

# JOURNEY SCHOOL NEWS

Volume 3, Issue 12

March 23, 2007

*Journey School \* 23431 Knollwood \* Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 \* (949) 448-7232 \*  
www.journeyschool.net*

Dear Parents,

I write to you in a reflective mood as Patti and I attempt to tie up loose ends here and prepare ourselves to fly to Aspen, Colorado to mentor at the Waldorf School of the Roaring Fork. I sit in a quiet office that is only so on weekends, with the gentle ocean breeze peaking in from time to time and the good feeling that it can be silent here at school. I look around and see a campus that is not full of outer beauty but filled with the inner beauty of the children and their teachers and their working together. These schools don't operate under normal business protocol. They operate on good will and the perception of the ideal.

Each school has its story. The Waldorf School on the Roaring Fork recently published a biography of their school that is truly amazing. The project was paid for by one of the founding families of the school who have single handedly saved the school from the financial as well as the emotional brink. The book tells their story. It is their biography of how they have grown, matured and ventured into the future. They have had their social catastrophes, unhappy parents, teachers and disgruntled Boards, yet they have survived the traumas. The book that I speak of was even co-authored by one of the school's former faculty members who still does not feel entirely at peace with the school and the days of old. The book tells their story with rich artistic luster and brilliant writing, trying in their way to understand that it is all part of the fabric that makes up our lives.

Journey, although half the age of this school, has its own story to tell. The names are different as are the circumstances, yet what I see clearly is that we make choices about how we greet things. I may be the eternal optimist, but I believe that life presents us with the opportunity to be happy every moment. It is our point of view or perception that makes the difference. Our school is a community school. It is not about me or you. It is about every one who provides some part of the fabric. We choose though, as to whether or not we want that fabric to be one of beauty, and that, I believe, is the unique thing about Waldorf education. We with the children as human beings get the opportunity to choose what no other kingdom on the earth gets to do, and yes this is the critical point of the fourth grade curriculum, and that is for the children to understand and comprehend that animals and plants are indeed incredible and have intelligence, but do not have the choice to do anything with it. It is an amazing discovery that allows our hearts to burst open with joy if we choose or to give forgiveness or to see the best in someone rather than the worst.

When I speak about my path to Journey, I know that it was in my destiny to be here, to meet each one of you and to be part of the lives of your children. I thank you for the privilege.

My best to you...Tim Connolly

**Dear Administrator,**

**Could you review the language of the school's policy on media and why Journey Faculty and Parent Cabinet have adopted such policy?**

"The philosophy of the school is based upon an understanding of the developing child. While television and other media can serve as a source of information and entertainment for adults, children do not operate in the same developmental stages as adults. Recent research has shown that exposure to media entertainment for young children may have a detrimental effect upon their self-image, their ability to concentrate and develop attention span, their relationship skills, values, reading skills, physical skills, energy levels, psychological health, creativity and social behavior.

We believe that the impact of the electronic media can have detrimental effects on a child's healthy growth and development; we encourage families to incorporate our media free philosophy into the children's daily lives. To that end, we request that our families put forth a conscious effort to significantly reduce or eliminate the use of television, videos, video games, computer games, I-pods, CD players, feature movies, etc...for their children. We ask for the complete elimination of electronic media during the school week, Sunday late afternoon to Friday after school. We realize that limiting or encouraging media from your child's life might feel like a tall order. However with support and reassurance, families may find that more free time means more creative and quality time together."

In addition, recent Kaiser Foundation studies show that the average 5-17 year old spends 38 hours per week (23% of the week) involved in media of some variety, with 75% of that time unsupervised as they utilize the various resources. Your children spend 31.5 hours on average (19% of a week) at school per week as a comparison. At nine hours per day, they sleep 63 hours per week. (37% of a week) That leaves the child with 36 hours per week with their families (21% of a week), where one typically gains life's greatest inspiration.

