

CONFLUENCE

Spring 2018

News from the Alliance for Public WaldorfSM Education

Vol.7, No.1

NEWSMAKERS | ALLIANCE HIGH SCHOOLS



Studying *Macbeth* at Carver High School of Arts & Sciences, in Northern CA

Ten Year Anniversary

THE FIRST FREE PUBLIC WALDORF HIGH SCHOOL
OPENED IN RANCHO CORDOVA, CA IN 2008

BY ALLEGRA ALESSANDRI, Ed.D., PRINCIPAL

George Washington Carver School of Arts and Science is a dependent charter school in the Sacramento City Unified School District. Now in its 10th year, the four-year high school is a unique combination of college prep, social justice, arts and science, all using Waldorf education methods.

The school is named after George Washington Carver who overcame the loss of his parents, racism, and poverty, who blossomed into a multi-faceted man who embodies all the traits of the school in his life and career.

Carver struggled to gain acceptance into college, but persisted and later contributed to the education of many others. He lived a life dedicated to social justice. As he said, "It is simply service that measures success."

Today at Carver, a community service requirement for all students is just one of the ways this unique high school embodies the life and work of George Washington Carver and creates opportunities for students to make a difference in their community.

Through a multi-disciplinary and integrated curriculum, 300+ Carver students master the academic and practical standards required for successful college entry and career readiness. The school culture is based on critical thinking (head), creative expression (heart), and wholesome action (hands). The college preparatory curriculum at Carver is integrated with the arts. On campus, students find a place to explore and experiment; every classroom is like a laboratory or art studio where students and teachers engage in academic inquiry and test their ideas. Continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

NEWSMAKERS

Principal **Allegra Alessandri, Ed.D.** reports on the Tenth Anniversary of the *Founding of G.W. Carver High School of Arts & Sciences* – page 1

FROM THE ALLIANCE

Board President **Liz Beaven, Ed.D.** reflects on the Alliance as it is *Looking Toward Our Future* – page 2

THE INTERVIEW

Victoria Temple talks with the Seaside Community Schools Principal **Sharon Saunders**, located in Atlantic Beach, FL on *Launching a Second School* – page 6

FROM THE FIELD

Rachel Schmid reports on the World Eurythmy Festival in Pasadena, CA in *Eurythmy Slam* – page 4

TEACHINGS

Allegra Alessandri, Ed.D., writes on *Navigating the Dark Waters with Mark Twain* – page 9

CONFERENCE 2018

A photo essay from the *Alliance Conference 2018* – page 4

HAPPENINGS

A video of the *Cain Hill* preschool program in Arlington, MA and more! – page 11



BY LIZ BEAVEN, Ed.D.

Looking Towards Our Future

HIGH SCHOOLS AND THE RISING GENERATION

Our Alliance for Public Waldorf Education membership currently includes three schools that offer a complete high school education: **Credo High School** in Santa Rosa, **George Washington Carver School of Sciences and Arts** in Sacramento, and **Desert Marigold School** in Phoenix. Each is structured differently and offers its own interpretation of Waldorf high school education, reflecting location, student demographics, and school format and organization. A number of other schools are looking to the future and exploring the possibility of a high school in order to continue to offer an enriched, supportive, and holistic education to students through high school graduation.

This is an exciting development that promises to have wide impact for our work and for the young people who attend these schools. Any exposure to Waldorf education is a plus; being seen as a unique individuality, having support for one's development, and experiencing a balance between academics, arts, nature, play, image, and story can make a difference to a child, a difference that resounds into adult life. The high school years are years of particular need, passion, conviction, and searching as young people seek in an increasingly conscious way to discover who they are, what their purpose is, and how they will pursue meaning. They are, by nature, intensely interested in the question of truth.

Whereas development of the physical body was the primary focus of the first seven-year phase, and the imagination and feeling life the second phase, in high school it is the uniquely human gift of independent, incisive, creative thought that must take center stage. This requires practice and honing, a reality well known to anyone who has parented or taught young people during the vulnerable passage to the somewhat calmer waters of full adulthood (now generally accepted to not really begin until our late twenties).

It is precisely during these tender teen years that our society tends to ask young people to toughen up and to put aside the pursuits of childhood. Typically, schools lose playgrounds and green spaces; schedules intensify, and there is a constant drumbeat of preparing for what lies ahead: college or career. This is the exact antithesis of what is needed and is not the environment found in our member Public Waldorf high schools.

