



## Issue 85

## From the WISE Office

Dear WISE Families,

February has a particular rhythm in the school year. The days can feel long in mid-winter, yet the month itself often moves quickly with the February break and a full calendar of school events. Early in the month, we celebrate La Chandeleur (Crêpes Day) as part of our French language learning. This seasonal marker draws attention to the gradual return of the light, even as winter continues and milder weather is still a ways away.

This year, our two main Open House events take place in February, and we warmly invite all families to attend. One is the **Junior High Alumni Panel on Monday, February 2, from 7 to 8 pm**. This is a student-centred evening where former WISE students share their experiences transitioning into high school and post-secondary pathways. Current junior high students shape the questions, and the conversation is moderated by the Principal, offering families an authentic, firsthand perspective on what makes Waldorf students stand out and how they are supported beyond the WISE. **Our General Open House, February 7 from 1-3 pm**, offers new and interested families time to visit classrooms, speak with teachers, and learn more about the programs unfolding at the school. Families are welcome to invite interested neighbours or friends to come and see the WISE for themselves.

From February 9-13, the whole school focuses on Random Acts of Kindness and how helping others can bolster our sense of well-being. We hope that cultivating this inner warmth has a positive effect during the heart of the winter. We also look forward to the last weeks of skating, sledding, and outdoor winter activities that enrich students' learning. Thank you for helping students come prepared with appropriate winter layers, boots, mitts, and hats. We hope your family has an excellent winter break this month.

February also marks the Year of the Fire Horse, often associated with momentum, courage, and steady forward movement. As this busy month unfolds quickly around us, we are reminded that growth and resilience are deeply human.

Warm winter blessings,

*The WISE Admin Team*

## In this newsletter:

## Important Dates

## Community Building

Office Notes

WISE Charter School Council

## WISE Events

## Message from the Principal

## Capital Project Update

## Meet the Board - Part 2 of 3



## Community Building

### Parent Coffee

Share some laughs, learn more about our school, and get to know your fellow parents after drop-off on Tuesday mornings. Coffee is on from 8:30 am - 9:30 am in the gymnasium (enter the front of the school and turn left at the hallway). Supervised children are welcome.



### 300 Goats

In icy fields.  
Is water flowing in the tank?  
Will they huddle together, warm bodies pressing?  
(Is it the year of the goat or the sheep?  
Scholars debating Chinese zodiac,  
follower or leader.)  
O lead them to a warm corner,  
little ones toward bulkier bodies.  
Lead them to the brush, which cuts the icy wind.  
Another frigid night swooping down —  
Aren't you worried about them? I ask my friend,  
who lives by herself on the ranch of goats,  
far from here near the town of Ozona.  
She shrugs, "Not really,  
they know what to do. They're goats."

- Naomi Shihab Nye

## Important Dates:

February 2	Jr. High Open House 6:30-7:00 pm: Tour 7:00-8:00 pm: Alumni Panel
February 6	1/2 day Gr 1-9; No Kindergarten, Nursery
February 7	Open House, 1:00-3:00 pm
February 7	No Sunflowers
February 16	Family Day, no programming
February 17 - 20: Winter Break, no programming	
March 16	Last Day of Marigolds, Winter Term
March 17	Last Day of Daisies, Winter Term
March 21	Last Day of Sunflowers, Winter Term
March 23	First Day of Marigolds, Spring Term
March 24	First Day of Daisies, Spring Term
March 28	First Day of Sunflowers, Spring Term
March 30-31	Parent Teacher Conferences

## Office Notes



### Registration for 2026-27

Re-registration packages for rising Grades 2-9 were given to students to bring home at the end of January and are due back by February 13, 2026. If you did not receive a package or haven't spoken with the Principal, please reach out to the office.

New application forms for Kindergarten - Grade 9 are available on our website and are due by March 6, 2026.

Applications for next year's Parent-Child and Nursery programs will be accepted starting at our Open House on February 7, 2026.



# WISE Charter School Council

## Invitation to School Council

---

The WISE Charter School Council is an opportunity for us to enrich the life of the school community by helping with fundraising initiatives, supporting school-wide events and championing the efforts of teachers. Parents and guardians of WISE Charter School students are automatically members. Meetings are held at 7pm and offer the option of attending in-person at the school or online (watch for emails from the registrar with the Zoom link before each meeting).

