



ACACIA WALDORF SCHOOL
Educating the Child: Head ~ Heart ~ Hands

AWS Bulletin

SY 2016-2017 – Issue No. 6 (November 2016)

MESSAGE FROM THE COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

November 29, 2016

Dear Acacia Community,

Many Congratulations are in order this November. Congratulations to our Science team, Teachers Abby Balan and Brian Sy Beng and our Parents Sebastian Schaffer, Sonia Pinto and Hiraku Onishi who collaborated together to bring to the Acacia students our very first, extremely fun and successful Science Week. It was certainly a week to remember and we plan to make it an annual event.

Congratulations also goes to the Kawayan Class 8 and their beloved Teacher Che Ann Tolentino for their outstanding class play, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and to all those who participated in bringing this beautiful story and music to life. It was an exceptional performance that brought both laughter and tears to the audience. Bravo, Kawayan! You've given so much pride and joy to your community!

And last but not least, we'd like to congratulate the tireless, dependable and organized Advent Fair Team for another successful Advent Fair last Sunday. They were so purposeful and determined to have a successful event and it certainly was. Even the weather willingly cooperated and blessed us with a beautiful, dry, fun day! This team generously gives so much of themselves year after year. We thank you, Advent Fair team, with all our hearts!

We now approach yet another very meaningful festival, the Festival of Advent. This festival is quite unique in itself because it brings to mind very unpopular and uncomfortable states of being: that of waiting and uncertainty. Yet, waiting is also a valuable opportunity to develop in us vital qualities such as Hope, Trust, Faith, Optimism, Believing, and Steadfastness. Rudolf Steiner spoke of Patience as the cardinal virtue to attaining spiritual development. The Advent festival reminds us to reflect on how we wait, what we choose to do, to think, to say or to be in times of waiting and uncertainty. Are we bearers of doubt or bearers of light?

The state of waiting today is very different for us from how it was back then 2000 years ago, as humanity waited for a prophecy of Hope to be fulfilled. The waiting was much longer, the uncertainty far greater. We, on the other hand, have seen how the story ends, and because of this, we know that all will be well, for it has been revealed to us how we are all so unconditionally and extravagantly loved.

A blessed Advent Season to all!

With our Warmest Regards,
Teacher Trina Galvez
For the College of Teachers

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

November 08, Tuesday
All classes resume

November 10, Thursday
2:00-4:00 P.M./
Michael Hall
Advent Festival Talk by
Panjee Tapales

November 11, Friday
Martinmas Festival

November 12/Saturday
6:00 P.M./Farm Shed
Chamber Music Series 2

November 17/Thursday
3:30-5:00 P.M./
Faculty Room
Talk on "Embracing Our
Special Needs Individuals"

November 21-25/
US Science and Tech Week

November 24-25, Thurs-Fri
6:00P.M./Farm Shed
Class 8 Kawayan Graduation
Play—"Fiddler On The Roof"

November 27, Sunday
9:00 A.M./AWS Grounds
Advent Fair

November 30, Wednesday
Bonifacio Day (Holiday)

December 01, Thursday
First week of Advent

December 02, Friday
Advent Spiral– PS, C1-C3

December 13-14
Class 3 Play, "Noah's Ark"s

December 14, Wed
Pre-School Last Day

December 15, Thursday
GS & US Christmas Party

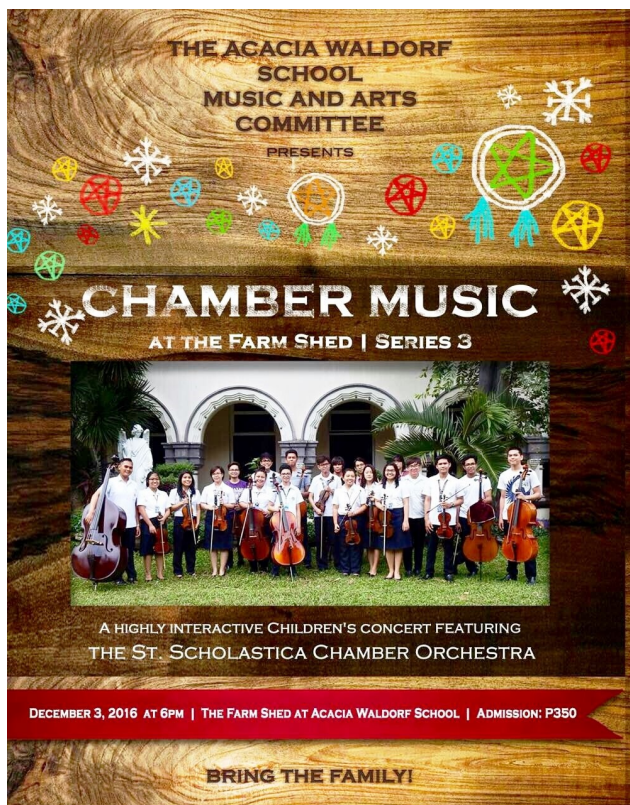
December 16, Friday
C4-US Christmas Festival