Rather, our member high schools recognize and reflect the unique needs of this age. The school environment and curriculum support and

nurture the students. Beauty and aesthetics are not neglected simply because adolescence has been reached. Nature and artworks are essential elements of school. The curriculum offers a wide range of subjects and experiences including drama, arts, and physical challenges to balance the intense mental activity of this age. The curriculum does not stop at providing knowledge or training, but allows for integration of what is being learned and provides outlets for young people to experience different possibilities of becoming and being. Students regularly practice self-expression, exploration, challenge, failure, the need for persistence, and courage — all essential capacities for adult life in an uncertain world.

The high school years are years of particular need, passion, conviction, and searching.

The existence of a high school founded in the principles of Public Waldorf education depends on the availability of appropriately prepared teachers. Adolescents sense the inner qualities of their teachers and identify “real Waldorf teachers” as those who are authentic, present, and willing to engage, those who have done the inner work to develop the capacity to be present. Steiner challenged teachers to not compromise with the truth, to not grow stale or sour, and to be a person of initiative in all matters, great and small. These seem highly relevant to those working with adolescents.

Personal development is vitally important when dealing with our clear-sighted youth; luckily, Steiner also gave tools for inner development, the “secret sauce” of Waldorf education. Attention to our inner climate affects our ability to be present with our students, to maintain self-control and equanimity in the face of the storms of adolescence, and to carefully observe. This is a largely overlooked aspect of traditional education and has significant implications for teacher preparation and professional development.

With excitement and anticipation, we look forward to the continued growth of Public Waldorf high school education. In an age of rapid change and an unpredictable future, we need young people who are creative, flexible, adaptable, and self-possessed. These are the very characteristics found in Waldorf alumni. We salute our brave young people and the adults who guide them with dedication and insight. ■



Alliance Board Members & Advisors held their Spring meeting in Monterey, CA in March. Front row from left to right: **Mary Rudd, Hellene Brodksy-Blake, Cassandra Bridge, Mary Goral, Rainbow Rosenbloom and Charlie Burkam** (*Membership Coordinator*). Back row from left to right: **Victoria Temple** (*Administrative Coordinator*), **Chamomile Nusz, Liz Beaven, Daniel Bittleston and Chris Topham**.

THE FIRST FREE PUBLIC WALDORF HIGH SCHOOL
OPENED IN RANCHO CORDOVA, CA IN 2008

Ten Year Anniversary

Continued from page 1 At Carver, the school environment is designed to develop thinking, creating, and healthy activity. Respect for the individuality of each student is fostered throughout the school.

Carver not only attracts students from K-8 Public Waldorf schools, such as Alice Birney and AM Winn, as well as other private Waldorf schools in the region, but those students who seek a smaller high school environment, rigorous college prep curriculum, and unique learning experience.

See more photos on Carver's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CarverArtsScience>

George Washington Carver
school of arts & science
a public Waldorf high school



Scenes from Carver High School students in Science class and Gardening classes, gathering seeds and planting

ALLIANCE HIGH SCHOOLS



Credo High School

9-12 | Founded in 2011 | Sonoma Co, CA

Continuing the Education of North Bay's Public Waldorf Students

The mission of Credo High School is to offer a college preparatory high school program that: continues the education of graduates of the North Bay's Alliance for Public Waldorf Education grade schools; is committed to the core principles of public Waldorf education; and teaches and models social, environmental, agricultural, economic and personal sustainability.

Credo offers a rigorous academic curriculum that exceeds University of California ("a-g") admission requirements and includes a full complement of enrichment subjects, including Spanish, visual arts (painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture), practical arts (media arts, blacksmithing, woodworking), theater, music (Choir, American Music, Orchestra and World Percussions), movement, dance and physical education, biodynamic gardening and farming and a social-emotional learning curriculum.

Credo is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and has an Academic Performance Index of 853.

Credo has its seed in the imaginations of the founders and pioneering parents of the North Bay's Public Waldorf school. Parents, students, teachers and administrators were acutely aware that the Waldorf curriculum is planned to address students through twelfth grade. In 2006, Chip Romer and Allegra Alessandri met to imagine the development of a regional Public Waldorf high school. In 2007 the planning began. In March of 2008, a Founders Meeting was held, inviting participation of over 60 people who expressed interest in helping.

In 2010, school leaders approached the Cotati Rohnert Park School District, geographically central to the feeder school student population, to discuss the prospect of authorization. The proposal was warmly received. By June of 2010, over 900 signatures in support of the school's charter document had been gather. Credo was was authorized in September 2010. Credo opened with its first class of ninth graders on August 22, 2011. Now Credo prepares for its fourth graduation.