On behalf of the Faculty and the Parent Cabinet, I ask for parents to commit to adhering to this policy.

### **Budget Update**

In the past three weeks, both the Council and the Faculty have had the opportunity to look at a first draft budget for the 2007-08 school year. It is exciting and difficult at this time because so many possibilities on the positive side exist for the school. The downside of course, is that there are unanswered questions.

The budget as written includes new or continued increases for:

- rent and utilities
- moving
- telephone system
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher
- Foreign Language teacher
- Office staff
- Specialty staff
- Salaries and benefits

On the other side, concerns we are carrying are:

- the need to increase the reserve for pending litigation
- higher rent than projected
- additional needs in the classroom for part time assistants

Over the next month, we hope to gain more clarity on all levels of areas where there are questions. The faculty will continue to work on what they feel are priorities for the Council to consider and the Council will continue to find a balance to the financial picture for the school. The Council meeting on April 19 will offer the next level of decision making on this matter.

## Annual Giving Update

It is an exciting time for Journey School with our move to a new campus and more space happening this summer. As the staff and Council plan for next year it is important that the parents show their support through financial contributions. Many of the things we love about Journey and make our school environment unique are supported through funds raised by the parent body. The more money we raise the greater benefit to our children. I do not think it can be stressed enough that Journey is functioning on roughly half the budget of a private Waldorf school.

With all this in mind I did something I had not done before. I forwarded the annual giving letter to my parents asking if they'd be interested in contributing to their grandchildren's education. I urge all of us to do what we can -- stretch ourselves, think creatively and contribute to the annual giving campaign. We are two weeks into Annual Giving and have four weeks to go! We have raised \$18,683.00 so far! Let's employ our imaginations and reach into any and all piggy banks to help ensure a wonderful and bright future for Journey School.

Lisa O'Neill, Parent Cabinet Chair.

*A huge thank you to our Journey School Annual Giving Campaign donors as of Friday, March 23.*

Marc and Betsy Abrams  
Michael and Amy Burk  
Salvatore and Stephanie Ciulla  
Patti and Tim Connolly  
Cosibella Cristenas and Louix Dor Dempriey  
Kimi and Jay Jay Encarnacion  
Myra Gonzalez  
Michael and Diana Graber  
Samuel and Susan Hahn  
Angelina Hart  
Mike and Amy Hessing  
Kathie and Doug Hibbard  
Jones family  
Connie and James MacLeod  
Roger and Laurie Manderscheid  
Richard Martin and family  
Cheryl and John Moe  
Bas Mulder and Liesbeth Sotebeer  
Sarah and Tim Northrip  
Kevin and Maxine Quinn  
Diane Richards (Smithson)  
Lisa O'Neill and Matt Shaw  
Jochen and Bettina Spretke  
Glenn and Miki Watanabe  
Lisa and Damon Wells

## Search Committee Updates

The Faculty has been diligent in pursuit of the right teachers for the positions of first grade and kindergarten. We have interviewed candidates, been fortunate enough to have a very good deal of interest in our positions and have spoke about what we feel the children of these classes need in a teacher. At this point, we have not offered a position to any candidate.

The Administrator Search Committee has met with three candidates for the position and will be meeting to determine what steps are necessary for the next levels of interviews and discussion. This group is made up of representatives of the three governing bodies of the school. The committee decided in their first meeting that it was necessary for both the Faculty and the Council to interview final candidates separately. We will continue to accept applicants through the beginning of April while we interview the applicants to this point in time. Like the faculty, we feel blessed to have an excellent applicant pool. If all continues well, we expect that a new administrator could be announced by May 1.

Please keep in mind that these groups have the responsibility to make these decisions for the school as clarified in our governance structure. We work diligently to consider all candidates, treat them respectfully and show no discriminatory practices in our search and hiring decisions. If there are questions about the process, please direct your questions to Tim Connolly for clarification.

