

Fall Newsletter, 2011

Greetings from the Facilitator

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On November 1st, the day after Halloween, the school began what we hope will become a new tradition at Waldorf Academy. The excitement, the sugar and the commercialism of Halloween is followed by The Day of The Dead. In many countries this is a very important day and in some places it is a national holiday. In a respectful and reverent assembly the students and staff honored The Day of The Dead. An "ofrenda", or centre piece, with photographs of deceased family, friends and pets along with flowers and candles was set up in the gym. It was a beautiful short assembly that placed the whole context of this time in a meaningful perspective. The students from Grade one to eight participated and then grades four to eight went off on a day of orienteering in High Park.

This was also the day of the school's Annual General Meeting. Sarah Luke our President and Chair of the Board of Trustees spoke on behalf of the Board to the assembled members of the corporation of Waldorf Academy. Our current Board of twelve trustees, eight parents or former parents and four faculty members has the ultimate legal, financial and strategic responsibility for the wellbeing of our school. We should all be very grateful for the dedication and hard work they do for all of us. The AGM is an opportunity for us to take stalk and hear about our financial, and sustainability status. We heard from Sarah and Angelo Zaccheo that we are no longer in the crisis that precipitated the two year plan of fifteen months ago. [Con't page 7](#)

2011 Annual Gift Giving Campaign: \$110,000

100% PARTICIPATION- WE CAN DO IT!
By giving before December 31, you will be able to take advantage of a 2011 tax receipt.



Photo 1:

Halloween Parade at Spadina House was followed by Storytelling. Thank you to Martin Julien for deliciously scaring the middle school and to Peg Evans for just slightly raising the hairs of the lower school.



Photo 2: Grade 4 Zoology- how does an app compare to this? Six week equestrian program

November 17,18 School Closed, camp is being offered

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Nov 17,18

Parent-Teacher Conferences are offered twice a year for families with children in the Kindergarten to Grade 8. You will have a full 30 minutes with the teacher. Not only is it an opportunity for you to see some of your child's work and find out how your child is doing at school, but also it is your chance to ask questions and raise any issues you feel need discussion.

Your teacher may also bring issues to your attention and may recommend therapeutic/remedial support, extra-curricular tutoring or educational assessments to help support your child's development. In the middle school, the class teacher may request a subject teacher to be present to add information or insight to the meeting. [More on the camps- page 19](#)



School Blog: November Crafts: Help!!!, Bean Bags, Knitter Pin, and Books

www.waldorfacademy.org/voice

HELP!!! By Laura Edlund

For those of you doing crafts for the Winter Fair and wanting some tips, talk to other parents, ask other crafty people you know, or get some help from a web site. Here are some useful web sites (for example, if you find yourself sleepless at 1 a.m. and suddenly confused by the blanket stitch):

- blanket stitch (with pictures!)
www.futuregirl.com/craft_blog/2007/09/tutorial-hand-sew-felt.aspx
- basic embroidery stitches
www.sublimestitching.com

French knots:

www.feelingstitchy.com/2007/06/french-knot.html

- all about needles:
www.feelingstitchy.com/2007/08/needle-in-haystack.html

If you are not yet doing crafts, try one. They don't take much time, are easy to learn, contribute to the school, role model good stuff to our children, and can get pretty darn trance-inducing...

Laura Edlund is a regular contributor to our school Blog.

Winter Fair-

“Honey, not now! I'm knitting gnomes for the Winter Fair!”

Parents are busy knitting, sewing, shopping, organizing, and felting all to create one of the most exquisite winter experiences for the children. Well, okay there are incredibly talented artists working to create one of-a-kind gifts for the Sleighbells Boutique and holiday baking to ensure all our adult senses are met too!

In the lobby you will find sewing kits that you can take home and complete for the Children's Only store. There are also requests for baked items and upcoming events for craft making. Each parent has a specific activity associated with their class that they are responsible for so if you have not been delegated a job please contact your class rep immediately.

Children's activities: storytelling, puppet show, two craft rooms, candle dipping and candle decorating, Woodland Pond, the Good Witch, the Wishing Tree and the Snowdrop Children's Market.

Adults: Sleighbells Boutique, unique vendors, bakery, café and choral music.

Bring friends and family to this enchanted community event.



Care Committee

Caitlyn Adamson (KG/Gr 2 parent) and Carola Speiss (KG parent) are leading this initiative

- This group will reach out to families needing extra help during a time of need
- Help includes food, baking, child pick-up/drop-off, after-school care, etc.

Please contact Caitlyn at caitlina@rogers.com, or Carola at carola_speiss@yahoo.com

Grade 3 enjoying cider and figs in the sukka they created.



Grade 3 is an exciting year in Waldorf schools. The children are going through the 9 year change and the curriculum is there to meet them. They are digging in the earth, planting gardens, knitting hats, and building shelters. They will have their first overnight trip on a farm, and they are learning cursive. They are discovering that they have the tools to feed themselves, clothe themselves, provide shelter for themselves and communicate with others.

A current parent? You can join our school tours too! Next tours are Nov 9, 23 9:15-10:15 RSVP ext 225

On Saturday, October 22 we hosted our fall Open House. With a total of 22 families in attendance, the majority, about 2/3, were looking for Childcare or Early Years Programs. The remaining 1/3 were here to see the Grades. We also had 4 of those families attend who found out about us from the Our Kids Expo the Saturday prior. Several teacher candidates from OISE/UofT also came to learn more about us.

Today's parents coming to check out Waldorf Education are well-educated, well-informed and full of probing questions about why we do what we do. With all the recent publicity in the NY Times and Scientific American, we will hopefully see a surge of interest in our school and further media coverage. If you would like to feel more confident when speaking about the Waldorf approach, please come and speak to me. I have some materials that I would be happy to share with you.

A bouquet of thanks to all teachers who made themselves available on a Saturday, to the Kindergarten teachers who baked bread, did circle time and told stories for the many young children, and to our many parents and students who helped out with the event from bringing flowers, cookies or cider to walking families around as their chaperones. The Open House's success is a measure of the energy and love our community puts into it. Thank you!

Sara Anderson, Enrollment Manager ext 225

WALDORF 101:

Waldorf 101 Lecture # 2 on
Reading and Language

Thank you to the faculty that provided our community with such a rich picture of the Waldorf approach to literacy and language. If you are further interested in this subject there is a Conference on Literacy being hosted by the Rudolf Steiner Centre located at TWS this coming weekend- Nov 3 and 4th.