■ See the **Credo High School** for more!



BY RACHEL SCHMID

Eurythmy Slam

World Eurythmy Festival in Pasadena, CA

At the World Eurythmy Festival in Pasadena in September, I was reminded of the excitement that comes with sharing one's own progress in eurythmy with colleagues. As the program unfolded under the stage lights, three high school eurythmy teachers met backstage and discovered that all of us were practicing Grimm's Fairy Tales with our senior classes. "Why don't we meet and show each other our work?" That was the moment when the EURYTHMY SLAM was born.

During the next months emails went to and fro, practice plans unfolded, spaces were allocated, costumes were sown and perfected, vans were rented. Finally the day arrived and we set out to drive to Costa Mesa California for our first Eurythmy Slam.

On Thursday January 25th, we packed our belongings and walked over to the Waldorf high school campus for breakfast and morning movement. After initial meeting with our fellow eurythmists, we used our practice time to experience the wide and airy performance space, review some group forms and practice our sounds and gestures. While we were setting the scene for the "Six Swans", San Diego High School arrived, and soon the hall was bustling with over forty students. Meeting everyone and moving together in this eurythmy circle was an impressive moment.

Even more impressive were the performances that followed.

Phoenix seniors went first, presenting "The Six Swans" by the brothers Grimm. They created beautiful soul moods throughout the play. The nimble fox escaping the father king with his sons, tension through the dark, eerie scenes with the witch and her daughter, moments of wondrous magic when the yarn spins her path of light, the meditative moment of the sister, redeeming her brothers, then the vigorous new life through the hunters of the new king chasing a white stag and the new, young king who stands by the princess through her darkest time, until finally the evil-doing wicked step-mother is dramatically swallowed up in flames. As a surprise, the three missing princes were performed by second graders of Costa Mesa, who then rushed onto the stage to join the final scene.

San Diego seniors went next, presenting "Snow White and Rose Red" by the brothers Grimm. They created a beautiful flow of movement scintillating between red and white like the rosebushes and the sisters, the stern but loving mother, the burly bear companion, the living forest, a bad tempered little dwarf greedily grabbing riches and treasures. Beautiful sounds, forms and musical moments led through the travails of the sisters, up to their wedding with handsome princes and a grand finale. Their masterful, precise movements were admired by all.

Costa Mesa seniors went last, enrapturing the audience in the story of the "Golden Goose" by the brothers Grimm. A father and his three sons, two of them self confident but haughty, and



A photo from *Magic Moments*, The International Eurythmy Project "What Moves You" in Berlin in August, 2017. At the end of the performance on August 27, 2017 in the Komische Opera in Berlin there was rapturous applause and a standing ovation for the 70 young people from a total of 18 countries, the orchestra – the Gnessin Virtuosi Moscow – and the colleagues in the artistic direction.

the youngest, Simpleton, who through his good heart and humility is given a golden goose by the old wise man. Through it all, he needs to please his father, make himself happy and restore his land to greatness. Throughout the story, the performers humored the audience, creating all their characters with individual flavor, the pink robed daughters of the host, the nosy man of god, the commanding king and protective father of the sad princess, who as soon as she sees the line of stuck people cannot help herself but laugh and laugh and laugh.

After the final performance the applause echoed through the school as a thank you from the classes of Costa Mesa, who were the chosen audience.

For the three senior classes and their teachers this was truly a moment worthy of all their practice. The connections between students deepened in the times between the plays, the lunches and breaks together.

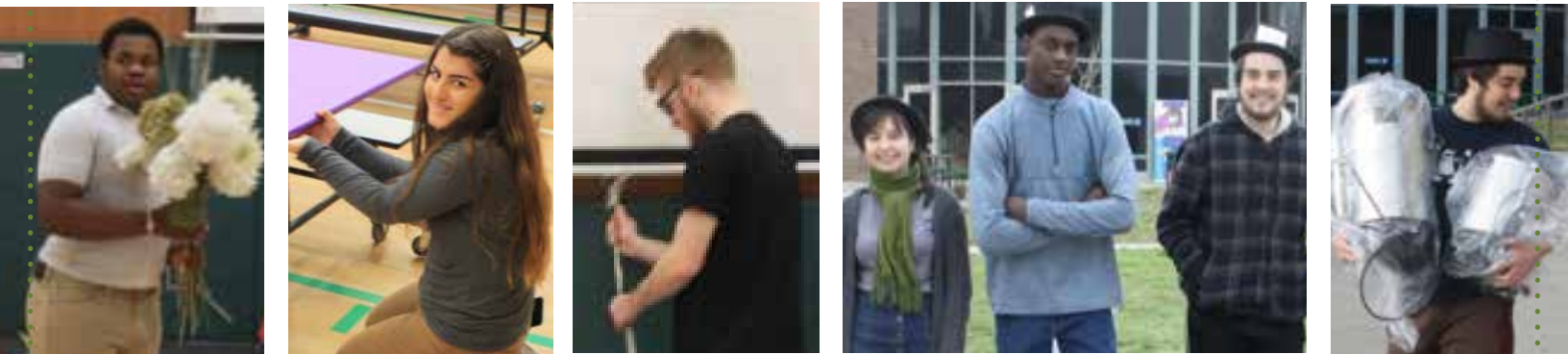
With a feeling of gratitude and achievement we drove back to Phoenix. ■

