



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

AWS Bulletin

SY 2015-2016 — Issue No. 10 (February 2016)

MESSAGE FROM THE COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

February 26, 2016

Dear Acacia Community,

Time is flying so quickly. We have arrived at the most hectic time of the school year when class plays, year-end presentations and camps take place one after the other. In the last 2 months, the grade school classes performed one successful and enchanting play after another. The high school held a soulful Poetry Night late in January, and in early February, on a very wet Saturday, AWS held its first Senior Project Presentation where our graduating Seniors had the daunting task of presenting their individual research projects to the community. These young adults have come full circle. Their gifts to the world are priceless as they embark on their new journey. It was a blessed day to remember. We as a school community have so much to be grateful for.

February, the month of Valentine's Day, is also known as the month of hearts. It was so timely that our beloved mentor from New Zealand, Mr. David Simpson, came for a brief visit at this busiest time of the year to observe classes, mentor teachers and give a talk on "The Importance of Rest", which he simply equates to Rhythm. Where does one find the time to rest in our busy, fast-paced schedules? We can turn to our hearts for the answer. Our heart is a steady and powerful muscle that is at rest when it is beating in its constant rhythm. Stopping for long pauses to take a break is not an option. And when it beats arrhythmically (with a lack of rhythm) for long periods of time, it tires.

By Rhythm, we mean a steady, repetitive and consistent flow of daily, weekly, monthly or yearly activities that allow for a rhythmic breathing in and breathing out. Nature gives us its indications, with the rising and setting of the sun, the ebb and flow of the tide, the seasons of the year, festivals, even our own breathing. We can observe this rhythmical movement of activities in all Waldorf kindergartens, so essential is it to the young child. But for this healthy rhythm to truly live in the children, David stressed that the adults around them need to practice this principle themselves in their own lives. We must be the example. And our hearts remind us that in this hectic world of technology and growing obligations, we, too, can choose to find rest and good health by staying loyal to a constant rhythmical lifestyle.

With our warmest regards,
Trina Galvez
For the College of Teachers

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

February

- 2-3 "Demeter and Persephone",
Camia Class 5 Play, 11AM, AWS
Michael Hall
- 5 Annual Summer Outing (Kinder
Classes)
- 6 Kalachuchi Class 12, Senior
Project Presentations
- 8 Chinese New Year Holiday
- 13 New Parents' Orientation (9-
11AM)
- 15-19 Visiting Mentor, David Simpson
- 17 Camia Class 5 Greek Olympics
- 18-19 "Iduna's Apple" Rosal Class 4
Play, 11AM, AWS Michael Hall
- 21-27 Mirasol Class 8 Camping/Class
Trip
- 24-26 Health Break (No Classes)
- 25 Edsa Day (National Holiday)

March

- 3-4 Rosal Class 4 Camping
- 9 Easter Talk by Panjee Tapales
- 13-14 Anahaw Class 6 Camping
- 14-15 Camia Class 5 Camping
- 16 Kinder Last Day
- 17 Year End Bahaginan/Last Day
- 18 GS Graduation (Mirasol Class)
- 19 US Graduation (Kalachuchi Class)
- 28-29 Faculty Evaluation/Planning
- 28-April 2 10th World Teachers' Conference

ANNOUNCEMENTS

School Year 2015-2016 will soon come to its end and we would like to know how many of our students will confirm their enrollment for School Year 2016-2017. We are already accepting new students/ transferees. To ensure a slot for your child, please fill out the reservation form. Sign and return it to the school cashier with a reservation fee of Php 10,000.00 not later than March 22. This amount is **non-refundable** and **non-transferable** but deductible from your tuition fee.

Your reservation fee does not necessarily mean that the student is officially enrolled. We will strictly adhere to the **first come, first serve** policy of the school. Failure to enroll your child on the specified dates of enrollment automatically forfeits his/her slot.

Our enrollment schedule as follows:

- March 1 – April 15, 2016 Early bird with 5% tuition fee discount
April 15 – 22, 2016 from 9 – 4 PM
May 02 – 13, 2016 from 9 – 4 PM



OUR MISSION

The Acacia Waldorf School mission is the Education of the Child: Head, Heart and Hands. We envision a school where children are nurtured to become loving, respectful, free, courageous and committed individuals who will become good leaders and citizens of the world.

