf Steiner

Cover and Inside Cover: Artwork by the Class of 2023.

SCHOOL NEWS

WELCOME

This year we have 17 new families joining the school, 9 new siblings, and 6 returning students—for a total of 37 new and returning students. Below is a list of our new parents, where they are from, the names and grades of their children, and the parents’ occupations and interests. I have included a list of students who are returning after a year or more away, and new siblings of current or former students as well. Welcome new families and students—we are happy you are here!

—Hannah Hastings, Enrollment and Outreach Coordinator

New Families

Brittany & Jacob Schultz – Westby, WI
Eleanor – Kindergarten

Brittany is a nurse midwife and enjoys reading, year-round outdoor activities, crocheting, and baking. Jacob is a flight nurse and enjoys paddling, hiking, and reading. As a family they like being outdoors, paddling, hiking, camping, reading books, playing board games, and doing puzzles! When asked what brought them to PRWS, they said, “We felt a sense of community. The Waldorf education philosophy is integral to our familial beliefs and the growth philosophy we wanted for our children.”

Jenny & Doug Detrick – Portland, OR
Jane – Grade 3

Jenny, Doug, Jane, and fourth-grade brother, Rowan (homeschooled), moved to Viroqua from Portland, Oregon, in the summer of 2023. Jenny is on her “maiden voyage” as a home educator but says she can be crafty and artsy when time and energy allow. Before becoming an at-home parent and homeschooler, Jenny repaired brass and woodwind instruments and was a scenic artist many moons ago. Doug is a grant writer and strategic consultant for arts and culture nonprofits and individual artists. He is also a musician, a writer, and a hobbyist photographer. As a family they like to read, listen to audiobooks, and attend live theater and music. When asked about their move, Jenny said, “We were ready to exit our metropolitan school for a more connected and hands-on experience for our daughter, and a quieter, gentler environment for our neurodivergent son. We are all grateful for this positive transition into this community.”

Craig Minowa – Viroqua, WI
Connie Minowa – Viroqua, WI
Aurora – Grade 6

Craig is a former Minnesota resident who says he and his family “came for the ‘big city’ progressive mentality of the area in the ‘small town’ setting.” Craig is a musician and composer who enjoys spending time with his family camping, e-biking, swimming, and making silly movies.

Connie is an artist, owner of Earthology Retreat Center, and director of Earthology Institute. Together, Connie and her family enjoy crafting, outdoor activities, and cooking.

Kindred & Nicholas WazeeGale – Viola, WI
Sora – Grade 5
Weda – Grade 8

Nicholas and Kindred work together as makers and educators. They offer seasonal sets of programs in handcrafts, outdoor skills, nature observation, and wild edibles for adults and youth in the Driftless area.

Iris Stevenson – Victor, ID
Steve Whitney – Jackson Hole, WY
Maple – Grade 1

Iris was living in Victor, Idaho, before moving back to Viroqua, her hometown. She works as the meat and seafood manager at the Viroqua Food Co-op. Her hobbies include biking, skiing, reading, yard work and gardening, and sewing. She and Maple enjoy being outdoors together—hiking, camping, biking, skiing, and getting on the river. When asked about her decision to move back to Viroqua, she said, “My family lives in the area. I wanted Maple to grow up with her litter of cousins!”

Steve is a professional ski patroller at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort in the winter season and has a handyman business in the Viroqua area that he moved here from Wyoming. He worked as an outdoor educator/mountain guide for 20 years and continues to enjoy most outdoor adventure sports, such as skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, rock climbing, and kayaking/paddleboarding, as well as competitive sports—everything from golf, ultimate Frisbee, and soccer, to ice hockey. When he’s not outdoors, Steve plays guitar in several bands and enjoys open mic night at the Fortney. He and his daughter Maple share many of the same interests. In the summer they spend time together biking, kayaking, tubing behind their boat, and swimming every day they can. Their winters are filled with sledding and skiing. When asked about his decision to move to Wisconsin, Steve said, “I moved here to be near Maple and support the greater good of her family here.”