RACHEL SCHMID graduated from the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany. She studied eurythmy in Dornach, Switzerland, and Hannover, Germany. Rachel taught a rich seven years in Wuppertal, Germany, and in California at Public and independent Waldorf schools before becoming the eurythmy teacher at **Desert Marigold School**.

ALLIANCE ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE
GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER HIGH SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCE
JANUARY 12 - 14, 2018 | SACRAMENTO, CA



THANK YOU TO THE **CARVER HIGH STUDENTS** & STAFF WHO HELPED MAKE THE CONFERENCE POSSIBLE



THANK YOU TO OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER **KIM JOHN PAYNE** AND OUR MANY WORKSHOP PRESENTERS



AND FOR A JOVIAL MOMENT WITH **TORIN FINSER** DURING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS AT CLOSE OF THE DAY



SEASIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOL | DUVAL COUNTRY, FLORIDA



Seaside Charter Schools' students at the beach! The original Beach Campus is five years old. The new school is in its first year, and more is expected.

Second School Opens in Florida Planning for Junior High and High School is Underway

AN INTERVIEW WITH SHARON SAUNDERS, PRINCIPAL

Q: What has been your path to Public Waldorf Education?

A: I have been in education over 25 years. I came to Seaside after spending a year on sabbatical and doing graduate work at the University of North Florida. During that year, I did some observing at Seaside. It was their first year. After observing and having conversation with the Seaside board during the year, they approached me about becoming the school principal their second year. I originally accepted for one year to give them time to search for a principal, and here I am five years later!

After many years in the public school system, I was discouraged by many of the practices the district was choosing to implement. Waldorf education is where my heart and philosophical beliefs are. The developmental way we teach the whole child is just good for children and the community of teachers, students, parents and the community is encouraging and fulfilling.

Q: What have been the most interesting things in your leadership experience that you think new initiatives seeking to launch schools would find helpful?

A: I think it is easy to get so involved in the opening of a school that we forget basic leadership, like structure comes first; you have to have a detailed plan with lots of structure so children, teachers, parents understand how the school will operate. Then as they feel safe and comfortable, the structure becomes less obvious, it's just the rhythm and way of work. You need a clear vision and goals for one year, three years, five years. Having a strategic plan and systematic approach is necessary for progress to happen. The first year of Seaside everything was about the freedom to make independent decisions and everyone ended up feeling lost and disappointed that they weren't making the progress they hoped for that year. [Continued on page 7](#)

WALDORF
100

LEARN
TO CHANGE
THE WORLD

The 100th Anniversary of Waldorf Education

The first Waldorf school opened its doors in Stuttgart, Germany in September 1919. Today, Waldorf education is a global movement with schools in over 60 countries. As Alliance member schools, we will all have the opportunity to join a worldwide centennial celebration, scheduled to occur throughout the 2019-20 school year.

Our Alliance is represented on the North American 100th anniversary planning committee that is in turn connected to an international planning committee. We will offer updates of plans for participation in events and celebration as we move towards the anniversary.

As a first taste of what is to come, please enjoy this documentary video on Waldorf education and feel free to share it with your communities.



Waldorf 100 — The Film

TO LEARN MORE: View the Waldorf 100 video documentary, that can be distributed to your school community via your website at [Waldorf 100 – The Film](#).

Watch for more information

about **100th ANNIVERSARY**
celebrations, in addition to a joint
AWSNA & ALLIANCE 100th
ANNIVERSARY NATIONAL
CONFERENCE
IN 2019.



WITH SHARON SAUNDERS, PRINCIPAL

Second School Opens in Florida

Q: Tell us about Seaside Charter – in the beginning, the founding, current age and stage of development, greatest accomplishments?