Upcoming 101 Lectures are:
December 9 Media 7-8:30 pm
Speaker: Gene Campbell

February 23 Therapeutic and
Remedial Support 7:30-8:30 pm
Speaker: Janet Hendershot



Sheila Anderson, Janet Hendershot, Bozena Ciepiewski



RICE-OAT MUFFINS

A special recipe for milk and egg allergies or sensitivities, and the children love it!

- 1 cup rolled oats (ground)
- ¾ cup rice flour
- 2 Tablespoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ cup honey
- ½ cup raisons
- ¼ cup safflower oil
- 1 cup water

Preheat oven to 425 degrees

Grease muffin tins

Mix dry ingredients thoroughly

Add raisons, water and oil.
Mix well

Fill muffin tins about 2/3 full

Bake 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes 12 muffins.

Lisa Gibson, Fairy Garden
Lead Teacher

Fairy Garden's Birthday Celebration

The week before the child's birthday, I remind the children that we may make a birthday picture for our friend who is having a birthday celebration. The children make their birthday picture and if they send a greeting verbally it gets put on the picture in quotations. *This helps the children acknowledge their peers and give something of themselves to others (Sharing).*

The day of the birthday we make the birthday cake. The children take turns and help measure the ingredients together. *It is a lesson in math, waiting and sharing and taking turns.*

Leading up to the birthday there is a birthday basket where a few modest gifts are wrapped ready for the celebration. Children will help or watch; tidy the room, set the table with a tablecloth and excitedly wait for the birthday family to arrive.

The Birthday family sits at one end of the table. We welcome them and acknowledge the child's birthday and together we sing our blessing, and then sing

"To you we sing and happiness we bring to celebrate your birth an angel here on earth." And finally we sing the Happy Birthday song. *This practices vocabulary, gratitude and social manners.*

Their artwork is presented in the birthday picture book and given to the child (A classmate is chosen to give the gift to the birthday child) each gift is presented by a different helper. *This supports social manners, honoring others and acknowledges the child's readiness to help others.*

The family is then asked to help serve the cake or muffins. We eat together and share the food the children have helped make. *The parents are modeling their willingness to help and the children are sharing their cake with pride*

The parent is welcome to share a story about their child that would illustrate parents loving intentions towards their child.

We end our birthday celebration giving Thanks for our meal and we say goodbye and thank you to the birthday family for coming and celebrating with us.

This teaches Reverence, Repetition and Rhythm for the occasion. By Lisa Gibson

A Family Guide to Waldorf Education:

Rudolf Steiner encouraged parents not to accept Waldorf education blindly but to seek to understand it. By understanding Waldorf education you will be providing the best support for your child's teacher.

One such excellent resource is the book, **Waldorf Education, A Family Guide**. The store can order it for you and I have a copy I am happy to lend.

School as a Journey, The Eight-Year Odyssey of a Waldorf Teacher and His Class, by Torin M. Finser

There are 3 copies of this excellent book in the school store. By Jen Deathe ext 233

The Three Fold Social Order

I recently travelled to the Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento, California for a 7 day course created for administrators working in a Waldorf School.

We focused on the three fold social order and how it applies to the organizational structure of Waldorf schools. We engaged in a very similar process that our school went through with branding. We participated in some of the curriculum subjects and as well studied anthroposophy from the perspective of an administrator.

We examined all the ways a school is marketed from the traditional ads, collateral material, events, word of mouth, to how we interact with each other, how we face challenges, how our sign looks, our building, the community life of our parents and teachers outside of the school, to the way the students interact with each other. Marketing is everything we do and we are all responsible for the way the outside world perceives us.

I did not imagine that I could be given so many gifts by taking a week long course but it has given me clarity, a deeper understanding of the organizational structure of our school and our social mission, as well as a beautiful social experience with administrators, teachers, and students from across North America.

I look forward to offering a workshop for parents based on the teachings I received from this course.

Jennifer Deathe /Marketing Manager

Innovation, Inspiration, Connection - PD at Waldorf Academy

Garden City AWSNA Summer Conference on Rudolf Steiner's Unique Understanding of Adolescence

Last June, I was fortunate enough to be able to attend a series of lectures given by Dr. Peter Selg at the Garden City Waldorf School on Long Island, NY. The topic for the presentations was adolescence. Peter is a practicing psychiatrist and anthroposophist living in Basil Switzerland. He is also a Waldorf parent of two grade school children.

Peter pointed out that the ability of a young individual to negotiate through the changes of adolescence is very much dependant on the entirety of their biography and how the adults in their lives supported them and presented themselves. I was very taken by his insistence that we the teachers must be engaged in the world; that to be guides for the adolescents who are strangers to this world we must not be estranged ourselves—this can be a challenge for some schools where the whole community can be rather alienated from the contemporary culture. He reminded us that Rudolf Steiner fundamentally believed that students should come out of school with a thorough understanding of the world as it is currently is, in all its aspects from agriculture to industry and business. The teacher should be able to reassure students that the world makes sense and has some order and justification in the midst of all the chaos and change. In fact, the very task of education as set out by Steiner, was to present the world with all of its capacity and limitations and give young people a sense of hope and courage to meet the challenges. Teachers are not to prescribe or proscribe but rather to “help each youth perceive of oneself as a morality generating and idealled individual”. This is the “ethical individualism” that Steiner had in mind as a path beyond the disasters of the first two decades of the 20th Century.

How true all of this sounds to me today as young people enter my classroom with an increasing sense of foreboding and helplessness about the environmental and economic perils they will face as adults. Rather than retreating in the face of all this uncertainty, I must engage in the present more than ever to bring a living picture of hope and striving for positive change. This is the true task of every teacher. Indeed, this is the true task of every adult who wishes to serve children and the future.

Robert Teuwen, Grade 7 Teacher

AWSNA: From October 20-22, Olivia Hanna and Siobhan Hughes attended the AWSNA (Association of Waldorf Schools of North America) delegates' conference at the Rudolf Steiner School in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The meeting is an opportunity to connect and share with colleagues from 31 Waldorf schools and training institutes in our region. The Great Lakes region stretches from Ottawa to Minneapolis and down to Missouri. We were fortunate to have the social science teacher from the Chicago high school guide us through a study of Steiner's "Origins of Natural Science."