Tyler & Hilary Conn – Viroqua, WI
Elias “El” – Kindergarten

Hilary and Tyler say they love living in Viroqua and being within walking distance of PRWS, parks, and local businesses. Tyler is the owner of the Woolly Bear Tap House in Viroqua. Besides beer and community, he loves cooking, gardening, music (playing, listening, talking about it), and creating costumes out of cardboard boxes. Hilary is a midwife at Gunderson in La Crosse. She enjoys reading, crafting, cooking/baking, and singing karaoke. When asked what they enjoy doing as a family, they said, “We love all the community events in Viroqua, like the farmers market, music in the park, and the night market.”

Celina & Jacob Dykstra
Ulynn Dykstra – Kindergarten

Celina is a nutritional therapist with a private practice, helping people heal their relationship to food and body. She loves reading poetry, singing loudly, and hugging people at the coffee shop. Jacob works as a carpenter and enjoys dancing, drawing, and bad dad jokes. Some of their favorite family activities include living room dance parties and gardening.

Annah Brown – Viroqua, WI
Trevor Klisz – Viroqua, WI
Alexandra – Kindergarten

Annah works as a personal caregiver. Her hobbies include wool felting, painting, gardening, Thai bodywork, traveling, and slow living. Annah and Alexandra enjoy spending time in nature together. When asked why she and Trevor chose PRWS for their daughter, Annah said, “We chose PRWS because it was the school most likely to cultivate her intertwined relationship with the natural world, as opposed to a traditional school raising her to believe she is separate from it.”

Trevor owns Klisz Contracting, specializing in roofing services. He enjoys hunting, fishing, permaculture, free diving, archery, DIY projects, and animal husbandry.

Paul Ratte – Viroqua, WI
Rebeca Ratte – Viroqua, WI
Gabriel – Grade 7

Paul was living in the Minneapolis/Saint Paul area before he and his family moved to Viroqua for the Driftless area, anthroposophical community, and great co-op. Paul is a naturopathic doctor, associate professor, and foodie, currently obsessed with clay pot cooking, gochujang sauce, beet kvass, and Chinese savory sticky rice. His interests include archery, pickleball, cold showers, volleyball, foreign movies, theater/opera, all things nature (hiking, birdwatching), and board games (especially Dominion, Oh So Clever, and Quacks of Quedlinburg). He and his family enjoy bowling, hiking, and bird watching together.

Rebeca is an acupuncturist who enjoys martial arts, playing music, functional movement, dancing, walking, gluten-free baking, herbal/flower gardening, and travel. She enjoys many activities with her family including reading, board games, science experiments, cooking shows, having tea, trying new food, camping, traveling, amusement parks, and playing with their dogs.

Rhyannon Roman and Tom Carey – Madison, WI
Paul and Kim Yates – Lake Wales, FL

Hannah – Grade 2
Amelia – Grade 4
Alice – Grade 6

Rhyannon moved to Viroqua from Madison and works in data governance at Organic Valley. She is interested in crocheting, reading, and hiking. Tom teaches computer science at YIHS and has hobbies in computer science, history, and fishing. As a family they enjoy board games, camping, and art.

Paul owns an artisanal cookie bakery and Kim teaches second grade. Their hobbies include running, reading, and Disney.