A: The original Beach Campus is five years old. Our Sea Turtles Early Learning Centers are three years old. The new San Jose Campus is in its first year. Our greatest accomplishment is that our children and staff love school, and they love learning. The students are making great academic progress without giving up their childhood. The community we have built of children, staff, families is so special, there is a caring and respect that is obvious when you come on our campus during the school day or for one of our festivals.

You need a clear vision and goals for one year, three years, five years.

One of the difficult things we have overcome is that the first charter contract was written by parents and university professors. They wanted a small school, but they didn't understand that it takes a certain number of students to have

enough funding from the state to pay your bills. We have had waiting lists since the first year of operation and we went back to the school district and asked if we could increase enrollment and they said no. For these first five years we have had to be very frugal and careful with our funds. Our parents have been supported by supplying things for the school and helping with fundraising (especially for teacher training).

I guess the other tricky thing we encountered is being the only school like ours in the Southeast means we haven't had other schools to collaborate with or for our parents to see and learn about Waldorf education. Most of our parents either don't know anything about Waldorf education or they have limited knowledge that sometimes it is not complete or correct.

We had to learn that it is okay for a family to come to us and decide our school is not for them. It isn't what they expected or what they think their children need. It doesn't happen much now, but in the beginning we had parents who really wanted a private Waldorf school (or just a private school setting) and we had to explain that we are a public school, so we wouldn't be doing everything they had read about or expected.

At first, we felt we weren't doing what we should and then we learned that we are never going to be all things to all families. We had to be okay with our Public Waldorf approach and blend our state requirements with what we believe and want through our Waldorf pedagogy and practice.

Finally, we are providing professional development for our staff. Now that we are larger it is cost prohibitive to take all of the staff to training. We are now bringing trainers to our schools and having a summer conference and ongoing training with Mary Goral and Liz Beaven.

Q: What has lead to the decision to launch two new schools? How has the district responded? What will the organizational structure be?

A: Demand! We had waiting lists for five years. Jacksonville is a large city, geographically and as people became familiar with our work they have asked when we will be opening in other parts of town. Families are looking for alternative ways to educate their children in happy, healthy environments.

As our first class of second graders matured it became obvious that if we are going to provide middle and high school for our students, we will need several K-8 schools to have enough students to feed into one high school.

Continued on page 8



Desert Marigold School

PreK-12 | Founded in 1994 | Phoenix, CA

An Effective Operational Model

The mission of **Desert Marigold School** is to provide an educational context that emphasizes intellectual achievement and the imaginative, artistic, and moral growth of its students.

Since 1994, Desert Marigold School has served students and families in the metro Phoenix area by working to bring alive the deep principles underlying Waldorf education. First as a developing member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and now as a member of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, DMS has grown from a tiny kindergarten initiative into a thriving K-12 school.

The role of the **Executive Director**, working with the **Board of Directors**, is to organize all school operations to support the internal education process, while ensuring that the external legal requirements are met. DMS operates under a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit, Valley of the Sun Waldorf Education Association (VSWEA), Inc.

DMS is too large to allow everyone or anyone, including the Executive Director, to be directly involved in everything. The **Administrative Council** works to share the work so that no one person is burdened by an unmanageable number of tasks or decisions. It establishes administrative processes to ensure that school operations optimally support the education in the classroom. The other members of the Administrative Council are the Director of Business Operations, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, the Director of Students Support Services, the High School Administrator and Enrollment and Student Records.

The **Education Council** oversees the education process. Lead faculty members from Early Childhood, the Lower Grades, the Middle School and the High School join with the Executive Director, The Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Support Services Director to form the Education Council. It is an essential link to the faculty for the process of consultation and formation of educational policy and procedures to maintain integrity to the **Core Principles of Public Waldorf Education**. To learn more see the [school's website](#). ■

Second School Opens in Florida

Our parents are very persistent that they want their children to go K-12 with us. The strategic plan is to have three to five schools in different areas of town. Each would have a private Sea Turtle Early Learning Center for two-to-four year olds. The charter schools could be K-8th grades. Actually, we would like to have K-6th grades on those campuses and then we will have one school that is 7th – 12th grade.

If we are going to provide middle and high school for our students we will need several K-8 schools.

This makes the most sense financially and would allow us to build a quality middle and high school program. The district has not been negative about our growth, but they haven't been excited or supported of it either, the process to open charter schools in our district is intensive and it requires a lot of work.