OUR HISTORY

The Acacia Waldorf School opened its doors in 2003 amid trees, flowers and birds in the quiet countryside of Sta. Rosa, Laguna. It was a dream that began in the heart of its founders - - mothers who longed for a more balanced education for their children. After training in the Waldorf/Steiner kindergarten approach, they knew they had found the kind of education that put the total development of their children first. From nurturing only a small community of children, the Acacia Waldorf School is now a school home to many children whose parents believe in our quest of *helping the world, one child at a time.*

THE EDUCATION

Acacia Waldorf School offers an education strongly founded on a spiritual understanding of the human being. This education is based on anthroposophy, the scientific research of the Austrian scientist and philosopher, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925).

In Waldorf/Steiner education children are educated through beauty, wisdom and truth through which they can reach their fullest potential. It endeavors to equally educate the head, the heart and the hands.

Waldorf/Steiner education recognizes three phases in the development of the child:

The first phase, from 0-7 years, is that of willing wherein the children learn through imitation and doing.

The second phase, from 7-14 years, is that of feeling; this methodology works with a combination of imagination, the academics and artistic activities.

The third phase, from 14-21 years, is that of thinking wherein there is greater focus on intellectual concepts and the development of judgment and clarity.

The Acacia Waldorf School recognizes that how lessons are taught makes the big difference in a child's learning experience. True learning is a life-long process of discovery that equips the whole human being. Here, that passion to work and discover is nurtured and celebrated in every child.

Waldorf/Steiner education sees the child not as an empty vessel to be filled by adult and worldly concepts, but as a being of unfolding capacities who must be nurtured so that he may become his own person - balanced in head, heart and hands, fully spiritual and consciously engaged in society and the world.

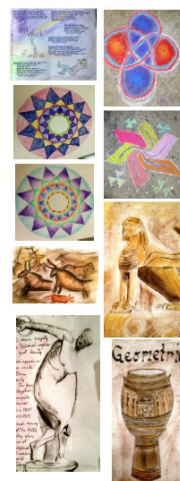
The natural surroundings and clean fresh air here at Acacia Waldorf School serve as vital support for an educational approach that differs from other schools. Waldorf/Steiner curriculum addresses the needs of the growing child according to his individual stage of development. It seeks to awaken the child's capacities that enable him to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

"It aims to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction in their lives."

- Robert H. M. Co-Owner, Waldorf Education Research Institute



"Nurture the child with reverence,
Educate him with love and
let him forth in freedom!"
Rudolf Steiner



HIGHLIGHTS

Surrender to Love



A celebration of love and gratitude hosted by one of our pioneer parents Yvette Manotoc last January 27 at The Crucible, SM Megamall. She discovered her artistic prowess when she founded the Acacia Waldorf School as the school for her only son. Through this simple and generous gesture of thanksgiving, she



chose to give back to the community. All proceeds were donated to AWS and Mary Joan Fajardo (mentor and teacher from Manila Waldorf School).

Several AWS senior students, teachers and staff were there to support this special event.

Senior Project Presentation

Again another milestone. On February 6, AWS held its first Senior Project Presentations. The Kalachuchi students presented their senior projects to the AWS Community of students, teachers, parents and guests. The audience listened intently as each student confidently presented his or her chosen topic. It was indeed an enriching and gratifying experience for all those present. We are so proud of you, our dear Pioneer Kalachuchi Class, for your courageous contributions and for blazing the trail for all seniors to come.

"Senior Projects are a high point of the year. At the end of the junior year, students choose a topic for independent study or practical work. By the first week of March, they have prepared a comprehensive research paper and artistic project, which they offer in a public presentation to the school. The seniors stand on stage individually, present their topic in a lecture format, and take questions from parents, teachers and fellow students. This is a festive occasion for the whole community as well as an often-poignant rite of passage when the students surpass their teachers; in effect, they become teachers for the whole community as they share a topic about which they are passionate and of which they have expert knowledge." (<http://chicagowaldorf.org/curriculum/high-school/grade-12>)

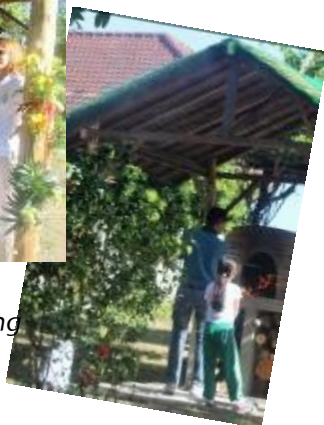


EVENTS

Brick Oven by Class 3 Santan



Class 3 Santan students smiled after the culminating activity. The oven was also used on the same day.