Upcoming meetings will be on the following dates:

- Wednesday, March 4, 2026
- Wednesday, May 6, 2026
- Wednesday, June 3, 2026

Participating in the School Council is a great way to connect with families from our school community and be involved in your child's experience. We hope to see you there!

## March Book Study Circle

---

The WISE School Council warmly invites parents and caregivers to continue our shared study of *Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out* by Jack Petrash. Our first gathering in January was a thoughtful and grounded conversation, and we are grateful for the care, presence, and reflections that shaped it.

Our next Book Study Circle will take place following the next School Council meeting, and offers another opportunity to enter more deeply into the living picture and guiding principles of Waldorf education, held in a spirit of reflection and community.

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Approximately 8:30 PM

In person at the school and online via Zoom  
20 to 30 minutes

Theme: The Lower School Path

Our conversation will explore the teacher as a warm and steady guide, the central role of stories and relationships, and why learning in the early grades is artistic and soulful rather than abstract.

Whether you joined us in January or are new to the study, you are warmly welcome. We look forward to continuing and deepening this shared journey together.

For more information or to express interest, please reach out to [wsc.vicechair@thewise.ca](mailto:wsc.vicechair@thewise.ca).

## Help Bring Our Spring Clothing Swap to Life

---

As the days lengthen and we turn toward spring's season of renewal, we are hoping to offer a Community Clothing Swap for our school families.

To help bring this event to life, we are seeking a member of our school community who would be willing to take the lead on planning and coordinating the Clothing Swap. This role would involve organizing logistics, coordinating volunteers, and helping guide the overall flow of the event.

This is a meaningful opportunity to support sustainability, foster connection, and encourage the sharing of gently loved clothing within our community.

If you feel drawn to this role or would like to learn more, please reach out to [wsc.vicechair@thewise.ca](mailto:wsc.vicechair@thewise.ca)

Thank you for helping make community events like this possible.







## Stirring the Pot: WISE & WESE Chili Cook-Off & Community Night - Tickets Now Available!

The countdown is on! Our annual Chili Cook-Off & Community Night is just around the corner – Saturday, March 21, 2026, from 6:30PM to 11:00PM in the WISE Charter School Gym. An adults-only evening of warmth, flavor, and community connection awaits!

### Tickets are officially on sale now:

- Early Bird: \$20 (until March 6)
- Standard: \$25

### How to Purchase:

- E-transfer: please send to [wsc.treasurer@thewise.ca](mailto:wsc.treasurer@thewise.ca) (please include “Chili Cook-Off” in the memo field of your e-transfer)
- Cash: in-person at the school office
- Pick up: All tickets can be picked up from the office or held for you at the door

### Chili chefs, this is your moment

Whether your pot is hearty and meaty or a creative vegan blend, your chili is your ticket in. Keep an eye on your inbox for the sign-up email if you haven't already registered your culinary masterpiece.

### Calling all performers:

We'll have music and karaoke to keep the evening lively, and we'd love volunteers who can sing, play an instrument, or just help spark some joy with live entertainment. Don't be shy - your performance will make the night even more magical! If you're interested in donating your talents, please reach out to [wsc.vicechair@thewise.ca](mailto:wsc.vicechair@thewise.ca) - we'd love to have you!

### Toonie Taste Test Mystery Chili

Feeling adventurous? Our mystery chili will have a secret ingredient – guess correctly, and you could win a special prize! Entries are just \$2 each, and the winner will be drawn at random at the end of the night. A fun challenge for your taste buds!

We can't wait to gather for a cozy, fun-filled night of connection, laughter, and delicious chili. Let's stir the pot together!

## WISE Events

### La Chandeleur

Bonjour! At the WISE, we have a wonderful tradition of celebrating “La Chandeleur.” We are delighted that Class 5 students will be able to host the event in person on Thursday, February 5, 2026.

Classes K-9 will come to the gym where Class 5 students will be leading them in song before serving them a crêpe and toppings.

A vegan (egg free/dairy free) / gluten free crêpe will be offered to students with food allergies or sensitivities. Parents of children with severe allergies may opt to send a snack for their child to enjoy.