SCHOOL NEWS

**Krista & Michael Browne – Spring Green, WI
Linus – Grade 1**

Krista and Michael moved around within the Midwest—from the Twin Cities to Madison and then to Spring Green—before their move to Viroqua in the summer of 2023. They have three children: Linus and his younger twin siblings, Luella and Lennon. Krista currently works at home. Her hobbies include cooking, listening to podcasts, learning handwork (doll making, sewing, felting, knitting), walking in the woods, practicing yoga, and spinning around town on bikes with family. Professionally, she practices interior design and does construction management. Michael currently works remotely for Ride with GPS, a bicycle navigation software application based out of Portland, Oregon. He enjoys riding and maintaining bicycles of all kinds, practicing yoga, and keeping up on the ever-evolving needs of home maintenance and improvement. Other activities and interests include dogs, exploring the intersection of technology and humanity, and wishing he had inherited his father's musical ability as much as his affinity for coffee. "We love spending time together and sincerely appreciate the family-focus of Viroqua and PRWS. Our family enjoys learning about our natural environment by exploring the outdoors, embarking on bicycle-based adventures, and finding all the fun and interesting activities the region has to offer. We create many family memories in the day-to-day, through music, creative play, and finding ways to make new experiences out of what's available," says Krista. Michael and Krista have always had an interest in Viroqua since their Madison neighbors Mike and Eva Moon shared their plans to relocate to the area. The Brownes' path here took a little longer (eight years and four moves) than they would have liked, but they're happy nonetheless.



**Dagmar Truckses & Nat Stephens – Houston, TX
Julian – Grade 5**

Dagmar is an entrepreneur whose interests include handwork, outdoor activities (hiking, canoeing, cross country skiing, etc.), travel, and lifestyle/healthy aging. Nat is a geologist who spends his free time doing outdoor activities. When together, the family is outside hiking, canoeing, and cross-country skiing or tucked inside cooking, baking, and playing games. When asked about the area, Dagmar said, "We love the small, active community Viroqua is."

**Lara & Neil Martinsen-Burrell – Decorah, IA
Linden – Grade 2
Violet – Grade 7**

Lara is the morning assistant in the Violet Kindergarten at PRWS. Lately she spends afternoons with her pup Clementine, often listening to audiobooks, doing the things that need doing, and awaiting an after-dinner game of spoons. Neil is a software engineering consultant in the US government and enjoys playing chess, film photography, and woodworking. Together they love cooking, playing games, and making music! Their summers are filled with road trips, hiking, wild crafting, and any water play they can find. "We came to be together in our oldest child's senior year at YIHS," said Lara. "Thank you to this wonderful community for welcoming us on this special sabbatical year!"

**Angela Pennington – Westby, WI
Adam Pennington – Viroqua, WI
Rose Pennington – Grade 1**

Angie is a housekeeper and homemaker who particularly enjoys gardening and raising livestock. She said her family enjoys "working and playing together, both outdoors and in. Biking, hiking, gardening, and baking are some of our favorite shared activities." Angie and her family have been in the area for 15 years and felt that PRWS would be a nice community for their younger children.

**Emily & Chris Grantham – Seattle, WA
Astrid Grantham – Kindergarten**

Emily is the membership and outreach coordinator at WDRT. She enjoys music, dancing, yoga, astrology, herbalism, piano, nature, and social justice. Chris is a senior business systems analyst at Veracode and enjoys art, music (jazz and Nordic death metal, among others), film, reading, writing, trail-running, hiking, and fly-fishing. Emily and Chris spend time with Astrid and her younger sister Sylvi, making art, listening to music, playing instruments, doing "live performances," going to outdoor music shows in the summer, and walking in the woods. When asked about her family's decision to move to Wisconsin, Emily said, "Where to even begin?! The focus on regenerative and organic farming was a huge draw, since food security is very important to us. We could tell this was a friendly, unique, tight-knit community that we were eager to be a part of. There is a thriving arts and music scene, and really this town has everything you could need AND it has the best people! As far as PRWS goes, we knew we wanted a non-traditional education experience, and we were willing to go almost anywhere to give our children what we deemed would be best for them. Waldorf philosophy truly aligns with our core values. We couldn't believe a beautiful school like this existed in rural Wisconsin."

**Christina & Kyle Bolstad
David – Grade 2
Eloise – Grade 4**

Christina is an intuitive sound healer and sacred circle facilitator. Her hobbies involve crafts or art in any form, as well as gardening and hiking new trails. Kyle is an electrician and enjoys spending time outside gardening and exploring, as well as going to live music performances. As a family they love hiking together, gardening, exploring the Mississippi River, and going to music festivals. When asked about their decision to move to the area, Christina said, "We moved to have a slower, more conscious lifestyle. We love the energy of the community here. We are happy to have found land where we are learning to be more self-sufficient in producing our own food." Christina and Kyle are looking forward to holding sacred gatherings on the property and connecting with like-minded humans.