December 17, Saturday
Pre-School, C1-C3
Christmas Festival & Party

December 19-January 3
Christmas Break

December 22-January 2
Admin Office Closed

ANNOUNCEMENTS



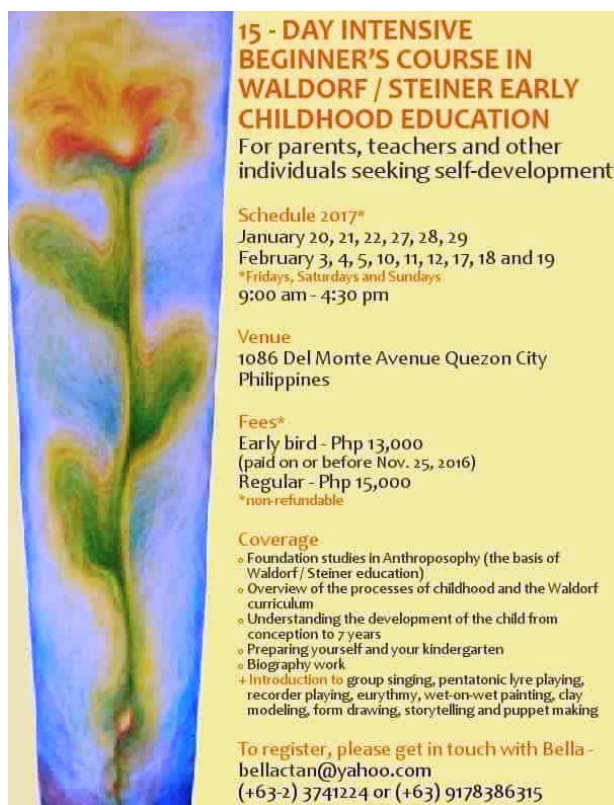
THE ACACIA WALDORF
SCHOOL
MUSIC AND ARTS
COMMITTEE
PRESENTS

CHAMBER MUSIC
AT THE FARM SHED | SERIES 3

A HIGHLY INTERACTIVE CHILDREN'S CONCERT FEATURING
THE ST. SCHOLASTICA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

DECEMBER 3, 2016 AT 6PM | THE FARM SHED AT ACACIA WALDORF SCHOOL | ADMISSION: P350

BRING THE FAMILY!



**15 - DAY INTENSIVE
BEGINNER'S COURSE IN
WALDORF / STEINER EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
For parents, teachers and other
individuals seeking self-development

Schedule 2017*
January 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29
February 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 and 19
*Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays
9:00 am - 4:30 pm

Venue
1086 Del Monte Avenue Quezon City
Philippines

Fees*
Early bird - Php 13,000
(paid on or before Nov. 25, 2016)
Regular - Php 15,000
*non-refundable

Coverage

- Foundation studies in Anthroposophy (the basis of Waldorf / Steiner education)
- Overview of the processes of childhood and the Waldorf curriculum
- Understanding the development of the child from conception to 7 years
- Preparing yourself and your kindergarten
- Biography work
- + Introduction to group singing, pentatonic lyre playing, recorder playing, eurythmy, wet-on-wet painting, clay modeling, form drawing, storytelling and puppet making

To register, please get in touch with Bella - bellactan@yahoo.com
(+63-2) 3741224 or (+63) 9178386315

HIGHLIGHTS

The Light of Advent by Panjee Tapales

Celebrating festivals in Waldorf schools helps us discover the significance of these particular seasons. The essence of the Advent Season daily unfolds as we consciously observe the changes in nature and our surroundings. We begin to experience darkness and its own substance and feel that sense of inner hope for something great to happen. As the community anticipates this beautiful journey, we are thankful for the time shared with us by one of our very supportive pioneer parents, Panjee Tapales. In her talk on the Advent festival Panjee spoke about how her children appreciated the way she celebrated the season at home, the living Advent table she prepared with much care and creativity and which she slowly built up and transformed every week. Every night, the family sang songs, read stories and lighted the candles which taught them all the values of waiting and preparation.

Last November 10, Panjee showed us a sample of the Advent table she prepared for her children. On the first week, stones and shells representing the mineral kingdom would magically appear on the table; on the second week, plants would appear representing the plant kingdom; on the third week the sheep and cows would appear representing the animal kingdom and on the fourth week, the shepherds, Mary and Joseph would appear representing humanity.



This beautiful and solemn yearly tradition served as her meditation which accompanied her family towards the Christmas season.