The Brick oven was the housebuilding project chosen by Class 3 Santan. The students and parents had a great time under the sun and worked hand-in-hand to accomplished this special task.

David Simpson

Our dear and beloved mentor, David Simpson, was back for a brief visit this February. He has been coming to AWS yearly since 2012 to mentor our teachers,



observe classes and occasionally handle a block or math practice classes in the grade school. Mr. Simpson has over 30 years of experience as a Waldorf Class Teacher and High School Teacher in New Zealand. Now semi-retired, he travels around Asia visiting the growing number of Waldorf School initiatives and giving them teacher training support. On his last day in school, David gave a most enlightening talk to the parents and teachers on the "Importance of Rest". We will be seeing David again in the coming school year.

Area Meet



Congrats to our Acacia Varsity team for winning 2nd place in the Area Meet hosted by DLSU last February 25th. This is AWS's 2nd time to join the Area Meet. Our Varsity Team valiantly challenged the long standing top basketball teams of DLSU and DBS.

Public Orientation

Last February 13, a public orientation was held in school at Michael Hall for new parents who are considering AWS for their children. An overview of the Steiner/Waldorf curriculum was presented with emphasis on how it was designed to support the stages of development of the child. We started the day with a morning verse and morning circle with games and movement, as we do in our classes. The orientation ended with a simple, enchanting puppet story.



FEATURED ARTICLE

The Impact of Television (Media) on Child Development

Using Rudolf Steiner's model of the 12 (Twelve) Senses as a basis and linking this to recent findings in medical and psychological literature.

Should my child watch TV, play computerized games, be exposed to learning based programmes, use an iPad or iPhone? How much is too much? Will my child be deprived of vital learning if we do not allow access to these media?

These are the questions with which we are confronted in this age when visual media invade so much of our lives. It is suggested that the average child in Europe will have spent 1 year of 24 hour days, watching screen media by the time they are 7 years old and 4 years by the time they are 18. This represents a huge percentage of waking time.

There have been many books and papers written since the early 1980's including "The Plug in Drug" by Marie Wynn and "Endangered Minds" by Jane Healey, showing the disadvantages and dangers of screen viewing. It has been easy for people to dismiss this information as unscientific and not relevant to the wide range of media and computerized learning possibilities now available. Research has been continuing, however, in particular since the year 2000, especially in relation to medical and developmental concerns. A paper prepared for the European Parliament in 2010 by Dr Aric Sigman gives this as a closing statement:

"There is a 'dose-response' relationship between the age at which children start watching screen media, the number of daily hours they watch and negative effects on physical health and well-being irrespective of the quality of the screen material. Screen time must now be considered a major public health issue and reducing screen time must become the new priority for child health".

Also in this article:

"Television viewing hurts the development of children under three years old and poses a certain number of risks, encouraging passivity, slow language acquisition, over-excitedness, troubles with sleep and concentration as well as dependence on screens.....even when it involves channels specifically aimed at them. (High Audiovisual Council 2008)

Why is screen viewing so damaging in the first three years? New studies show specific results including changes to brain cell structure and function with health implications which span the lifetime.

The infant arrives in the world completely dependent on its care givers - In the course of the first three years three major developmental challenges must be mastered - walking, speaking and thinking (memory, consequence). Thinking and knowing brings with it the beginnings of a sense of self as separate from the world and from other people.

The young child is completely open and receptive to the sensory world. He/she cannot shut off to unwanted stimuli of any kind. The love of parents and other close caregivers surrounds children to support and shield them through the huge growth and development which takes place at this time.

When we describe the impact of the sensory world on child development it is helpful to use the 12 senses model which was proposed by Rudolf Steiner prior to 1923. He spoke of four will senses which have their most important development during the first seven years. These are the senses of touch, life, movement and balance. They are the senses which inform us about our own body. Then there are four senses which allow us to perceive the world around us which bring aspects of antipathy and sympathy to our experience. These are the senses of smell, taste, vision and warmth. Finally we have four senses which facilitate our interaction with other people. Our ability to learn, to share ideas, to be truly human, depends on our senses of hearing, word, thought and the sense of ego.

During the first years we develop the will senses which affirm our sense of self.