**Sarah Fortney – Viroqua, WI
Tharyn – Grade 2**

Sarah works as a personal caregiver and enjoys art and music as well as spending time with Tharyn doing chores and playing outside.

Returning Students

Leo Boyd – Grade 1, child of Aurora & Kelly Boyd
Sage Ruder – Grade 1, child of Chris & Susana Ruder
Reuben Kiehnau-Stumpf – Grade 4, child of Ashley Kiehnau & Simon Stumpf
Persephone Lavoie – Grade 4, child of Anna Jo Doerr & Shawn Lavoie
Oliver "Omosh" Kiehnau-Stumpf – Grade 5, child of Ashley Kiehnau & Simon Stumpf
Levi Froeschl – Grade 7, child of Kate & Brendan Froeschl

New Siblings

Clara Bakkum – Kindergarten, child of Bryn & Patrick Bakkum
Rosemary Hatfield – Kindergarten, child of Frankie Hatfield & Johnmark Hatfield
Felix Jones – Kindergarten, child of Lydia & Emlyn Jones
Anson Lavoie – Kindergarten, child of Anna Jo Doerr & Shawn Lavoie
Hawk O'Connor – Kindergarten, child of Kirsten Layer & Terry O'Connor
Uma Ugo – Kindergarten, child of Julia & Adrian Ugo
Josephine Wallin – Kindergarten, child of Anthea Wallin
Sadie Daniels – Grade 1, child of Darci & Justin Daniels
Linus Kiehnau-Stumpf – Grade 1, child of Ashley Kiehnau & Simon Stumpf

Beth Krieger-Fritsch, Grade I Class Teacher



Please help us to welcome a familiar face in her new role as our first grade class teacher: Beth Krieger-Fritsch! Ms. Beth was born and raised in southeastern Wisconsin as one of six siblings. She attended UW-La Crosse for her undergrad work. After graduation, the wide open spaces of the Southwest beckoned her.

Beth spent the next 14 years in Taos, New Mexico, high in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. This was a deeply special time, in a place with which she fell in love. It was here that she also felt a call toward Waldorf education. Beth found a home at the Taos Waldorf School, initially as the Movement teacher, but then as class teacher of a fourth grade class. She stayed with this class through their eighth grade graduation, and then, following the closing of TWS, ran a small homeschool program for first through third grades. Along the way, Beth made space to take up her Waldorf class teacher training through the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, and earned a master's degree in education from Mount Mary University in Milwaukee.

In 2019, Beth and her family moved to Viroqua. They were looking for the right spot at the right time for their son Oliver to enroll at YIHS, daughter Mae to attend PRWS, and husband Tom to continue his work as a chiropractor and doctor of functional medicine. In the autumn of 2020, with youngest daughter Anna Rose beginning in Ms. Shannon's Violet Kindergarten, Beth stepped in with both feet to serve as interim first grade teacher for the first four months of the year, guiding those intrepid six-year-olds who spent every moment of every day outdoors in the longhouse on our playground. For the next two years, Beth frequently served as a substitute teacher throughout the school, as well as being a valuable mentor for members of our faculty. In 2021, Tom and

Beth opened Watershed Chiropractic and Wellness, where Beth enjoyed meeting the wider community of our small town as the welcoming presence at the front desk.

And then something else happened: Beth realized she was feeling a growing connection to a group of rising kindergartners. She'd gotten to know quite a few of them while subbing in the classroom, and the call was strong and getting stronger! Thank goodness Beth was listening, and thank goodness she said yes to the call!

Oliver is now in his first year at Montana State University in Bozeman; Mae is in 8th grade with Ms. Carrie; and Anna Rose is in her final year of Kindergarten with Ms. Shannon.