Talk on Embracing Our Special Needs Individuals by Olive Medina



The Special Needs Committee headed by Mommy Lani Melendres spearheaded the talk on "Embracing our Special Needs Individuals". The talk was given by one of our active and dedicated parents, Mommy Olive Medina. She shared the importance of inclusion and respect for persons with special needs. There are so many different ways to show how we can help them and one is to understand their condition and carry them through their school life. The Special Needs Committee looks forward to a bigger audience for their next talks. These children are a gift to us and a greater awareness and understanding of their condition is an essential part of a healthy and loving community.

Kawayan Class 8 Play—"Fiddler on the Roof"



The students, teachers and cast of the play, 'Fiddler on the Roof' made a tremendous impact on the community with their awesome and outstanding performances last Nov 24 and 25. And a musical at that! This play was the culmination of all the years of acting, singing and staging class plays throughout their entire grade school. Indeed, "From a seed grows a tree." These Kawayan actors have certainly matured and were almost unrecognisable. And what did it take? Hard work, focus and dedication from the cast, the genuine confidence and belief of one loving teacher in her beloved students, and of course, as always, the presence of much laughter, fun and joy! Thank you, Kawayan!

EVENTS

Science Week

Science from the Latin word *scientia* meaning *Knowledge*. Oo's, Ah's and Aha's filled the grounds and the science lab as Acacia conducted its very first Science Week. The children were filled with excitement and amazement as they conducted and witnessed the different, carefully chosen experiments for all ages. Experiments demonstrating the principles of Chromatography, Inertia, of how typhoons occur, of surface tension among many others were never so much fun and left the children wanting to know and experience more. We ended the week with a very creative challenge presented to both students and teachers alike, The Egg Dropping Challenge. They were asked to create a vessel for a raw egg that they would drop from the second floor of the high school building without the egg breaking. Impossible!!!! Not at all! We had a few successful creations. One student even designed a little parachute. Yes, all is possible when one is driven and inspired! Of course Gringo, our farm pig was happiest of all as he was given a lot of raw eggs for his meal that day. How amazing and orderly is this beautiful world of ours. Wonder and knowledge of her laws can only inspire in us a deeper love and reverence for her and guide us to become more responsible stewards of this world we call Home.



Advent Fair 2016





FEATURED ARTICLE



RESILIENCE by Christof Wiechert

Disturbing reports are circulating around the world, always in the murky twilight of so-called 'facts.' According to the rumors, or indeed facts, that we are dealing with, a disproportionate number of war veterans commit suicide on their return to the USA from their tour in Iraq. After the Vietnam War, accounts came in from various sides of how soldiers were able to cope again with everyday civilian life only with great effort. People in Europe are also worried about the NATO soldiers' ability to deal with trauma when they are in peace-keeping missions abroad. The question is, How does an individual cope with traumatic or otherwise shattering events in his or her life? This question is just as valid for children as for adults.

The research that deals with this is research into resilience—research into the overcoming, the processing of, 'insurmountable' experiences, research into the soul's (mental) power of resistance (resilience = to spring back, to rebound).

This research began after World War II, when people were faced with the fact that there were those who inwardly overcame their experiences of war or prison and were able to resume a 'normal' life once their soul wounds were healed. However, at the same time, they realized that there were those who never really overcame these experiences and instead kept suffering from the trauma affecting them.

The question arose on what this ability to inwardly overcome experiences depends. What makes one child strong in taking life's knocks, what makes another child react so much more sensitively? From regions where people have been hit by great natural disasters, we hear relatively little of the problems that they have in inwardly coming to terms with them.

Research into resilience has arrived at several conclusions that have considerable significance for educators in particular. The first issue was to follow up on the question of whether the soul's power of resistance may be explained by heredity. If the parents have inner strength, is it passed on to their offspring? After numerous studies the conclusion was reached that this is not the case. Resilience is not inherited.

However, resilience is definitely connected with the experiences of the early years of childhood. One researcher thinks it is a matter of the first four or five years, while another thinks the whole time of childhood is significant, that is, until the tenth year. Leaving aside the different viewpoints, there is agreement that the soul's power of resistance, or resilience, is nurtured and developed, if children have had the following five experiences.

A reliable, stable relationship with one person

This person does not necessarily need to be the mother, but it is necessary for it to be a single person in the beginning. Later on this person may be joined by others. Neurologists also point out that at the start of life there must be only one person to relate to. Later on, there may be a second, followed by a third or fourth person, who is added to the circle of people the child relates to, but just not in the beginning.