### **Report on the February West Coast Educator's Conference by Liz Clark**

With my son safely winging his way to the East Coast for his 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip, I was free to head north to one of my favorite places; Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento. The event was the annual West Coast Educator's Conference. I was a first timer and the event did not disappoint.

The Conference started with an outstanding performance by the San Francisco Waldorf High School Eurythmy Troupe. The Troupe travels the world, last year they were in Japan and this year they will be in Italy. The movements, and floating silk chiffon costumes in spectacular colors, were something to behold. The following morning and each day began with vocal and singing exercises in the gymnasium with Christiaan Boele. Ronald Koetzsch, a Waldorf stand-up comedian, tickled the funny bone each day by making light of knitting, oatmeal, melancholics and well, you get the picture. After the warm-ups, the serious part of the conference focused on the theme of RECONNECTING WITH NATURE. Craig Holdrege director of the Nature Institute in upstate New York and also a Waldorf high school biology teacher of 21 years drew our attention to the separation that is occurring in our modern culture between people and nature, and the troubling consequences of this trend. Craig's message for the three day conference was to bring ways for educators to build on Rudolf Steiner's ideas of Truth, Beauty and Goodness as practical ways to bring a deeper experience of nature, and our natural environment to the children we teach. I was inspired by Craig's insights.

The afternoon and evenings were taken up with a selection of individual workshops. I chose "Creating Imaginative Nature Stories", "Singing Games for the Classroom", and "Pastel Painting Imaginations". Our Journey School teachers were able to choose workshops to follow their interests and gain new ideas and inspirations for their teaching. The conference ended with a Eurythmy performance by students in the Eurythmy training program at Rudolf Steiner College, and a hilarious skit about a faculty meeting put together by participants in the "Using Comedy and Humor" workshop.

Thank you to Journey School for helping fund our faculty's attendance at the West Coast Educator's Conference this year.

Liz Clark

## The Council Bids Goodbye to Bas Mulder

At the last Council meeting, Bas Mulder announced that he would be leaving the Council at the conclusion of that evening's meeting. As you may recall, he stepped away from his role as President last June and pledged to remain until December 2006 to help to create a smooth transition. Not an unusual act for Bas, he stayed three months beyond his pledge.

He is a man of depth, integrity and duty, and has carried the school in his heart deeply. Rather than me extol his virtues, I have excerpted a portion of an open letter that he wrote last year to the newsletter, and will allow his own words to define him.

*"I have been a member of the Council for almost three years, about one year as a member and the rest as president. Did I ever solicit for the job? No! But as many of you know, I would do it all over again with all my heart. These years have taught me many things, they made me grow and gave me the feeling I helped in the education of Journey's children. Let's make one thing clear, Journey School is about our children and about our children alone. Everything, from teaching to cleaning the toilets is for the growth of our children.*

*To some this might not look like something special, but trust this is unique, and you can see it at any time; just look at our children. Journey School has grown up in the last two years and is on a positive, exciting road. I am proud to have our child in school and have the confidence that he will grow up as a beautiful, educated person with all the "tools" to choose and make his own future.*

*Our children are in school most of the time. Time that is essential to their overall education and growth. We as parents are not in school and do not know what happens to and with our children. When they come home, they mostly tell you very little of what really happened that day. Most of the time our son never gets any further than "School was fine, nothing happened". Being part of the school as a volunteer gave me the opportunity to be really involved, to help the school to grow and assist the children in their learning process. Yes, as a school we hire teachers, administration and staff. Without them there would not be a school, but let's not forget all the parents that dedicate many hours of their time to the school. Keep in mind, not only do they have the satisfaction to see the fruits of their labor, their children become a deeper part of the school as a living organism. It is in the example we as parents set, that physically being on campus where children see us, is where we will find the satisfaction of being part of the education of our children.*

*Looking forward to the future makes me confident that we are on the right "journey" and that we are helping our children to become "educated", beautiful members of our society. Our teachers and administration have done a miraculous job over the last two years. We as parents, teachers and administration are creating the nurturing environment so essential for the growth of our children. Let's make sure that we honor the teachers, the administration and all the volunteers. They need our help and support.*

*Thank you all for this wonderful "journey", Bas Mulder"*

On behalf of the whole community Bas, we thank you for your leadership and your love for the beauty of childhood.