The next delegates meeting occurs at the end of February and it will be part of an exciting conference with the theme "Building Regenerative Communities" from an economic, ecological and social/cultural perspective. More information on this to come. **Siobhan Hughes**



Photos: Beehive, collard greens. The bio-dynamic garden at the Sacramento Rudolf Steiner College feeds 60 families.



City Council approves eco-park at MacPherson and Spadina

Josh Matlow, the councillor for our area has just released the news that an eco-park proposal has been approved.

"After a very positive local meeting in August, I am happy to support a local resident's application for a City of Toronto grant to build a demonstration "Ecopark" with solar panels, community gardens, native plants and an electric car. This is an opportunity for the City to demonstrate its commitment to renewable energy, environmental stewardship and innovative public spaces. The new green space would also provide an educational experience for local schoolchildren from the Waldorf School, Huron Public School and Cottingham Public School."

Several of our parents and our admin have been actively seeking support for this park for several years now. Both Josh Matlow and the Annex-Eco Park Alliance are aware that we wish to continue to be a part of the development of the park.

The Feasibility study determined that:

- the area is contaminated and must be cleaned up before the park is built.
- the Geo-Thermal energy grid is not financially feasible due to the high cost of drilling.
- wind, although not very financially profitable, is still a good option as a demonstration technology. However due to the high cost we will have to have the units donated the same way we did for the solar panels
- solar remains the most viable and best option. Unfortunately the province has dropped the rate paid for non-roof mounted solar panels from \$.80 to .44 per kwh. However even with the drop in the contract it is still financially profitable due to the Panel donations from Morgan Solar.
- after long negotiations with Toronto Hydro our original plan to put the panels in parks was temporarily put on hold because of Hydro-One policy. Negotiation for an exemption or re-location is still ongoing.
- there are a lot of logistical issues because there are so many stakeholders. We realize the design is going to be a little more complicated and will take a lot longer than expected because of all the right of way issues that will have to be.

To read more on this exciting opportunity for our school and see the plans, please go the school BLOG- www.waldorfacademy.org/voice
If you have any questions please contact:

* Peter Griffin/Facilitator ext 231

* Geoff Rayes President and Founder of the Annex Eco-Park Alliance Inc.
[416-923-3139 graves@cravemusic.com](mailto:graves@cravemusic.com)

* Josh Matlow, City Councillor Ward 22 – St. Paul's www.joshmatlow.ca

Message from Peter Griffin continued from the front cover

Last year we reached our enrollment target and fund raising target and were able to give the faculty a variable pay above their regular salary. The Board is and has been committed to meeting the goal of providing an appropriate salary to the faculty, especially those with the most years of service who fall well short of the norm for their experience. This is year two of the plan and at this point we are short of the enrollment target set at the beginning of the plan. Only a modest variable pay will be available as any salary increase depends on enrollment.

As I mentioned in my remarks enrollment is the key. There are two aspects to enrollment, retention of our current students and the admission of new students. We can and must do whatever we can in those areas we have control over and understand and accept those we cannot control. Moving away and financial difficulties are not aspects we can control despite a generous tuition assistance program. Sometimes parents realize that despite good relations and satisfaction with the school there is just not a suitable fit and their child would be better off elsewhere. Sometimes parents become unsure the Waldorf way is the right way for them. However, there are many things the school can do to ensure the retention of our students and many of these things are the same things that we can do to attract new students.

We know that people are attracted to a nurturing, safe and well run school. In the past few years we have focused on these aspects and have made progress we are proud of especially in our organizational effectiveness. Our two manager teams, the Faculty managers and the Administration managers, are operating professionally and meeting our goals. Enrollment procedures are much improved and the admissions and tracking of inquiries is established. We now have an enrollment committee that supports the enrollment manager and has led the way in a parent survey and exit interviews. Our communications are improving with e newsletters, Voice flashes, The Voice, our web site, blogs as well as events like Waldorf 101 lectures. We are marketing using the tools of our branding experience. Excellent staffing is a huge component for parent satisfaction and school reputation and our systems of hiring, evaluating, and accountability as well as providing professional development have improved dramatically.

The Childcare Centre is now operating at capacity and the reported level of satisfaction is very high. The Waldorf way and attitude towards providing a natural and nurturing atmosphere for child development is being implemented. It is a first class city daycare we can all be proud of and we sincerely hope that those beautiful young ones will chose to continue with Waldorf Education through grade eight at Waldorf Academy.

With a solid grasp of our financial situation and creative financing Angelo Zaccheo, assisted by Laurie Cooke, are finding ways to improve our site and provide our teachers with the resources they need.

These are some of the organizational effective improvements we have managed to implement and we believe they will lead to a noticeable improvement in enrollment. As word of mouth is the main source of referrals to our school we need all of you to spread the word. Recent publicity and scientific research points the way to our future success and the realization of our goal of two hundred and twenty full time equivalent students at Waldorf Academy. Look for future descriptions of our Self Study which forms the basis of our Waldorf accreditation process and the all-important pedagogical improvements led by our Faculty managers.

We Are One.

Peter

Age Requirements at Waldorf Academy

Is my child eligible for Kindergarten?

Children at Waldorf Academy must turn 4 prior to September 1st to qualify for admission to the Kindergarten Program. Similarly, children must turn a minimum age of 6 prior to entering Grade One.

Why does Waldorf have different age requirements from the public school system?

The rationale for this age difference stems from our approach to teaching, which is grounded in child development and the idea of “doing the right thing at the right time.” Waldorf schools take great care to ensure that each child is developmentally ready – physically, socially and emotionally – for the academic challenges of grade school.

With this readiness goal in mind, it may be recommended that a child attend an additional year of kindergarten to benefit from further development. This ensures that we are setting the child up for success and not struggle in the later grades.

Scientific research now indicates that formal or “direct” academic instruction – what we view as traditional school – is *not* the most beneficial learning approach for children under age 7. Journalist, Paul Tullis, has written about this in his recent article in *Scientific American* entitled “The Death of Preschool”.



My child is ready to read: why don't you teach reading in Kindergarten?

The mainstream's perception that “earlier is better” to start direct academic instruction in fact runs contrary to how young children learn best. Scientific research in the field of education and language acquisition show us that children's innate curiosity is what allows them to develop their social, emotional and physical skills through their creative play, their exploration of the world and their social interactions with others.