When Beth isn't leading her first graders, she most loves to hike, run, bike, ski, read, write, and spend copious amounts of time with family and outside. She'll also sling a guitar out if anyone needs accompaniment. Beth has been learning to juggle since she was 19; this pursuit is still in its early phases. She can still do flips on the trampoline (less gracefully than once upon a time, perhaps), doesn't like any kind of seafood, can basically muddle through a conversation in Spanish, really loves a good riddle, and can create a story on the spot just about any time, especially if her audience is child-aged.

We are so grateful and excited that Ms. Beth has joined our faculty as first grade teacher!

Hot Lunch



The PRWS hot lunch program runs Mondays-Thursdays. Each meal is organic and vegetarian, made from scratch, with a gluten-free option every day, a dairy-free option some days – and lovingly prepared, always by Ms. Julie.

Michaelmas

The first festival of the fall, Michaelmas, began with a morning assembly, followed by acts of service around the community, and a great all school feast, to which each class contributed. Grade 1 made dragon bread with their Grade 8 buddies. Grade 2 harvested and peeled apples for Grade 3 to turn into an apple crisp. Grade 4 set up the dining hall and decorated tables with beautiful fall tablescapes. Grades 5, 6, and 7 helped with roasting squash to make a yummy soup, managed the kitchen, and helped with feast cleanup. It was a day of shared work and enjoyment – a wonderful celebration, indeed!



SCHOOL NEWS

Integrative Student Support at PRWS

by Mark John

This year, student support positions have become integral to the daily school rhythm, thanks to a grant Pleasant Ridge received to implement Dr. Kim John Payne's Integrative Student Support (ISS) program.

Mark John, Zoe Ellerbusch, and Jeanne Saver have been working in these student support positions. Mark is working with grades 1 through 8, Zoe is offering support from Early Childhood through 8th grade, and Jeanne is working in the Early Childhood building. At the beginning of the year, Mark's position was not fully utilized, but he was very soon spending time in the 1st grade, helping Ms. Beth and the students adapt to their new rhythms.

Most of September and early October were spent reviewing and organizing Kim John Payne's ISS program. The faculty and staff are learning the vocabulary, skills, and processes of Kim's work. Like any new system, it will take time for it to become a living part of the school community.

Before joining the ISS committee, Mark had already worked with Kim at two other schools and was familiar with his techniques. The program has grown and is truly integrative as it works with social, behavioral, and academic aspects of the student body. Many factors affect the health of a class and the school, and addressing one or more of these aspects often helps improve the cohesiveness of the social fabric. Look for further updates over the next couple of years as this approach is adapted and modified to better fit the school community.

As the year has progressed, Mark has been available for subbing in many of the classrooms, often for scheduled absences. For example, in the second half of the year, the teachers visit each other's classrooms for peer evaluations. Sometimes the subbing is to allow a teacher to make it to an appointment or take a needed planning break to catch up with work that needs to be done. Mark has the privilege of getting to know many of the students, teach

lessons, and tell stories. Sometimes the subbing is last-minute, and there is the opportunity to recall lessons taught in the past and bring them back to life with a new group of students.

Another aspect of Mark's role has been as an assistant in the classrooms. Having another set of hands and eyes can be quite useful in the class when there are needs. Mark has been in every class this year in one role or another. Sometimes the assistance is working with small groups in math, beginning recorder, reading, or handwriting, or catching up with missed morning lesson material. Zoe taught Mark some Bal-A-Vis-X exercises to use with students. This is a system of movements employing balls and beanbags to calm the nervous system and help children who need a break before they can reintegrate back into the classroom.

Zoe's work was immediately integrated into the school. As she is here only on Wednesdays, her schedule is often full a month in advance. She has been involved with parent-teacher meetings to support children who are having social or emotional challenges. Zoe works in classrooms, making observations of individual and class dynamics, doing exercises with students, and providing support for teachers. She is working with teachers to assess student needs and assist in implementing classroom modifications when necessary. She is also helping to implement modifications for specific students.

