

WHY WALDORF

YMKE HEMMINGA

In my search for articles on Waldorf education I found this piece on the blogsite of Denny Strecker, a martial arts instructor from Michigan U.S.A, and decided, with his permission, to use it as this month's editorial.

It is interesting that this man doesn't seem to be connected to Waldorf in any way, yet I think his ideas on self improvement and parenting go hand in hand with what Waldorf stands for.

Different Forms of Education

One of the best skills you can pass along to your child is the desire to learn. Education is a major factor in how many opportunities your child will have in life.

Now there are multiple facets to education. Parents normally think about school and grades when I discuss education with them, but some other types of education include – Social, Moral, Personal, Practical, and Mental.

Social Education – Knowing how to act in different social settings. I am always amazed when I see adults, let alone children, acting poorly while out in public. Teaching your child the social norms for the society you live in, will help them get further in life.

Moral Education – This type of education is similar to Social, but involves the inner person as well. Knowing what should be done AND doing it. It is one thing to know right from wrong. It is another to ALWAYS choose right.

Personal Education – Easily the most neglected form of education. Learning for the sake of learning. I see and hear students all the time ask, "What do we have to know for the test?" They want to know what parts of the book, chapter, or lesson they can ignore. If there is not a test on the subject at all, less than 1% of the group will read the assignment. Teach your child to be inquisitive. Learn how things work or why they work in a particular manner. This skill will leap frog them over 99% of the American Population.

Practical Education – Learning by hands on experience – An Apprenticeship. Not everyone HAS to go to college in order to be successful. A lot of the top millionaires in the world never did. What they lacked in formal education, they more than made up for in Practical Education. Once your child shows an interest in something, dive in and learn as much as you possibly can about it.

Mental Education – Problem Solving and Math Skills are severely lacking in our children. Working these skills on a regular basis will help them as adults when faced with difficult situations. By learning how to Problem Solve at a young age, they are better suited for the work environment as adults.

In a recent study, it was discovered that 85% of adults will NEVER open a book again after graduating High School.

Are you part of that group?

Remember, you are the role model for your child. If you show an interest in reading and learning, they will tend to follow.

January 2009, Dennie Strecker

IF ANY PARENTS HAVE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ON WALDORF EDUCATION, PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO ME BY THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH SO I CAN ANSWER THEM IN THE NEXT MAX STIBBE MATTERS.

Max Stibbe Matters goes out on the first Friday of every month, with exception of the holidays. The Next issue will go out on Friday 7 May. Contributions or small ads can be emailed to ymke@rawstudio.co.za by the 15th of every month. Please note that the next issue will only go out on Friday 7 May, due to the Easter Holidays.

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Sebastienne got into the car after school about a week before the Class 1 Parents' Update, proclaiming, "You're going to sit in my chair on Friday!" followed by raucous laughter. "Don't worry. Natalie said it won't break!" Pure joy and enthusiasm from a 6 year-old.

A week later I'm sitting in my daughter's chair at school (indeed, it didn't collapse...!) while Sebastienne is proudly explaining each colourful drawing in her workbook depicting a letter of the alphabet. After warmly welcoming all, Natalie quickly ran through the routine of a typical school day. She then went on to explain how the children are being taught to read and write. How they literally have to 'feel each letter in their bones' before they even start putting crayon to paper.

All the children were happily running around outside up to this point, and Natalie quickly rounded them up to demonstrate what they do during Circle in the mornings. They immediately got into the magical spirit of movement, rhythm and song. The absolute joy and enthusiasm in their whole beings was beautiful to witness, and mirrored on Natalie's face.

May we as parents try our best to cherish and nurture our children's joie de vivre and eagerness to learn new things, for as long as we possibly can!

And thank you already, Natalie.

Zelde Rischmuller



SCHOOL NEWS

Class 1 Parents' Update

On February 5, parents of the new Class 1 were invited by Natalie to a Parents' Update. A mere three-and-a-half weeks into the school year, we did not know the surprise and delight we were in for. The children could not suppress their excitement and pride in sharing all that they had learned so far. And they had learned so much. Their books were filled to the brim with colourful pictures of the characters that help them learn the alphabet – big brown bears and magical caves with crystal treasures, a divinely decorated dragon, a fanciful fish and a gorgeous long-necked goose, all of which adorned the walls of the classroom as well. We were let into the secret of the vowels, which we were told in confidence are saved for last as they are the angel sounds. Also in the book were the practice exercises for early writing skills, demonstrated with glee and not an inkling of tedium. After flipping through the books, we joined the children and Natalie outside on the grass as the storm clouds gathered above. No-one noticed, however, as the level of focus was so intense and the sheer joy of the children was contagious as they demonstrated the songs and rhymes and tongue twisters they have soaked up like sponges. Rain drops made no impact as the children concentrated and giggled, looking at each other as comrades and checking in with Natalie from time to time with reverent sideways glances and knowing smiles. Natalie's explanations of the interconnectedness of the curriculum and how it all fits together and seeing it in practice gave us enormous confidence that this system works. And the phenomenal attendance by parents gave us comfort that there are many like-minded families among us. We left that evening, completely buoyed by the shared effervescence of a love for learning that Natalie has already inspired in this bubbling class of happiness and laughter. And completely at ease that our precious children are in safe and skilled hands.

Tanya Goodman
Charl du Plessis
(parents of Tessa)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RECYCLING PROJECT 2010

While shopping for school stationery in December, I discovered a rubber pencil bag with this inscription on it :

I USED TO BE A CAR TYRE

Then I discovered a whole range of recycled stationery and was at once inspired to start a recycling project for 2010. Judith Mthimkulu-Seanego had been previously involved in a very successful recycling project and together we have joined forces for 2010.

Judith is also doing eurythmy with our group during our circle, before starting our sessions and it is a great inspiration to us all.

Our project will run for the whole year and so far we are recycling cans and white paper and are ready for big quantities, so please send your recyclables to school.

We have a great team with lots of enthusiasm with no fear of getting their hands dirty and our environment clean.
Melanie Janse van Rensburg

IMPORTANT DATES

Saturday 6 March Open Day from 9h00 to 11h00

Wednesday 10 March Parents' Update class 5

Saturday 13 March Athletics day

Wednesday 17 March Parents' Update class 6 – 9

Sunday 14 and 28 March

Rosemary Hill Farm Market from 9h00 – 14h00

Friday 19 March Parents' Update Nursery School and Grade R

Monday 22 March Human Rights day; Public Holiday; school closed.

Thursday 25 March Parents' Update class 2

Friday 26 March School closes for Easter Holidays

Sunday 11 and 25 March

Rosemary Hill Farm Market from 9h00 – 14h00

Tuesday 13 April School opens

Friday 16 April Parent s' Update class 1

Monday 26 and Tuesday 27 April, Freedom day; Public Holiday; school closed.

Friday 7 May Next Max Stibbe Matters goes out