In terms of literacy, forming an extensive vocabulary is key to a young child's language skill development. Singing songs, reciting verses, listening to and participating in storytelling are what build a child's rich vocabulary and lay a solid foundation for reading. No scientific evidence has yet been found that learning to read earlier leads to better readers later.

Neuroscientists, developmental psychologists and education experts are now recommending play-based, indirect teaching strategies to be the most effective methods for young children's brain development and the best way to prepare children for academic success in later life. Some research points to harmful outcomes of early exposure to formal academics in the preschool years, citing stress and frustration as inhibitors of the brain's architectural development and as possible indicators of mental and general health issues later on.

For a century, the Waldorf curriculum has understood the vital role of play in early childhood development. The use of age-appropriate teaching strategies and the provision of self-discovery opportunities make up the living, experiential focus in our preschool classrooms. A solid foundation for reading and a love of literacy and are ignited in Waldorf early childhood programs.

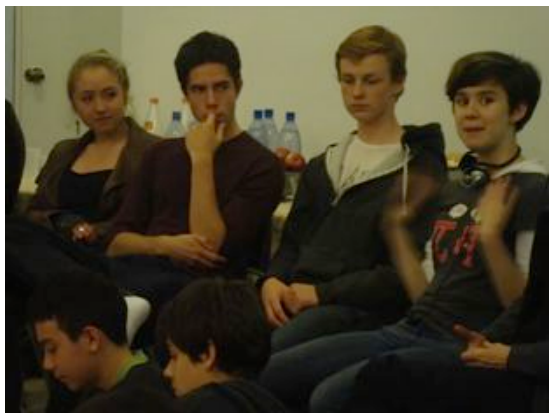
Sara Anderson, Enrollment Manager

Alumni high school night 24 Oct 2011 by Deb Kohn

Eighteen wonderful graduates of AHWS and WA turned out to share their high school experiences with grade 7 and 8 students and parents currently deliberating their own choices. We welcomed representatives of Central Technical School (Lee and Emmett, G9), Claude Watson School for the Arts (Earl Haig Secondary) (Gabby, dance, G11), Dragon Academy (Laura and Nathan, G9), Etobicoke School of the Arts (Jonas, G10 visual arts), Greenwood College School (Alison, G12), Humberside Collegiate (Alice, G12), Northern SS and Oakwood Collegiate (Zoe, G12), Rosedale School of the Arts (Max, Isaac, Gideon and Noah, G9), Toronto Waldorf School (Dexter, G10, Phoebe and Molly, G11, and Nigel, G12), and Ursula Franklin Academy (Chloe, G9).

In the course of a lively and revealing question-and-answer, we heard

- Transitions from Waldorf to high schools of all sorts were usually painless and quick. Early grade 9 is mainly about finding the way around bigger schools, realizing everyone was in the same boat (new and friendless) and getting to know new nice people.
 - Academically generally not scary; some students felt over-prepared for some courses and under-prepared for others. Course choices generally limited in grades 9 and 10.
 - Homework load varies from school to school, with some reporting light amounts (Rosedale, Dragon) primarily to be completed in school (Central Tech), and others reporting it 'piled on' (Central Tech).
 - Larger schools offer a wider variety of subjects and enriched courses (including the Claude Watson arts program at Earl Haig) than specialized (arts) schools, whereas smaller schools supported pursuit of individual passions and interests.
 - High schools use computers and smart-board technology to varying degrees; schools may have a mandatory computing course in g9 (UFA) or an optional one (TWS) and some teachers may require assignments to be typed (e.g. at Central Tech); technology was generally meant to make school work easier by putting presentations and homework schedules online.
 - Arts courses are available in non-(arts) specialized schools, but specialized arts programs don't cut you off from anything academic.
 - Though Waldorf grads have formative experience in the arts, this does not necessarily determine their focus in high school and beyond. Mentioned among future directions were mechanics and engineering, IB programs, non-profit sector and environmental science.
 - Waldorf experience helped in building relationships, engaging with teachers, formulating good questions, expanding on ideas.



Toronto Waldorf School

High School – the journey continues

Monday, November 14th our High School will be hosting an evening for parents who want to learn more about the Toronto Waldorf High School curriculum and how we prepare students to succeed in post-secondary education.

The evening format is such that it allows parents to meet in small discussion groups, and our High School teachers rotate through to answer the specific questions of the parents at each table. We have found that this format allows for great discussions that have been quite helpful to parents in considering the High School journey.

For more information please visit website or call

www.torontowaldorfschool.com

Chalkboard drawing Grade 7



Transition to High School cont'd

A little about each school represented –

Toronto Waldorf School: familiar format; courses fairly fixed in g9 and 10; highly academic and never boring in g11 and 12; teachers passionate and supportive; feels like high school not AHWS/WA; deep questioning and thinking required; 3-4 month exchange in Germany or France possible in g10.

Rosedale: not academically as easy as reputed; less homework so far in grade 9 than in grade 8; admission is less about what students have done than about whether they can learn; g9 visual arts repeats much Waldorf; everyone really friendly; can take beginner/intermediate/advanced strings, learn saxophone.

Central Tech: big school (2700), 6 floors, 3 buildings; special arts program with admission by audition/interview in front of 3 'judges' offers 1 arts class in g 9 and 10, 2 classes in g 11 and 12; trip outdoor/rock climbing activities early in g9 good for making friends; mechanics program with admission by interview.

Ursula Franklin Academy: smaller (about 500), notable for social justice curriculum and for Wednesday program of courses on just about anything; admission by lottery following a writing assignment of 4 short essays; exciting trips (Italy, UK, Kenya).

Etobicoke School of the Arts: 'awesome' visual arts program; admission into a major (drama, visual, musical theatre, dance, instrumental music, film) by audition; 20% of credits and 25% of time spent on the major.

Dragon Academy: small classes of 'informal' conversations; friendly across grades; homework most days and fairly easy, but study needed for tests; camping trip early g9, farther afield March break trip.

Claude Watson (embedded in Earl Haig): admission by audition in welcoming atmosphere; EH huge (3000) with big-school academic breadth; TDSB does not let them near water on trips (!).

Humberside: quality depends upon teachers; experience made by extracurricular opportunities; great to have friends in the neighbourhood.

Northern: big (~2000); good visual arts. **Oakwood:** ~700, local, fine.

Greenwood: private school with outdoor education focus; 400 students, possible to know 80% of them; two one-week outdoor trips per year.