The organizational structure is one Board of Directors for the Seaside Charter School Consortium, Inc. They set policy and monitor the work of the schools, supporting the Executive Director and staffs of each school.

The Executive Director/Learning Leader coordinates and leads the work of all the schools. Each campus then has a Principal and staff. The Leadership Team includes the Executive Director, Principals, Business Manager, Academic Directors for Content Areas (including a Waldorf Professional Development Director). This group plans implements the work of the schools.

Q: What are the greatest challenges you face in this growth?

A: Managing the growth with fidelity.

Q: How are you addressing the need for teacher preparation?

A: How is the teacher community engaged in the life of the school, inside and outside the classroom? We are sending key staff for training whenever possible, we are bringing trainers to our staff. We do a lot of reading and study as a staff. We also use the University of North Florida professors to work with our staff on best practices and how that looks in a Waldorf classroom. The Leadership Team and select teacher leaders visit Waldorf schools each year to see what they are doing. That is helping us grow and calibrate our work.

Q: Tell us about your student population? Number of Grades? Number of classrooms? Number of kindergartens?

Our Beach Campus will be in year six and San Jose will be in year two. We start all new schools with a private Sea Turtle Early Learning Center and a charter school with K – 2nd or 3rd grades. We add grades each year as children progress. We have no plans to open an entire K-6th or K-8th in one year. We grow slowly.

Q: How are parents involved? What is the social / festival / community life like? What local Floridian culture is brought into school life?

A: Parents are very involved, working along side the staff daily, supporting and planning activities, festivals, fund raisers, grant writing, working on our facilities, grounds, helping with the cleaning and up keep (remember we have had limited funds in our first five years). We ask for 30 volunteer hours a year, many do much more than that. [Continued on page 9](#)

We have a fall festival; we held our first **Wander Through the Woods** this year; we have a **Festival of Light** in December; and **Grandparents Day** followed by **May Festival** on a Friday and Saturday in May. We also have a family campout each year. [Continued on page 9](#)



Scenes from the early grades at Seaside Community School in Florida.



Navigating the Dark Waters with Mark Twain

BY ALLEGRA ALESSANDRI, Ed.D.

Huckleberry Finn is a standard ninth grade text in many high schools, including Waldorf schools. There's much to learn from this story about slavery, trust, friendship, family, abuse, satire—to name a few of the pithy themes Samuel Clemens wove in to this often troubling and difficult piece of American history.

For me, a veteran English teacher and Waldorf educator, one of the most important lessons from the book is the pseudonym of its beloved author, Mark Twain. A “mark twain” is a thing—an essential thing needed to ensure safety in piloting a riverboat. The mark twain, the second mark on a rope, indicates a depth of 12 feet—two fathoms—and informs the riverboat pilot that the water is a safe depth to sail. Any water shallower than that may be endangered by submerged rocks and debris and could “tear the life out of the strongest vessel that ever floated,” Clemens wrote in his 1863 memoir, *Life on the Mississippi*.

As a teacher and parent of teens, my own mark twain is an essential tool in managing the dark, deep and often turbulent waters of the years that bridge childhood with adulthood. Imagine the navigating that our teens must do during high school—from innocence to knowledge, from inexperience to experience. It is as treacherous as the Mississippi. And all we have is a rope with some knots to help them find their way.

It is also worth adding here Twain's brilliant perspective of the teen years. He noted, “When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.” In a way we are so stupid—with only an old knotted rope to guide us. And though we've been through it ourselves, do we ever really know what's going on in our infuriatingly beloved teen's head?

I do not know, nor do I pretend to know. I have learned to be curious about each and every one of the thousands of teens who have come through my life, including my own children. Smugness—knowing what they are going through because you have too—will infuriate a teen. And they should be infuriated. Teenagers must find ways, however difficult and painful, to grow independent of their parents. Our teens today are asking us for space to learn who they are first, so they can introduce themselves as young adults to us later. How many times has the teacher told the parent that Teen is helpful and respectful and a strong student leader, and the parent responds, “My sassy, sullen Teen is that person?”

Throw your mark twain overboard and take measure: how are the grades? What are the teacher reports? Is your teen involved? Doing homework? Who are Teen's friends? (Super-important to keep your mark twain active on this one.) Use your mark twain to observe. If any of the readings on your rope seem to be entering shallow water—then please intervene with loving direction, form and clear expectations.

Your teen will experiment; they must. They explore through the Waldorf curriculum, through field trips, through work and internships, through experimentation and sometimes risk. These activities give high school students opportunities to find new authorities in their lives, like a real boss. As Twain complained about his parents *Continued on page 10*



Seaside students enjoy a nature-rich campus.

