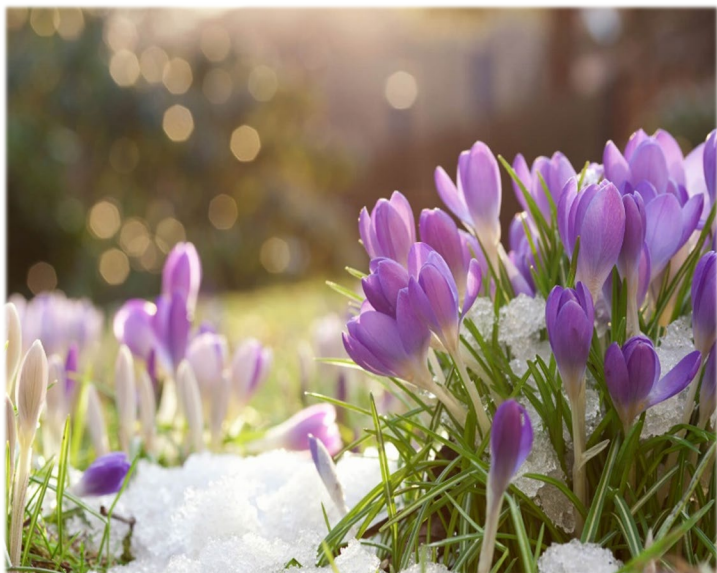




the wise connection

Issue 36

April 2021



From the WISE Office

Dear WISE Families,

Spring has sprung at the WISE and it is glorious in all of its thaw and mud and promise. Please ensure that you pack an extra set of clothing and send your child with appropriate outerwear, such as splash pants and rain boots, so they can fully enjoy the weather.

Within this newsletter, you'll find information about our Gateways Conference. We are so pleased to be able to bring it to you virtually this year, as it's a wonderful opportunity to learn new things and come together as a community.

We hope that you enjoy the change in weather and unfolding of the season as you return from a restful break.

With blessings,

The WISE Admin Team 

Waldorf Independent School of Edmonton (WISE)



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WISE Facebook Page:

[Waldorf Independent School of Edmonton](#)

Facebook Parent Group:

[The WISE Parent Connection](#)

The Waldorf Education Society of Edmonton respectfully acknowledges that we are located in Amiskwaciwâskahikan, or so-called Edmonton, on Treaty 6 territory. The land that the Waldorf Independent School of Edmonton sits on was once Métis scrip land. Scrip was given to Métis people in exchange for their land rights. The land of Treaty 6 territory was once a gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples, including the Cree, Blackfoot, Metis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway/ Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant communities. Our faculty, staff, board, and school community commit to working toward reconciliation and decolonization.

Important Dates:

Apr 5 Easter Monday, No Programming

Apr 6 Remote Learning Day

Apr 30 No school for nursery & kinder. Half day for grades

Apr 30-May 1 Gateways

May 3 PD Day, no programming

May 9 Bulk Order closes

May 14 Bulk Order pickup

May 24 Victoria Day, no programming

May 25 Remote learning day

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Donation Appreciation

Thank you to Sienna Cashion Dextrase and David McWeeny at the U of A Wilson Climbing Centre, who have donated their retired ropes to the WISE. We are repurposing these ropes to build more class skipping rope sets for our students as part of our meaningful movement initiatives across the grades! If you are interested in summer climbing camps, please follow the link to their programs.

<https://www.ualberta.ca/campus-community-recreation/our-programs/climbing.html> 🌱



Warmth and Weather – Free Shipping!

Need new rain gear? Want to get the warm layers ready for next winter? Orders placed between April 2 - 16 qualify for free shipping to the school (enter code wise21).

Check out the catalogue at:

<https://warmthandweather.ca/?ref=WISE> 🌱





Gateways

Making a virtual return this year, Gateways is here to share some wonderful information for our WISE families and the general public. This year will feature [Betty Staley](#), who will give a Friday night Keynote presentation, as well as a Saturday follow-up session. We will finish up with your choice of workshop to ease the pandemic-weary soul.

FRIDAY NIGHT KEYNOTE:

Tending the Spark: Lighting the Future for Middle School Students

Betty walks us through some key questions: In the midst of changes in children, parents, and teachers, how can we develop healthy schools? She will share how earlier puberty is creating a "Vulnerability Gap" for our children and how we can respond by developing the values for the "Civilizing Mind".