By Deb Kohn (parent of an alumna and current gr.8 student)

Findings from our Parent Satisfaction Survey

Last spring we asked you to complete a Parent Satisfaction Survey. The purpose of the survey was to determine the school's strengths and challenges as seen through the eyes of parents so that we can continue to improve your family's overall experience with the school.

We were very happy that 82 parents took the time to give us very valuable feedback. Below are some of the key findings:

Our Strengths:

Quality of Teaching: 82% of parents rated their satisfaction with the quality of teaching as Very High or Extremely High

Accessibility of Teachers: 82% of parents were highly satisfied with the degree to which their child's main lesson teacher is accessible to them

Key Communication Channels: Overall, parents are very happy with the school's key communication channels – the Voice, Newsletter.

Waldorf Education: Our ability to deliver a Waldorf education is also a key satisfier.

Perceived Value: 87% of parents reported that they feel that Waldorf Academy provides good value for the money

Referrals: Fully 92% of parents who completed the survey indicated a willingness to refer the school to other parents.

We were very happy to hear how our efforts are paying off and we will continue to do our best to ensure that the things that you are happy with stay that way.

Of course the survey also helped pinpoint some areas where we need to make some changes:

Opportunities for Improvement

Timely Resolution of Problems: Many of you told us that the school needs to do a better job of resolving problems on a more timely basis. At times you also feel that there needs to be better ownership of who is responsible for resolving issues.

Point of Contact: Quite a few parents indicated that it's not clear to them who they should go to in the school with various questions and issues that are important to them.

Communication: While the school's key communication channels seem to be meeting many parents' needs, your comments helped us to identify several areas where we could do a better job. They include:

- Having a person at the front desk to answer the phone and interact with parents.
- Ensuring that all teachers are on the school's email system and that they respond promptly to emails.
- Keeping the school calendar up to date and comprehensive.
- Having permission forms available in PDF format so that they can be downloaded.
- Ensuring that report cards are sent out in a timely manner.
- Sending reminders to parents at least two weeks in advance of key school events.

Survey results con't,

Remedial Support: Parents reported that they would like to see the teachers better supported in the area of remedial instruction and identification of learning issues.

Our Response to Your Feedback: We have taken the following actions to date: Hired a front desk receptionist.

- Completed the annual calendar and posted it online.
- Ensured that all teachers are now on the email system.
- Begun a communication plan to help parents clarify who to go to when they have issues, questions or concerns. The plan includes making more use of the Voice, new parent events and Waldorf 101 lectures.
- We have hired a new person and enhanced our remedial support.

What's Next: The Enrollment Committee is reviewing information collected from exit interviews from families who left the school in the past two years. They will take that information into consideration along with the survey results. At the November Board meeting they will present recommendations to address all the key factors that are having an impact on parents' experience of the school. We are committed to bringing regular updates on our actions and initiatives.

If you would like to read through the survey findings, the data is available in the office. Note that for privacy reasons, individual comments will not be made available.

If you have questions about the survey results, please feel free to contact any of the members of the Enrollment Committee: Jennifer Deathe, Sara Anderson, Catherine Kirkland, Katherine Fulford or Daniel O'Connor.

Thanks again for your input. We look forward to continuing our dialogue with you and hearing how we can continue to serve the needs of you and your family.

Annual Giving Campaign 2011

Last night Sarah Luke, Advancement co-chair, announced our Annual Giving Campaign for the 2011-12 school year at the AGM. She reviewed and praised last years successful campaign and where the money raised was allocated.

This year our target is \$110,000. You will be receiving a letter in the mail requesting that you give what you can to enrich your child's experience at the school.

The most important aspect of this campaign is participation. Why?

100% participation is a very powerful statement. It means that all the faculty and staff are in this together with the community. It is a testament to businesses, governments, charitable foundations and the world that we believe in Waldorf education; that it is worth the fight to keep our independence in order to give our children a rich multi-disciplinary curriculum that is as creative as it is analytical. It is worth the time and commitment we give to this school so that our incredible teachers feel supported and can focus on drawing out from each child their unique gifts and ignite in them a passion for life long learning.

For more information please contact Sarah Luke luke.chernoff@gmail.com (Co-Chair of Annual Gift Campaign and Board Chair) or Scott Lamacraft lamacraft@rogers.com (Co-Chair of Annual Gift Campaign and Board Treasurer) or Jennifer Deathe jdeathe@walodrfacademy.org (Marketing/Advancement Manager)

The Silent Auction:

We have agreed as a community to not have the silent auction at the winter fair and instead allow the focus of the fair to be on the children and a community building event.

The silent auction will instead transform into an evening near the end of March that will include a larger auction and a very special evening of entertainment. Please contact Jennifer Deathe if you would like to be a part of this awesome event!

Middle School Trip



It is a Waldorf school tradition that the Grade Eight graduating class take on a large-scale, team-building and spirit-building adventure. The trip itself is the culmination of all the trips that the students experience starting in grade one. The trip has many functions, with personal growth at the forefront. Through the years students gradually work past homesickness and dependence during day and overnight trips towards confidence in their own abilities and independent spirit. To this end, the graduating class of 2012 embarked on an epic ten night canoe trip within the Temagami region of Ontario. Though trepidatious at first; (what if I can't lift a canoe? I've never paddled before! What are we going to eat? How much am I going to have to carry?) the students heeded the advice to pack light, pack warm and pack smart and bravely boarded a van bound for the wilderness.

Every outdoor trip is an important part of the Waldorf curriculum. The skills and confidence necessary for the final trip are gradually teased out of the students on seemingly innocuous outings like pumpkin picking to the class's first overnight trip.

Each trip brings out a new appreciation for the beauty and power of the natural environment. Children learn about all manner of flora and fauna, the delight they elicit and the caution they require. Parent involvement in these early trips fosters a sense of security and community. The day trips of grade one also begin to impart the importance of nature and outdoor activity in the students, especially as these settings are becoming less and less available in the modern urban existence. The duration of the trips build to a maximum of four nights five days or three nights and four days in grades five or six. The durations are always dependent on the development of the students and class.

During outdoor education, the sensory experience of the natural world is gently massaged into skills relating to observation, description, analysis and finally interpretation. For instance, in the Grade Five botany block students engage with the subject by first observing flowers and plants in their natural environment. Students are able to see, smell and feel plants before they draw and describe them, enhancing their overall experience. It is only after the students have experienced the plant itself that they are taught about their unique aspects and anatomy. The subject is then remembered as a living experience rather than a series of disseminated facts.