### EVERYONE WELCOME!

Come join the fun April 19, in the Morning Glory Kindergarten room at 1 pm  
for the next:

PARENT CABINET MEETING

# JOURNEY SCHOOL COMMUNITY FORUMS

APRIL-MAY 2007

APRIL 2  
7:00-8:30 pm

## PARENTING MADE EASIER WITH UNDERSTANDING THE TEMPERAMENTS

Patti Connolly will speak about how parents can use their knowledge of the four temperaments to make their parenting easier. The four temperaments, basic personality styles in their essence, were first identified in the Middle Ages but still are a huge help to adults in understanding and working with children and each other. This Community Forum Talk will take place in the Eurythmy Room.

APRIL 25  
7:00-8:30 pm

## WHY SHOULD I SAY NO TO MEDIA?

Did you know that there is scientific evidence demonstrating irreversible detrimental effects on the brain from electronic media use? Come find out! with Liz Clark, First Grade Teacher.

MAY 17  
9:00 ~ 10:00 am

## PARENT'S EURYTHMY

Come experience eurythmy for yourself. You will be led through a progression of the grades, sharing both tone and speech eurythmy with Amy Schick, Eurythmy teacher.

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED UNLESS FEE IS NOTED  
ALL FORUMS WILL BE HELD AT JOURNEY SCHOOL

23431 Knollwood, Aliso Viejo, California 949.448.7232

## Wonderful Wool Workshop Postponed

My workshop has had to be postponed due to the unfortunate fact that I sprained my ankle badly last Friday, and then I got sick after that. I would like to thank the 3 people who signed up to attend the workshop.

If the 3 individuals who signed up would come to me and/or leave a note in my box as to a good day for you all to hold the class I will adjust my schedule accordingly. However, I would like to hold the class for more as I ordered enough wool and supplies for 10. If you are interested, put a note in my box or leave a message and I will take the additional requests into consideration. I apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you, Miss Laura,  
Sunflower Kindergarten teacher.

### *A quote for the week:*

***“Anyone who accepts the discipline of ideal standards and attempts to bring one’s own behavior into line with what is true, beautiful and good, is in a better position when called on to discipline others. Thoughts are then just and impulses objective; both will be accepted as no personal criticism or guidance could ever be. The secret is that what is personal in me is foreign to you, but what is objective and ideal in me is near to you. When one has been severe with oneself first, even gentleness and lenience have the effects of strength. The disciplined individual does not speak from prejudice, fear or desire. Such a person speaks for the uncorrupted nature of all people, and their speech is simply good sense.”***

***John F. Gardner***



## Important Dates

### **March 27**

Classroom Walk Through for interested parents

8:15 - 10:40 a.m.

Parent Study Group on Adolescence

7 p.m.

### **March 28**

INTERNATIONAL FOOD FESTIVAL

5:30 p.m.

### **April 2**

3<sup>rd</sup> grade class meeting

6 p.m.

Lecture on Temperaments by Patti Connolly

7 p.m.

### **April 5**

6<sup>th</sup> grade play

1:45 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

### **April 6**

Early dismissal

NO JASP

### **April 9 - April 13**

Spring Break

NO SCHOOL

### **April 16**

School Resumes

### **April 18**

Open enrollment ends

### **April 19**

Parent Cabinet Meeting

1:00 p.m.

Council Meeting

7:00 p.m.

### **April 25**

Community Forum

"How to Say No to Media"

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

### **April 28**

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Pentathlon @ Highland Hall

All Day