SATURDAY MORNING FOLLOW-UP TALK:

How to help middle school students walk the tightrope over the minefield of danger and opportunity. Betty will lead us to explore how popular culture, consumerism, materialism, technology, and sexual imagery are affecting middle school children and what we can do about it.

SATURDAY WORKSHOPS:

We have five great workshops to choose from, including more from Betty Staley and options to nourish your creative and contemplative soul. See [registration information](#) for all the details. 🌱



Highlights from “Raising Resilient Children” by Jack Petrash, WISE Parent Engagement Presentation - February 24, 2021

The Calgary Waldorf School (CWS) and the WISE were grateful to have [Jack Petrash](#) engage with our schools as part of our joint Waldorf Community Outreach & Education series this year.

While the presentation was not recorded, many families expressed how positive the presentation and discussion were. This highlight reel hopes to capture some of the discussion's richness and to share positive takeaways with the whole community, whether they were able to attend or not. In a year without in-person festivals and events, we continue to prioritize community engagement opportunities at the WISE such as Class parent nights and the upcoming Gateways conference. Deepening our understanding of Waldorf education fosters meaningful community connections and invites individual and collective growth as parents to meet our children as our highest endeavour!

Jack Petrash began discussing early childhood development (ages 0-7) and encouraging will-force development towards human resiliency. He spoke of the importance of strengthening one's constitution with lots of time outside in nature and engaging the limbs as being essential aspects of developing one's constitutional resiliency that moves with us through life. Through these natural and playful childhood experiences, the younger child learns how to handle unexpected events.

In a young child, building courage and developing the will forces are experienced as perseverance, fortitude, and determination. The will is fostered by the adults in a child's life through conscious reinforcement of regular rhythms day after day with younger children. Parenting young children requires us to find and develop our own will and perseverance in a given situation and fortitude to build these daily habits. This security of reliable daily rhythms and boundaries can express itself in the health of the child's inner world.

Jack comments that he has observed that children today are much more anxious, worried and fearful than 40 years ago. He references Wendy Mogel's book "Blessings of a Skinned Knee" https://www.wendymogel.com/books/item/the_blessing_of_a_skinned_knee.

Jack discussed supporting resiliency in the next phase of childhood by actively tending to the feeling life of the 7 to 14-year-old. The family stories we share, songs we sing or music we play, and creating rooted family traditions such as birthday and holiday celebrations, can expand emotional resiliency. Expressing regular delight, laughter and joy in the home allows children to feel more comfortable stretching their limits and building emotional resilience.

Highlights from “Raising Resilient Children” by Jack Petrash, WISE Parent Engagement Presentation - (continued)

He gave an example about how we can create the circumstances that help parents respond well to a child by giving ourselves time. When we are rushed or late, we don't tend to give our children the response they need or deserve, and we can become sharp and impatient. Something small that could be managed well with time on our side can be transformed into a seemingly major inconvenience by a stressed parent. Giving ourselves time allows for a very different and usually more pleasant experience for both parent and child. He also shared how having early bedtimes supports healthy sleep rhythms and gives parents essential reflective time at the end of the day. Having space to reflect and identify how we would like to shift and adjust in the ways we respond to our kids is an essential aspect of our growth potential as parents.

Leading the presentation into the development of the thinking life that dominates the 14 to 21-year-old, he spoke about how right action leads to right thinking. Expressing that, when youth are not sure what to think, providing the framework and direction towards right action can lead the way to right thinking. He shared how vital it is to ask children what they think and sincerely listen, without judgment. He elaborated that teenagers should be able to think whatever they want without being judged or criticized. He also highlighted that thinking whatever they want is not the same as being able to do whatever they want. He shared his experience that teenagers change their opinions like they change their clothes. In his students and his children, he has observed that the teenager often clarifies and figures out what they believe by saying it out loud, to hear what it sounds like, to try it on for size. We don't need to react to everything they say; they are figuring it out. It is more helpful to them to listen and not try to correct their thinking. He suggested that when a child is entering teenagerhood, they already know precisely what you think. At this stage of development, youth are seeking their own experiences, they are looking to find out what they think, and it would do well for us to become better listeners and only share advice when it is being asked.