As the ISS program grows, this team will share access to community resources to augment what they are able to provide in support of students in need. Much of this is living in the ISS committee that Zoe also serves on. This will allow the ISS team to refer students, with parents' involvement, to appropriate agencies for professional assistance beyond the scope of what the school can provide.

Drawing together her experience as a private counselor and her time working in schools, Zoe assists in making recommendations for school curriculum and instructional practices with regards to social and emotional health as well as the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) curriculum,

where appropriate. This includes working with the staff to understand crisis support.

Jeanne's position in the Early Childhood program has saved us from scrambling for a substitute, keeping the children and program on track when one of our teachers is absent. She is someone who can be available for one-on-one support when a child needs emotional holding or behavioral redirection. She is a huge help in the kitchen and tying up loose ends in daily chores and responsibilities.

Jeanne is also a support and model as new kindergarten assistants are trained and is an enthusiastic leader in outdoor work and play. She is becoming an involved member of the ISS team and serves there as a representative for the entire Early Childhood program. Ultimately, in her role, Jeanne provides an invaluable presence for the children and teachers in our program. It has been such a gift to have these reliable extra hands in our mixed-age kindergarten!

The school recognizes the importance of support in social, behavioral, and academic areas. We are grateful to have the funding to explore these roles and to experience the reality of such support for the well-being of students and faculty—support we could only dream of in years past!



The Rainbow Bridge Ceremony

by Ed Holahan



"Make new friends but keep the old / One is silver and the other gold." A simple song and a true song. A song that is best sung in rounds, best sung with improvised harmonies. A song that is best sung by all of us, together. That's how the ceremony ended, the ceremony that opened the academic year at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School in Viroqua, Wisconsin.

The center point, the main focus of the ceremony, is the welcoming, the initiation of the brand-new first graders. Tiny people, a mixture of awestruck and aw-shucks, they are introduced, one by one, to the assembled families and friends. Their buddies, the eighth graders, take them across the Rainbow Bridge, a *short* span that begins their *long* journey through formal education.

The way a child negotiates the bridge is a signal, isn't it? A hint as to how that child will go at their education, how that child will go at life. Most of the brand-new first graders are a little cautious. The bridge crossing is not strenuous—they have all done something like it at home or on the playground a thousand times. But they have never done it in front of hundreds of people, most of them strangers.

You'll notice (if you're looking for such things) that a few of them are very cautious, stepping carefully and crossing slowly. They look down. They are making sure. I suspect that they will come to conversation and reading and learning with the same care, attention to detail, maybe even patience. Careful, to be sure.

Then comes the little boy who takes the three steps up . . . in two steps. Bounces briskly across the bridge, gives us all a wave and a smile, and hops down the other side to join his new classmates. I think he will converse easily and have many friends. I think he will learn what he wants to learn. I think he will be a star in the world, or maybe get into trouble—probably both.

Mary and I began reading to children at the school library eight years ago. The children were first graders when we met each other. They were tiny. Those people are the eighth graders now, the big kids. The difference in physical stature between the eighth and the first graders is astounding. They will be year-long buddies, the eighth and the first graders. Mentors and newbies. Experience holding hands with Wonder.

I didn't notice until the end of the festivities that every first grader was wearing a ribbon around their neck, and at the end of the ribbon hung a tiny brass bell. As their brand-new teacher led them out of the assembly, they shook their tiny bells, and the bells twinkled like stars, a joyous sound, music at its most basic.

I happened to be standing near the door as the children exited

the room. And here, again, their personalities were on display, couched in innocence. Some were vigorous bell-ringers. Some were deliberate. One or two forgot to ring, and one seemed perfectly happy just to be wearing a bell at all.

I like to interact with children. I can't help it. I like to gesture when I catch their eye. An excited wave, a big thumbs up, or a very low high five go a long way to telling a child that you really are glad they *are* on the planet. Some beam a big smile back at me and some giggle, but they all respond. Words will come as they mature. But for now, their faces say it all.