The same is true of understanding personal strength and how to harness strengths during times of challenge, like those experienced on the Grade 8 trip.

Many of the challenges concerning the Grade Eight trip began before the bags were even packed. Some of the students had some reservations about being away from home and the city for eleven days. Others questioned their physical abilities. Most students resigned themselves to their fate once the van pulled out of the Waldorf Academy parking lot and the rest of the hesitations began to dissipate over the first five days in the wilderness. By then the students began to settle into the trip and enjoy the adventure.

The Grade Eight group including Mr. Singh and Ms. Anderson arrived at Camp Wanapitei late in the evening as the sun had just disappeared under the horizon. We had just enough time to set up our tents as the night sky began to glisten over the landscape.

The introduction to our trip guides Emily Pearson and Brian Wright came over dinner. This was our first taste of the deliciousness Brian and Emily would create for the group over the next ten days. By the second morning the group had come to realize that the food on this trip would be no ordinary camping food

Some of the items on the menu over the ten days included; chocolate chip pancakes, turkey bacon and eggs on English muffins, apple and cinnamon crumble oatmeal with raisins and coconut, lasagna, scalloped potatoes with ham, pizza, wraps with variation of vegetables and meats, soup with crackers and pepperoni on a cold rainy night, peanut butter, nutella and banana wraps, granola bars, fruits, and of course lots of jelly beans, marshmallows and chocolate. Brian also brought along some of the honey and maple syrup he makes on his farm. Each day as meal preparations began a student would approach the fire pit and ask Emily or Brian what the group was going to eat. Once they had discovered the menu they would announce it to the entire camp site and the wildlife all around with glee. Brian was dubbed "Brian Mom" the night he made Lasagna in his dutch oven. Brian must have known how important it was to entice the group with savory smells, as none of the group realized how much food energy we would be expending the following day canoeing and portaging.

The group departed the base camp at Temagami on mid-day Wednesday after the gear, tents, life jackets, paddles and canoes were gathered. Once in the canoes the group set out to canoe until just before dusk. Individual paddling abilities were determined over these first two days and the group formed canoe partnerships with strong sterns and the bow persons rotating on this basis. Routines were improved every day. It took time to establish an efficient routine of packing of equipment and departing our camp sites in the morning, but the group soon learned that a late start to a day would translate into a late meal in the dark and little or no free time in the evening. The process of learning how to prioritize activities and efficient packing was allowed to emerge organically so that the students could see the results for themselves. To ensure group cohesiveness, students were taught to work and act for the benefit of the group and depart from the mine/yours mindset into considering the "our" by ensuring that they transported items no matter who they belonged to. This applied not only to packing and taking down the campsites, but also to the transportation of the canoes and bags during portages.

The transition from 'Me to We' became evident first during the portages. Initially some students were attached



to their own personal items and insistent that their own bags belonged in their canoe. This shifted as the students learned what was necessary during portages and packing and unpacking canoes. It became evident to all that it did not matter where the camp packs were located, as long as they were brought along. This also became true during portaging, as students would take items simply because they needed to be taken. Students also realized the difference between taking several trips with light loads versus challenging themselves with heavier loads for fewer trips back and forth. In the last three portages two students further challenged themselves by carrying a canoe (each) by themselves while others challenged themselves to carry the (often quite heavy!) food barrels. It was

evident that some students struggled under these tasks, but the determination was apparent on their faces. One of the most challenging portages was 3 km long. The group decided as a whole to opt for the single portage (the longest portage in Temagami!) instead of two smaller portages and canoeing during extremely windy conditions on one of the larger lakes.

This portage turned out to be THE most challenging event of the trip. Friendly bets at the beginning of the portage estimated that it would take the group a maximum of 2.5 hours. In reality, the portage took 4.5 hours of working around wind fallen trees, carrying loads mucking through mud, clambering up and down rocky hills, and finally trudging through spongy moist swamplands. It was at this time that the group really came together. The emphasis was on getting the portage over with as quickly and efficiently as possible, since almost nothing could be left behind in the woods during the night. The initial intent was to canoe following the portage. This idea was dashed as night was falling on the group's would-be camp site. Even the thought of a warm dinner was dismissed in favour of granola bars and near-immediate sleep and dreams of a huge breakfast.

To encourage perseverance over personal challenge, the last portage was conducted in silence. It was clear that the students had a new sense of confidence and ability following the accomplishment of the "EPIC" portage, and took to the silent portage with determination and efficiency. Some students chose to deliver items and RUN back, while others carried heavier than previous loads. One student opted to carry a bag containing four tents and an air mattress. Not a small feat.

To put these accomplishments in context it is necessary to know that: This 800 m portage was completed in about 40min. (in silence!) The first day's portage of about 450m took around 2.5 hours Every student was able to carry far heavier loads on this portage than any of the previous portages. In some cases students carried more than twice the weight of the first portages.

The physical and emotional challenges present on this trip cannot be minimized. Physically, the trip was nothing short of grueling. Emotionally, several students experienced acute homesickness, fear, and lack of confidence in their physical abilities.

That being said, with the support of the guides, teachers and peers "I can't" turned in to "I did" Every student's challenges were different, and required a different kind of support. Most of all it was the student's own determination that brought them through.



This trip has acted much as a right of passage or threshold for the year and for their lives as young adults. It was exactly what everyone needed to function as a cohesive group and to work throughout the year with confidence.

Each student should be extremely proud of themselves, and know that their teachers and guides are intensely proud of them.

Karanvir Singh, Grade 8 Teacher

Middle School English with Ms.Anderson

It • You • I exercise

A writing piece on an object from three different perspectives

During the Grade 8 trip in Temagami, we did a writing exercise based on a natural object. We had to write about our chosen object in the third, second and first person. Such an exercise requires keen observation, but also the ability to stand in many different shoes. See if you can recognize each object and each point of view.

There are two blueberries on a branch. There is also a leaf on the branch. They are wild blueberries. The leaf on the branch is red, and the berries are blue. They are not poisonous.

Would you like it if I ate you right now? Do you like growing in the middle of the wilderness? You grow on bushes, you are wild blueberries.