Jack shared other “gems” during the presentation and answered many parents' questions by sharing stories, including one from the book “Hunting for Hope” by Scott Russell Sanders - a father writing about conversations with teens.

https://www.scottrussellsanders.com/book_pages/hunting_for_hope.html

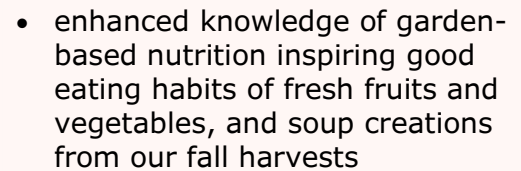
Jack wrapped up the evening's discussion by referring to Thoreau's quote, "The more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core. And I think the same is true of human beings."



Our community garden, food forest and woodlands here at WISE are truly gifts for the senses. As our little hands sift the soil, pick up the trowels, plant the seeds and provide nourishment for our seedling and tree friends, we awaken to the beautiful cycle of our plant and tree life. We notice how the leaves continue to unfurl and become darker in colour as they reach for the sunlight, how the stems grow stronger and reach up and out in exuberance, and just like our plant and tree friends we also flourish in the sun's gentle embrace, the wind tussling our hair, the rain dampening our cheeks and the fresh air filling our lungs.

Some of the beautiful knowledge and experience we gained from our experience in the garden and woodlands:

- opportunities to identify, analyze, classify, and compare shapes, colours, and numbers from the garden



- garden journals were written recording each child's individual experience, interpretation, and interaction in the garden and woodlands, including weather, lessons, gardening tips, drawings of plants

- We are always welcoming more parents and students to participate in preparing the soil, planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, constructing new beds, maintaining the compost, and other garden care activities throughout the school and summer seasons. Please contact

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Elevate WISE Donor Profile

In the last few years, we have been quite delighted to connect and re-connect with those throughout our extended Waldorf community through our Elevate outreach events. This month, we introduce you to Terry Nord, who has generously donated to our school over the past two years, including two recent (and rather stunning) donations of \$10,000 in November 2020, and \$12,000 this past February 2021, for our 'Build our Castle' campaign. Thank you, Terry!

TERRY NORD:

"I have gained some notoriety lately for donating to the school. I am retired. I worked at the University for more than 40 years as a technician. I haven't had to raise a child or pay alimony and was never unemployed. I traveled a bit to the point I didn't want to do it anymore. I drive a 1999 vehicle, which I like, with less than 100,000 km on it, although it would be quite acceptable if someone ran into it and I could buy a Subaru SUV. I haven't bought a new shirt in more than 40 years and in 2020 I cut my own hair, and still do.

I have scavenged alleys for discarded items and from fans and other devices, I mounted several "wind things" on a gazebo frame in the garden. The most successful one was a large "3-cup anemometer" made from a ceiling fan I got at the Eco Station. My property backs onto a pipeline right of way with a wide path so many people can tell if it is windy by looking at the rotating things.



Elevate WISE Donor Profile (continued):

TERRY NORD:



"I built a 4' x 8' greenhouse using plastic pipe made for built-in vacuum systems. It is covered in greenhouse plastic and is on castors. I used it one summer to grow peppers and flowers, but it wasn't worthwhile - better to just plant in the ground. I secured it with straps and chains and looked at it from my kitchen window for a few years, not having a use for it but not wanting to get rid of it. Last year I dragged it to a secluded spot in my yard. This was perfect. I have a lounge chair, a cup holder, a shelf and a table. It is outside where I can hear the birds, the wind, kids yelling and the neighbors arguing, and still be sheltered from the elements. If I want to "get away from it all" - which I never do - I go there just for a change. In a minute I can be back in my house with a proper bathroom and a fridge full of food.

Over a few decades savings added up. While there are many worthwhile causes, I know just enough about Waldorf education to feel very comfortable making this the primary recipient of my donations.

It is quite impressive to see, from afar, competent and dedicated people successfully offer a Waldorf School, with all of the many challenges. To contribute to a new physical structure and to the enlightened education of children - that is good value.


You are invited to stop by the office during regular office hours - our staff will direct you where to browse through beautifully crafted wooden toys, beeswax crayons, kite paper, and play silks. We also have colourful chalk, needle felting supplies, modelling beeswax, pencil crayons, fountain pens, Uriel anthroposophical remedies and many books on Waldorf pedagogy, natural parenting, and a collection of works by Rudolf Steiner. It's a great way to bring Waldorf into your home, all while supporting our lovely school. 🌱



(Art by Amanda Clark)

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Waldorf Education Society of
Edmonton

We encourage your
comments, suggestions,
and submissions to
newsletter@thewise.ca

The deadline is the
fifteenth of the month.
Anything after the
deadline will be
considered for the
following month. All
submissions are subject
to editing and approval.