Public Waldorf in Florida

Continued from page 8 We include surfing in our curriculum along with science lessons at the beach, and we access many of our local artists and musicians throughout the school year. We take field trips to St. Augustine, the oldest city in America. We are often working outdoors in our beautiful parks and historical sites throughout N.E. Florida. Our new Beach Campus backs up to Hannah Park on the ocean. We will go out our back gate and into their forest, lake and the ocean.

Q: What would you like to see the national Public Waldorf movement focus on in the coming years?

A: What can the movement learn from the experience in Florida? We need regional training, conferences four times a year. Let different schools host it and give our schools an opportunity to collaborate and see the work first hand around the country. Don't be bound by what you can safely do; roll up your sleeves and do the work that is good for children.

It doesn't take a large group of people; a small group of committed passionate teachers, parents and professors can move mountains. This is important work. Every school should embrace its identity and know we don't have to all look exactly the same to believe in and use the Waldorf pedagogy to change education, one child at a time.

Q: How are you thinking about high school?

A: We have seventh graders next year, so time is critical. We are studying and visiting Waldorf high schools and thinking right now, planning will begin soon, and we will have to keep you posted! I personally am challenged but excited to think about our little school growing to the point that the families and staff want a high school. That trust is a lot to live up to.

Q: Anything else you would like to add?

A: This Seaside journey has been what my career was meant to be when I chose education as my profession. I am incredibly blessed each day to have the honor of leading a talented and dedicated staff of professionals, I am blessed to be a part of this wonderful kind, loving Seaside community. I am blessed by the precious students that I love and serve every day. So blessed! ■

SHARON SAUNDERS is Learning Leader of the Seaside School Consortium, Inc., that operates the Seaside Community Charter School Beaches (K-7), Seaside Charter San Jose (K-4) and Sea Turtle Early Learning Centers located on the school campuses.

For more information: learningleader@seasideconsortium.org

Navigating the Dark Waters with Mark Twain

Continued from page 9 as idiots, let your teen find new trustworthy and inspiring adults to learn from—they may have learned as much as they can from you at the moment. They need to be challenged by specialists in areas that interest them—natural authorities. Steiner was a genius for recommending that all teens take drama. Through a great drama program, teens can try on many identities in a safe way. They can explore.

And here is the hard part—your old knotted rope is form. Your teen must feel the strength and form and life-preserving boundary of your mark twain. To ignore this is disastrous. Your rope is like a lasso, firmly enforcing the form and expectation. Betty Staley, my own high school teacher and now mentor, wrote an invaluable book called *Between Form and Freedom*—this is exactly where true development can occur. Parents, please remember to regularly check your rope to be sure that the depth is safe. If not, reel them in.

Youth need form. They need to wade out into the water to explore and experiment. They will take risks. The Waldorf curriculum ingeniously provides risk through vibrant discussions in class. Youth take risks by sharing their opinions on a hot topic in history—one that you can ask about with deep interest over dinner. Take a risk performing in the play. Take a risk improvising in the jazz band. Take a risk writing and performing an original poem—and praising the creativity and ingenious use of language. Take a risk getting a job.

Remember to learn from your teen.

And then there are the real-life risks in navigating the dangerous waters of sex and substances—or of love and life. Listening to rock and roll is not such a big risk—but playing in a band is! If Teen is getting good grades, meeting your expectations, adhering to the form you provide, then other kinds of risk will be mitigated by their knowing the boundaries of your form and family expectations. When they have proven they can respect the form and achieve the responsibilities you expect of them, reward them with freedom. Use your mark twain to gradually allow them to pilot the riverboat of their own lives.

One of today's most innovative educators is Leon Botstein, President of Bard College in New York, who wrote an important book called *Jefferson's Children*. Botstein says teens need to experience something strange and different from themselves. Doesn't this sound like risk taking? If we give teens experiences that are strange and different, we offer them healthy risks rather than unhealthy ones. This might be a job, foreign travel, a solo vision quest, meeting youth from another place, meeting professionals in various careers, visiting a university, and on and on.