The growing child needs the experience of an authoritative upbringing

This means that the child needs the fundamental experience that others (involved in its upbringing) decide for him/her, and that he/she is completely relieved of the necessity of making decisions. It is simply from the experience that others make the right decisions that the child gains a sense of security in life, in other words, trust. This experience cannot be estimated too highly. In the first place, others decide what is good or bad for me, what is right and wrong, healthy and unhealthy. A deep feeling of security comes about: I can leave it up to the world to take over; I can rely upon my surroundings in all circumstances.

Children need the experience of learning through example. This has to do with two qualities, firstly, a moral quality that makes a deep impression: What the child experiences through the example of the behavior of those around him should be completely compatible with what is demanded of him. If the child is forbidden to watch television and the people he relates to watch unlimited amounts of television, the child's understanding of his surroundings as a totality cracks open. You can add many other examples.



FEATURED ARTICLE



There is something else at stake too. When the Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura discovered the mirror neurons and their activity in human beings, the interesting question arose as to whether, in general, the child learns with his/her intellect or from imitation, from “doing it like this too.” Bandura argues vehemently that the young child learns from imitating, not through cognition, something he documents impressively through the process of learning to speak.

To date, in the practice of teaching, this most significant idea, the idea that children learn in a more carefree way through imitation rather than laboriously drumming things into their heads, is scarcely to be found. In this case we are talking about children up to the age of ten. Through the process of a child’s learning, for example, to do arithmetic by developing habits rather than through the intellect, self-confidence is developed as he learns ‘externally’; he feels affirmed through the sure habit.

The research described here does not derive from an anthroposophical-anthropological milieu, but from conventional research. It is, therefore, legitimate to emphasize that, according to Steiner, from around the twelfth year cognitive learning takes on more and more significance. Only with Steiner is this whole complex called “becoming capable of forming judgments.” In other words, the learning process is guided and determined by the child’s own power of discrimination, no longer by habit.

Children need a qualitative experience of time

What is the difference between morning and evening for our feeling about life? What is the difference between autumn and spring, summer and winter for our feeling about life? Within a Christian context, how does the Easter festival differ from Christmas? Or within an Islamic context, how does the sugar festival differ from the beginning of Ramadan? How does the child experience the ordering of time, how do we help him to experience the ordering of time? Here is one quite simple example: when I was still quite young, people in Holland celebrated the Queen’s birthday at the end of spring. This was the season when we used to visit the annual fair and celebrate the day we would be given cotton candy on a wooden stick. In our minds as children this cotton candy developed into the quintessence of the celebration of the Queen’s birthday.

Lots of biographies describe rituals that are linked to the seasons. There is also the simple fact of going to bed. Is it a random activity because we are tired, or is there a small ritual belonging to this moment when we take our leave of the day that is entirely different from waking up in the morning?

We can see from the way in which this fact is reflected in Waldorf kindergartens and schools that these festivals are not celebrated just for the sake of it, but rather out of some insight. Whoever wants to give shape to his or her life, whoever refuses to be ‘lived’ has to shape time.

The child needs a definite surplus of positive school experiences. The fifth condition from research into resilience scarcely requires an explanation. Nonetheless, it ought to be pointed out that for long periods of time (times which are not yet over) the question whether pupils are left with more positive than negative experiences from learning, from going to school, is considered incidental. This needs to be seen properly. Many school traumas will accompany the individual for his or her whole life, wounds of which the school (or the teachers) are often not aware. If they were aware of them, the schools would set things up differently. In other words, whatever basis is laid down for the mood of soul at school plays a key role in the memory of individuals for their lives. This is an important reason for schools and teachers to ask themselves how the pupils are faring. This is by no means to deny that school is a place where pupils can go through a crisis; this will also need to happen. What is at stake is the overcoming of difficulties and whether pupils feel sufficiently accepted by the teachers.

We will have no difficulty, after reading the above account, in establishing the basic requirements of the art of education. That is to say, the art of education is based on resilience. We are dealing with one aspect of resilience. Another aspect is concerned with the so-called education for dealing with emergencies. How do we help children who have survived natural disasters or war disasters? Nowadays, we know that what enables children to work through trauma more than anything else is art or artistic activity. (This can be gleaned from the Chengdu Waldorf school report.) This fact has been documented in lots of places and it confirms the healing power that can come from art. Art needs to become a normal part of every form of education.

Christof Wiechert served as the head of the Pedagogical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland from 2000-2010. His task was to encourage, advise, and inspire Waldorf educators around the world. He did this with great energy, wisdom, insight, and humor. During his tenure, Christof Wiechert visited North America many times, lecturing at conferences, giving workshops, visiting schools and teacher education institutes. At the end of 2010, Wiechert retired as head of the Pedagogical Section, although he remains in Dornach and continues his work for Waldorf Education. (SOURCE: <http://www.waldorftoday.com/2011/08/resilience-by-christof-wiechert/>)