I grew up in an educational system that was academically superior, really great curriculum and teachers. The collected knowledge of the world was at my fingertips. I was an avid reader, a student of letters and history. My teachers opened those doors to me. My father took care of my hands, teaching me to build and to draw. We made things together. But no one taught me about my heart. No one encouraged expression. No one said that I should be confident in myself. I had to do that on my own.

So I sit and I think about these new first graders, children who *will* have it all. Heart and head and hands every day for the next eight years. Lucky them—and lucky us to help them along the way.

The Enchanted Forest

When this year's first grade students work their way up to eighth grade it will be their role to greet the first graders and guide them over the Rainbow Bridge. They also will have many opportunities to give back to the school community in some very memorable gestures of service.

Imagine your favorite fairy tale coming to life before your eyes as you slip through the forest on a chilly late-autumn afternoon. That is what happens every year in the Enchanted Forest as the vignettes are played out and the story – kept secret until that afternoon – reveals itself. This magical experience has become a treasured Halloween tradition we look forward to every year. Thank you to this year's Grade 8 students for such a fun time watching the Lion King followed by a lovely treat!



CURRICULUM

Kindergarten

Our kindergarten had a joyous time playing with a Scandinavian kicksled from Finland!



Grade 3

Farm Week is a cornerstone of the Grade 3 curriculum, which is centered around practical studies. The class spends a week visiting a local farm, harvesting apples and pressing cider, caring for animals, chinking a log cabin, helping with chores, and working together to prepare communal meals in the kitchen.



Grade 4

How many fourth-graders-long is a blue whale? Our students set up to find out as part of their human and animal studies.



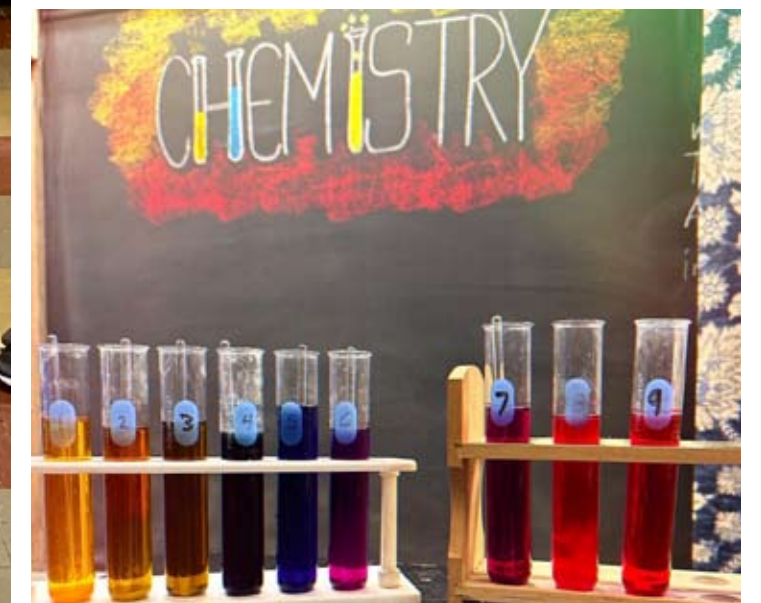
Grade 6

During the Grade 6 astronomy block the children come to understand our relationship with the cosmos around us – the earth, moon, sun and stars. Where are they in the sky? How do they “move around us”? Students observe the stars through nightly “window” homework, as well as a group camping trip. The movement of the stars and the relationship of the pole star to our latitude is further explored during classroom lessons.



Grade 7

The Waldorf approach to science – as well as to learning in general – is to cultivate an attitude of awe, which allows children to see the marvels all around them. Pictured here is an experiment in Grade 7 while learning all about acids and bases by testing with purple cabbage water. Science is beautiful!