We are blueberries, wild blueberries. We are very tasty, but since we are growing in the middle of nowhere, we are hardly ever eaten. It is not very comfortable to grow on rock, but there is nothing we can do about it. So we just have to sit here on the branch all day. **Lilianna**

At Centre Falls

Splash, gurgle, swish! I laugh as I plummet toward the ground below. I swirl around in a slight pool at the bottom, and then on I go, never stopping to look back. As I reach the channel, I dodge around and jump over the rocks. The leaves and logs often try to hitch rides, but I usually spit them out before they reach their destination. The landscape beside me is very beautiful, but I'm always too busy to look. Maybe someday I'll take a break, but until then I'll just keep moving.

I take one look at you and I fill up with jealousy. You're so beautiful, and you don't even care! You can run for miles, and never tire. You're sharp and witty, but you never hurt anybody. Everyone loves the massages you give. And there's nothing quite as spectacular as the way you dance, nimbly jumping here and there. Your fun and bubbly humour keeps everyone going through the day. And at night, you sing a quiet song that we can all fall asleep to. So how do you do it? What's your secret? Oh, what I'd give to be you for a day.

Here is a waterfall. It has about three ledges of rock before the drop down to the pool below. At the bottom it creates a foam that soon disappears as it carries on into the soft current. It makes a rather loud noise that is hard to talk over. It gives off a nice spray and a slight breeze. It's very beautiful. One could stare at it forever, always noticing new things.

Lia

Water. She is ever changing, never staying fast or slow. She can be fun and gentle but she can be harsh and cruel.

You are beautiful no matter what shape you are in. You never stay the same and that is what makes you water.

I am always wet and I can never find a man who can keep up with me. The moon tries to pull me, but he is not strong enough. **Christopher**

It is solid, smooth, constant. Cold, wet and slimy to touch. It has allowed the water to course over it for millions of years. Unyielding, it juts out from beneath the steady stream of water. To us it seems unchanging, unmoving, solid as a rock. We say *cold as stone, stony-faced*, and yet this rock was carved by time, by water, by a sacred unnamed artist.

You seem formidable, dark and angular. This is nothing soft and warm about you. Your inside and outside are alike in hardness and silence. How does it feel to have water relentlessly crashing over you, unceasing? Nonetheless, there must be something accepting about you. Perhaps you embrace the water. Do you love the sound it makes against your dark silent body?

I am the strong, silent type. You can lean on me. I'm not going anywhere. I am hard, unforgiving, but I am stable, constant, loyal. Your metaphors are unjust. I glisten under the caress of the water. I provide a passage for her, enable her to travel. She is fleeting and ever moving. I remain forever here – yearning. **Ms A**

He is a little patch of green moss. Unassuming, unique, and most certainly curious. He, unlike others, resides in a crack between two rocks, accompanied by no-one but another patch of moss, a dear friend of his. He is bright green and warm, thick brown. He is quite aware that he will get faded and brittle, but for now he is springy and colourful. He is very happy.

You are a defiant thing, aren't you? Living apart, stubbornly living in a harsh place with but one friend. Brave, but arrogant, I must say. Still, you like it, don't you, the adrenaline of the possibility that you might be crushed by an unaware human? Silly, strange, but oddly compelling.

Yes, I am happy, in my own way. No one can tell me different. Birds, animals, and the odd insect tell me that I should move to a more appropriate setting, but only other moss know of my fortunate dilemma; I simply CANNOT move! Moss just cannot move! I reside where I reside, and there is nothing I can do about it. I ENJOY the fresh morning air and the warm setting sun, and most of all I enjoy the company of my lovely fellow moss patch. However stubbornly, I am happy.

Andreana

Here is some moss. It is crispy and has a shade of light green, matching my sweater. Bugs are living in the moss. It is their natural habitat. It is very pretty. There are other plants that are growing up and out from it. The moss looks like it has been trampled on. The moss seems sad.

I wonder what it feels like to be moss. Do you feel like a great weight has been put upon you when a bug lands? Are you warmer than us? Are you colder than us?

I am moss. A friendly, little fluffy thing you'll see. I live in your local forest. You've probably stepped on me once or twice. But that's ok because I am still growing. The worst part about being moss is being stepped on. The best part is living. **Gemma**

It is a sort of earthy brown in places, almost white in others. It is sharp, smooth, and brittle like the bones of a human. It's a stick.

You are small, smoothed by water for long periods of time but jagged and hard from being on land for long periods of time. You're a small, miserable stick.

I am thin and weak. I used to be browner but most of my brown has been scaped off. I hate being a stick.

Piers

I am moss. I live in forest and in between rock cracks. I'm green. I love sun to give me protein. I love rain to refresh me and make me more healthy, and also my other moss patches. The seasons I live in are spring and summer, but I die in fall and winter. I love the feeling of cute insects crawling on me with their tickly feet. I can't move. I'm still in the ground. But not all nature respects me. Humans step on me and rip me out of the ground! I feel so hurt! But I'm still always happy.

The moss lives in the ground. It lives more than one thousand years. It can be different shades of green in certain areas. It's all over forests. People love to pick it out of the ground.

You are moss. You live in forests. You never move or make noise. I wonder if you're ever bored of growing more than thousands of years. I have not much to say. You're too bored. **Nicole**

There is moss. It has been her for many months. I know this because it has step marks on it. This moss is wet and damp from last night's storm.

You say you're fresh, green, and beautiful, pretty and soft, kind and nice to sit on, but to me you're ugly and dry, wet and slippery and pointless. I'm sorry I am so negative.

I can feel weight on me. It hurts, but no one cares. I sit here bored and lonely. No one wants me. They pull me and rip me up and throw me on the rocks. It hurts so much. **Emma**

3rd: He is a little patch of green moss. Unassuming, unique, and most certainly curious.

He, unlike others, resides in a crack between two rocks, accompanied by no-one but another patch of moss, a dear friend of his.

He is bright green and warm, thick brown. He is quite aware that he will get faded and brittle, but for now he is springy and colourful. He is very happy.

2nd: You are a defiant thing, aren't you? Living apart, stubbornly living in a harsh place with but one friend. Brave, but arrogant, I must say. Still, you like it, don't you, the adrenaline of the possibility that you might be crushed by an unaware human? Silly, strange, but oddly compelling.

1st: Yes, I am happy, in my own way. No one can tell me different.

Birds, animals, and the odd insect tell me that I should move to a more appropriate setting, but only other moss know of my fortunate dilemma; I simply CANNOT move! Moss just cannot move! I reside where I reside, and there is nothing I can do about it.