If you have a good rope, carefully measured to two fathoms, you will be able to help your teen successfully navigate this treacherous crossing from childhood to adulthood. ■

DR. ALESSANDRI is a Waldorf graduate and 24-year teaching veteran. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Pomona College in Claremont, CA, a Master's from Georgetown University and her doctorate from UC Davis in Educational Leadership. Dr. Alessandri is a national leader in Waldorf high school development and a specialist in Waldorf curriculum as it meets University of California A-G requirements and California State Standards. Dr. Alessandri has taught high school English and Humanities in the US and Venezuela. She also founded the San Francisco Waldorf High School in 1998. She has served on the Board of Trustees at San Francisco Waldorf School, the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and Golden Valley Charter School, a Waldorf-inspired K-8. Dr. Alessandri is a Director of Chengdu Waldorf Teacher Training Center in Chengdu, China.





BY
VICTORIA
TEMPLE

THE SEVEN CORE PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC WALDORF EDUCATION

Colorful 17x24 inch posters identifying the seven **Core Principles of Public Waldorf Education** are still available to member schools.



FUNDAMENTALS OF WALDORF EDUCATION

The **NOVA INSTITUTE**, with **Jack Petrash**, **Nancy Jewel Poer**, and **JoAnn Climenhage**, offer a seven-day introductory course that will focus on practical understandings and the heart of Waldorf education, from June 10 through 17, 2018. The cost is \$575 (plus \$50 supply fee) that includes food and lodging at a retreat setting in the Sierra foothills of CA. Tuition has been made more affordable through a grant from the **Matthew B. Kelly Family Foundation**. For more information contact the Nova Institute at 240-418-6579, or via the website: www.novainstitute.org/



WALDORF 100 EVENT

Benedikt Just is the director of a documentary film, **Dawn of Hearts**, which presents scientific evidence that Rudolf Steiner was correct in stating that the heart is not a pump. The director of the film has produced Oscar-nominated and Sundance-winning films in the past, and aspirations for this film are high, in the hope of sparking a world-wide discussion about the real purpose of our hearts. **Benedikt would like to screen the film at every Waldorf school that is interested!**

Learn more at <https://dawnofhearts.co> and follow the project at <https://www.seedandspark.com/fund/dawn-of-hearts>. Benedikt can be reached at 541-292-3311



NEW PUBLIC WALDORF-ORIENTED PRESCHOOL

Cairn Hill Afterschool Program, located in Arlington, MA, has operated as an After School program with a child-centered approach to teaching and learning, inspired by Waldorf education. In September 2017, the **Cairn Hill Nature Preschool** opened with 17 young students, and the school is now receiving calls daily about their new program. The Founding Directors are **Daneil Kekele, Ed.D.**, Harvard University, **Cheryl Dressler, Ed.D.**, Harvard University, and **Margaret Ris, M.Ed.** Antioch University.

Here is a link to the video that shares the inside story of a day at the Cairn Hill Nature Preschool. > <https://vimeo.com/245739766>.

BEST OF CONFLUENCE

Copies of the Summer 2017 edition of the **Best of Confluence** from 2010-2017 are also still available for use in enrollment packets or at parent evenings.

If you would like us to mail you copies of either publication, contact Victoria at alliance.public.waldorf@gmail.com



POST JOB OPENINGS ON THE ALLIANCE WEBSITE

To announce job openings at your school on the Alliance website go to www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/ and scroll to the bottom of the page, then send your information to alliance.public.waldorf@gmail.com or call Victoria for more information at 707-628-4322.

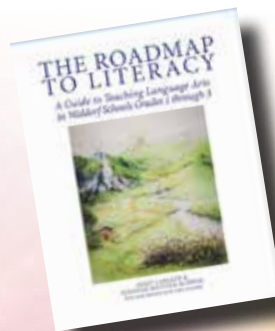
GOT NEWS?

The **Confluence** editorial board would love to know what's going on in your school community. Help us paint a vivid picture of the Public Waldorf school movement. Share the rich experiences of your students, teachers, parents and community supporters. Contact us at alliance.public.waldorf@gmail.com to plan how to share your stories and photographs, schedule an interview or write an article.



PARENT OUTREACH IDEAS

Syringa Mountain School (ID) introduces prospective parents to the school with crafting opportunities for adults and children. The gatherings take place on Saturday mornings from 10:30 to 12 noon, there is no cost but donation for supplies is welcome. This April 15 they will be make felted eggs!



THE ROADMAP TO LITERACY

Janet Langley and **Patti Connolly**, offer a Summer Intensive on **Creating an Artistic and Effective Language Arts Curriculum in Grades 1-4** at the Waldorf School of the Roaring Fork in Carbondale, CO from August 6-8, 2018. The fee is \$350 includes materials for making classroom resources, and meals. For more information and to register by **May 1**, go to www.waldorfindspirations.com/