Beloved School Community,

This fall I made the incredibly tough decision to step away from my role as Development Director. These past five and a half years with PRWS have been profoundly meaningful both personally and professionally, and it's been an honor to work and serve alongside you during these remarkable chapters in our school's biography. It has been a period of significant change and upheaval, creativity, collaboration, growth, reckoning, and renewal—and so, so much fun. Thank you for it all.

I have spent the past few months doing my best to ensure a smooth transition, off-boarding my responsibilities, and putting things in place to pass the torch. A search is underway for a development director to help lead the next chapter, and we're so fortunate to have Kelly Slentz's leadership here as Development Coordinator.

PRWS is a truly special place, and I remain dedicated as ever to this school and beautiful education. I'll still be around and actively engaged as a parent, finding my place in the cheering section/sidelines once again.

Bountiful thanks to all of you—indeed, the entire community of students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, grandparents, and special friends—who welcomed me with open arms and made this a wonderful place to learn, work, and grow.

At Grandparents and Special Friends Day this fall, always one of my favorite events, the affection for our sweet school was palpable. At the reception, many shared with the group of over 100 fellow guests of honor what they appreciate about PRWS. The list was long!

There I announced that a few long-time PRWS grandparents had pledged \$10,000 in matching gift funds to help kick off our Annual Giving campaign and raise much-needed funds for the school. I wanted to be sure to share this with you, too. This means that any and all donations, up to \$10,000, will be matched by these generous families, thereby doubling the impact in achieving our fundraising goals! We are so grateful for this opportunity, and count on your help to meet it. Every gift, regardless of its size, makes a difference and gets us closer to our goal.

Won't you join us and make a donation in honor of what you appreciate most about PRWS? My husband, Steven, and I feel especially inspired by our school community's generosity and have given our gift this year in honor of YOU.

As always, thank you for recognizing the value of Waldorf education and for your support. Together we can achieve so much!

With much love and gratitude,
Robin Kottke, Outgoing Development Director



Grandparents and Special Friends Day, October 13, 2023.

Collaborations at Growing for Good

by Mary Christenson

The property the school owns at 520 Terhune Street has undergone another change this year.

For three years we leased the greenhouses and retail space to Thoreau College, who operated the space as an entrepreneurial aspect of their curriculum. Last autumn they decided not to renew the lease as they now operate in a space where they can develop gardens and similar programming. We are fortunate that Sarah Mercer, who taught for Thoreau College and worked in the greenhouses for several years, proposed to open her own business and lease the space. Details about the hours and services of her new business, which opened in December as Little Bird Plants, can be found at littlebirdplants.com. Sarah has developed it into a sweet space and it is well worth a stop.

The property also still hosts garden spaces for PRWS and Youth Initiative High School, as well as a few community plots. They are stewarded by Vicki Ramsay, who is an alumni parent, YIHS teacher, and PRWS board member. Thank you, Vicki, for your energy and enthusiasm for the gardens! Classes, especially the kindergartens, often utilize the grounds too, and the willows that grow on the property produce bundles of basket-weaving materials.

Another new development is the construction of an outdoor stage for theater and other performances. This project has been funded through the Schools Fund Sharing program of RSF Social Finance. We extend huge gratitude to Adrian Ugo for the creating the design and being the lead builder. While the project has had some setbacks due to water flow on that land, they are being remedied and we hope to complete the project by spring. It will be a site for plays, concerts, festivals, and community sharing.

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Many thanks to all who have supported the work of our school
July 1 – December 31, 2023.

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Four great raffle prizes - one for each season
Winners selected on March 23, 2024





PRWS faculty and staff— Front row (left to right): Beth Krieger-Fritsch, Shihhan Chou, Lerie Alstad Van Ells, Kate Froeschl, Kate Bergan, Jordan Brudos, Ronald Schirmer, Hannah Hastings. Back row: Robin Kottke, Elaine Schmid, Bryn Schumacher, Erin Erkelens, Shawn Neary, Aaron Schmidt, Carrie Treviranus, Martha Buche, Shannon Landis, Christina Hotchkiss, Marinella Pro, Geri Shonka, Susan Beck.

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