TOUCH is nurturing, calming, defining and vital to development. Babies who are not lovingly touched and nurtured do not grow or thrive. Screen viewing is passive and has no tactile component. Children are always irritable after screen viewing and need to fight and bump into the world to re find their bodily self.



FEATURED ARTICLE



The **LIFE sense** is the sense of well being and encompasses all the rhythmic aspects of our body and our activity. The infant's heart beat and breathing mature throughout childhood. The digestive tract must mature so that it can transition from milk to solid food; sleeping and waking need to be established. The child's brain is only gradually building connections between actions, emotions and meaning. Studies now show that children exposed to screen viewing from infancy have delayed development, sleeping is disturbed, excitably or passivity is induced and crucial brain pathways, associated with socialization and problem solving, are underdeveloped. Rhythms associated with eating and daily routines give way to the demand of the screen programme.

The results of studies also show that background TV exposure is as damaging as direct viewing.

The **MOVEMENT** sense arises from information from muscles and joints and is used to inform the brain where the legs, arms and fingers are so that we can learn to move with skill. The infant must 'grow down' into its limbs, down to the toes and the fingertips in the critical first year which culminates in the child walking. The interaction with significant care givers is vital in this process. As you move, the baby moves, as you speak the babies' body echo's the movement in a loving devotion to everything that you do. This loving bond is what calls the baby into activity. A person on a screen cannot do this. A baby cannot interpret movement on a screen. Our movement is ensouled and embodied with emotion. We move with love, with anger, with care. Every aspect of a gesture is taken in, later to be mirrored back as the child is the master of its own movements and its relationship to space. Studies show decreasing interpersonal contact time and ever increasing eye to screen time which is impacting on the development of skilled movement.

We stand upright in **EQUILIBRIUM** having mastered gravity and the challenges of balance. At birth the infant cannot even raise its head and yet, over the first year, gravity is conquered and uprightness achieved. An unobserved but vital part of this balancing process is the integration or working together of the two sides of the body - which culminates in a dominant side being established and with this specialization of the functions of each side of the brain. Recent research shows the detrimental effect of screen viewing on children's motor skills development with a reduction in motivation to move. Equally importantly amongst the changes to the brain structure are reductions in

the size and condition of brain cells in the orbito-frontal (thinking) part of the brain as well in the corpus callosum which is the bridge which links and unites the two sides of the brain and is vital to integration, the establishment of dominance and speed of processing information.

The second group of senses described by Rudolf Steiner have significance in relation to the life of feeling. They are awake from birth, but become refined as conscious senses during the second seven year period. These are the senses of smell, taste, vision and warmth.

SMELL and TASTE build our first memories in relation to our closest care givers. Our essential well-being depends on knowing whether we are hungry or not, knowing if what we take in is good or not. Screen viewing means that the metabolism is slower and fewer calories are burned. Children are more likely to be overweight. Internal cues telling us we have eaten enough are not registered and over eating is likely to result. One study has found hours of television viewing to be independently associated with percentage of body fat at seven years, every hour of additional viewing equating to an additional kilo of body weight.

VISION is represented in the brain by hundreds of thousands of light sensitive cells. Vision is a very awake sense through which we move out of ourselves to take in the form and activity of our world. Our ability to perceive depth, the form and the relationship of objects to each other, to perceive movement and to judge our own movement in relation to movement in the environment, is not innate, it must be learned. The infant learns to perceive visual space through doing - by learning to crawl, to stand, to fall and get up again, to hop, jump, run and skip and by watching the movement of important people in the environment from the earliest age. The eyes need to move in unison and independently from the head movement, for skill to develop in hand/ eye integration.

Looking at a screen of any sort requires that the viewer is able to interpret what is passively seen. Infants do not have this ability, but can be fascinated by light and colour. Eyes are static in this process of looking and the eye muscles are not exercised.

(Please refer to this website for the complete article: <http://www.waldorflibrary.org/articles/1225-the-impact-of-television-media-on-child-development>)

Robyn Ritchie has worked as a Paediatric Occupational Therapist and Extra Lesson Therapist for more than 35 years.

OTHER EVENTS

Almost 5 years have passed since the 11th of March 2011 and yet all of those who will be affected by the nuclear disaster in Fukushima have not yet been born.



On the 11th of March 2016, you are invited to take part in a deed for healing of the land and people affected by this disaster.