I ENJOY the fresh morning air and the warm setting sun, and most of all I enjoy the company of my lovely fellow moss patch. However stubbornly, I am happy.

Andreana

Community News

Free Classifieds have moved to our School Blog www.waldorfacademy.org/voice

SUPERShakes for SUPERHealth

Learn how to take any blender and create Simple Delicious & Nutritious liquid food for the whole family!

We'll explore;

Tips to get more greens in

High Nutrient dense FOOD ingredients

EPA DHA Omega 3 derivatives

Natural PEA mood elevators

Pudding and Porridge too!

\$40 Monday Nov 7th 1-2:30pm or

Sat Nov 12th 2:30-4pm

Call 416.807.5483 or email

jeanette@jeanettesousa.com

to register! Limited Seats

Jeanette Sousa  **.com**

Nourish Revitalize Glow

jeanette@jeanettesousa.com

Seeking Caregiver

A family from the Rainbow Garden class seeks a caring, experienced, fun nanny for our 3-year old son and potentially an infant. Hours would be 8am-6pm five days a week with opportunities for occasional evening care.

Responsibilities include dropping off and picking up our son from school when he has school on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and playing in neighborhood parks and drop-in centers or at our home on Tuesday and Thursday; preparing lunch, snacks, and dinner; cleaning of the house (about 2000 sq. ft), ironing and laundry. Please send a letter of interest and outline of experience to Paul at s40racer@gmail.com or inquire by phone at [773 909 8243](tel:7739098243).

The Voice Newsletter is published once per term. Term 2 Winter Voice Newsletter submissions are due Feb.15, 2012.

The weekly eVoice is sent out Fridays. Submissions are due on Wednesdays.

Please send without formatting to jdeathe@waldorfacademy.org

Ads and Community News: Ads for the Voice Newsletter- jpeg \$20, text \$5
Weekly eNewsletter- \$5

Special thanks to Sheila Anderson-Masse who types the students' work for the VOICE.

Jennifer Deathe
Marketing Manager
416-962-6447 ext 233
jdeathe@waldorfacademy.org

Gaia voice for Girls

Singing circle and voice work with Leah Salomaa

Folk, Pop, Musical Theatre, Traditional, Rounds and Sacred

This group class gives vocal instruction and technique, as well as an opportunity to sing in community and harmony.

We meet on the first Thursday, once a month in my west end Toronto home (address given upon registration)

age 8-10 yrs

5-5:45pm: \$20.00

age 10-14 yrs

7-8pm

\$25

next gathering: Thursday, November 3

to sign up just send an email to:

girlfishmusic@sympatico.ca

to read about Leah's singing work: www.leahsalomaa.com

Child Care In My Home Alumni parent offering childcare for children up to 6 years of age, ECE qualified, many years of experience, references available, Waldorf inspired. Part time or full time, please contact Julie at [416-924-3699](tel:4169243699).

Community News

Free Classifieds have moved to our School Blog www.waldorfacademy.org/voice



julia@inhabitpilates.com

Calendar

Nov 3 Boys Soccer Tournament
 Nov 4 PD School Closed. No Camp
 Nov 9 Lantern Walk Kindergarten
 Nov 10 Lantern Walk CCC 5:30pm
 Nov 11 Lantern Walk Gr.1-3
 Nov 15 Grade 4 CN Tower
 Nov 16 Community Council Meeting 7pm
 Nov 17,18 Parent/Teacher interviews.
 School closed. Half/full day camp is being offered based on 5 minimum.
 Child-minding available for duration of interview and is free.
 Dec 2 School Closed for Winter Fair Prep
 Dec 3 Winter Fair
 Dec 4 Winter Fair Clean Up
 Dec 6 Advent walks begin
 Dec 8 Waldorf 101 # 3 Media Gene Campbell
 Dec 14 Parent Festival (Each grade demonstrates what they have been learning) 4pm-5:30pm
 Dec 22 School closed. Assembly in gym at 2pm for caroling.

Looking for Support

Michael Schmidt needs your help to keep our food choices free from the government. Michael is in a 3 week old hunger strike to protest the reversal of his 2009 acquittal from charges for safely distributing raw milk and needs your immediate support.

<http://www.change.org/petitions/government-of-canada-support-food-freedom#>

Sebastian Bilbao
 1st Grade Parent

FREE WOOL!

Bluebird Handmade is offering one roving skein (Fleece Artist) or one pre-packaged colour combination with every purchase of 25.00. If you spend 50.00 you get two, 75.00 you get three and so on.

Just say you saw this ad in the Waldorf Voice and come and pick your colours.

Offer valid until November 30th.

986 Bathurst St.

Tuesday -Friday 11-6

Saturday 11-5 Sunday 11-5

Nov 18-19 Day Camp and Child-minding will be offered

1. As in previous years, Waldorf Academy will be offering child minding free of charge for families who need care only for the duration of the conference time slots. In order to facilitate the scheduling of back-to-back meetings **for families with multiple children**, Annie at the front desk will try to reach you over the next few days to book your conferences. **Starting Tuesday, November 8th, all other families will be able to book their time slots.** Please call the front desk or drop in and speak to Annie to book your time.

2. We will also be offering reasonably priced day camp on both Parent-Teacher Conference days for anyone who would like further options for childcare. Please see the attached registration form for times and costs, and remember to sign up by the deadline, Friday, November 11th, so we know numbers for appropriate staffing.

With thanks from Sara, Krisinda and Annie



Day Camp Registration Form

Camp Date(s)	Registration Deadline
Please tick all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday, November 17, 2011 <input type="checkbox"/> Friday, November 18, 2011	Friday, November 11, 2011
Student Name(s)	Grade(s)
Cost and Hours	
<input type="checkbox"/> Option A – Extended Day: 8am – 5:30pm, \$65. Please pack a regular full lunch for your child/ren. <input type="checkbox"/> Option B – Full Day: 8:30am – 3:30pm, \$50. Please pack a regular full lunch for your child/ren. <input type="checkbox"/> Option C – Half Day: 8:30am – 12:30pm \$40. Please pack a morning snack for your child/ren.	
<p>Payment in full must accompany this form to confirm registration. We need to know numbers in advance so we can staff accordingly. With this in mind, no refunds for cancellations or no-shows will be provided.</p>	
Please list any important information about your child that camp staff should know.	
Parent/Guardian Authorizing Signature	Date

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 charitable reg. no. 11921 1498 RP0001