At 7:30pm (your local time) come together with friends and colleagues for 3 Hallelujahs. You need not be a eurythmist (but it is a good excuse to find one to show you how, or help on the day).

Last year we know that people in Japan, Philippines, South Africa, Switzerland, Germany, England, Mallorca, Ecuador and America took part.

The vision is that on the 11th of March 2016 the Hallelujahs will take place all over the earth, beginning in Japan, moving over Asia, Africa Europe and into the Americas with the time change.

Please post a message if you plan to participate, with where you or your group will be (so that others might be able to join you).

Feel free to pass this page on to people whom you think would be happy to know about it.

Heartfelt wishes from

Nicholas
in South Devon, England



'Why do Waldorf kindergarten teachers talk to the children in a singing manner?'

'Why are children are handling real knives in slicing vegetables as early as kindergarten?'

'Why don't Waldorf schools seem to teach reading at the same time as traditional or progressive schools?'

'What is Eurythmy?'

'Does Waldorf education prepare children for the "real" world?'

Whether new to Waldorf or a Waldorf parent for many years, we always have questions on the hows and whys of this pedagogy that we chose or are considering for our child. We hope to find answers to these questions and to address our other concerns through a Parent's Circle. To launch the Manila Waldorf School PARENT'S Circle, Ms. Mary Joan Fajardo, a pioneer of Waldorf Education in the Philippines and founder of the Manila Waldorf School, will open her home to parents to answer questions on Waldorf education. She will share her experiences with children in the 20-plus years as a Waldorf class teacher and mentor.

Join us at PARENT'S CIRCLE this Saturday, January 30, 9am-11am, and every last Saturday of each month thereafter.

No. 24, 9th Street, New Manila Rolling Hills Subdivision, New Manila, Quezon City

Please bring food to share. Open to all parents. Feel free to bring your friends and family who are interested.

Energy exchange: Your donation in any amount is welcome.

10TH WORLD TEACHERS' CONFERENCE
Overcoming Resistance. Courage for an Independent Spiritual Life

10. WELT-LEHRER- UND ERZIEHERTAGUNG
Gewinnen am Widerstand. Mut zu freiem Geistesleben

This endeavour is shared every day anew in kindergartens and schools around the globe. From the very beginning the aim of the Waldorf school were social as well as educational.

The 10th World Teachers' and Educators' Conference will focus on this theme to encourage schools to stand up for their ideal of an independent spiritual life. A free spiritual life needs people who strive in freedom.

We each of us have the possibility today to keep a part of our soul free from external influences. This enhances individualization.

New social forces will emerge if we manage to defend the soul's intrinsic future impulses against the resistance and anti-social trends of our time.

We are looking forward to working with you at the 10th Teachers' and Educators' Conference on finding the courage to tackle the tasks that lie ahead.

Die Schulbewegung hat in ihrem fast 100-jährigen Dasein viel geleistet. Ihr Herzentrappen ist es, herausfordernden Menschen den Weg zu ihrer inneren Aufgabe zu öffnen und in ihnen die Voraussetzungen aufzubauen, ihre Ideale dem Leben angemessen zu verankern.

Dieses Anliegen wird täglich neu in Kindergärten und Schulen rund um die Erde umgesetzt. Von ersten Schulung an lobby in der Waldorfschule das Ideal, dass eine Erziehung nicht nur eine pädagogische, sondern auch eine soziale Aufgabe lösen will.

Die 10. Welt-Lehrer- und Erzieherstagung will hier ansetzen, damit die Schulen in voller Offenheit für ihr Ideal des freien Geisteslebens einstehen können. Ein freies Geistesleben können nur nach Freiheit strebende Menschen schaffen.

In jedem von uns ist heute die Möglichkeit verankert, einen Teil seiner Seele frei von jedem Einfluss der Außenwelt zu halten. Das fördert die Individualisierung. Gelingt es uns, die in ihr liegenden Zukunftsimpulse gegen Widerstände und antisoziale Tendenzen durchzusetzen, entstehen neue Kräfte für das soziale Leben.

Wir freuen uns auf die gemeinsame Arbeit mit Ihnen an der 10. Welt-Lehrer- und Erzieherstagung. Sie wird Mut für die anstehenden Aufgaben schaffen.

P.F. Orndorf-Ratz C. v. Ritz

28 MARCH - 2 APRIL 2016 GOETHEANUM
Pädagogische Sektion am Goetheanum

MARCH 28 - APRIL 2 Goetheanum