Merci Beaucoup!

*The WISE Administration and Mme. Jen*

### Brief History of “La Chandeleur”

This festival began in ancient times as a Celebration of Lights and of the Celtic goddess Brigit. During Christian times, in France, la Chandeleur took its name from the blessing of the candles on this day for use in the church throughout the coming year. Early February was also marked by the start of winter seed-time. Surplus flour was then used without too much risk of shortage and “les crêpes” were made as a symbol of prosperity for the coming year.

In modern times, la Chandeleur is above all known as “crêpes day” and generations have kept alive a collection of traditions and customs around the making of les crêpes. We also look to the hibernating animals to come out and see if it is still winter, and whether or not we will have an early Spring. We can see how Groundhog Day developed, as a secular response to the natural world at this time of year.

Adapted from [www.vws.ca/candlemas/](http://www.vws.ca/candlemas/) and <https://frenchmoments.eu/candlemas-in-france-la-chandeleur/>  
For more info: <https://waldorfschop.net/blogs/waldorf-education/celebrating-candlemas>





## Message from the Principal

With temperatures often most frigid in February, the month that completes the Earth's held inhale, we are reminded to ward off comment and criticism in the caution against imbalance. To do so, we must use discretion around which internal thoughts warrant vocal expression. As has been described by Steiner, the Earth's thoughts are like the wind, and so it is not difficult to imagine that these currents are influenced by the waves of thoughts we choose to express as human beings on the earthly plane. May we wield the force of silence, which takes meditative concentration, to better ease the wind that blows up at this time of year for ourselves, and our fellow beings.

*Mary Conrod*

## Capital Project Update

The winding woodland path to building our “Dream Castle” Since our last community newsletter update in October, our School Construction Accelerator Program (SCAP) proposal for a replacement K-9 WISE school remains under consideration by Alberta Education.

While we wait, we want families to know we are continuing to advocate for a purpose-built Waldorf school that will serve our community for generations to come. We have stayed in regular communication with Capital Planning at Alberta Education, and we understand that our proposal submitted in April 2025 is being reviewed (among others) as part of the 2026 budget cycle. The provincial budget will be tabled in February. Typically, specific project announcements follow shortly after. If our project is approved, we would most likely hear more sometime in the spring, and if not, we will share next steps as soon as we receive further direction.

In the meantime, we have invited Capital Planning to visit and tour our school in March and will share any additional news as it arises.

Thank you for your patience and your encouragement, and for keeping your fingers and toes crossed for our “dream castle” to be approved in this round.





## Meet the Board

### Alisa Vaughan - WESE Vice President

Alisa has been a member of our community for ten years and is a parent of children in classes 4 and 7. Volunteerism and community building were foundational values in her family growing up and she is passionate about sharing the same lifestyle and values with her own children.



### Keith Martinot - WESE Board Secretary

Keith is passionate about continuous learning and enjoys exploring the outdoors with family and friends. In his spare time he likes to capture photos of people and experiences, along with tinkering in his garage on cars, bikes, metal working, or whatever needs to get fixed up.



As a member of his community league board he's also excited about the opportunity to share his experience as the next chapter of WESE and the WISE charter school continues to unfold.

### Josh Thatcher - WESE Treasurer

Josh is a husband, father of three (send coffee!), and Waldorf enthusiast thanks to his brilliant wife who showed him the light over 15 years ago! Josh's background is in the natural food world – everything from chef-ing to building businesses. When he's not up to his elbows in flour or spreadsheets, he loves playing music, climbing mountains, and embracing the joyful chaos of family life.





# Meet the Board



## **Sarah Freire-Gibb - WISE Director**

After living primarily in Europe and South America since 2005, Sarah and her family moved to Edmonton in 2019. She's had three children attend WISE (Anna, class of 2024; Elisa, grade 9; and Xavier, grade 5) and she appreciates the holistic education Waldorf offers her children. Sarah works in access to information for the provincial government and has a master's degree in international relations and development. She enjoys working together with others in community settings and finding creative solutions to problems.



## **Margot Bright - WISE Treasurer**

Margot and her family discovered the WISE in 2016 and are so grateful that they did. She has three children, all of which attend the school. She is currently chair of the Finance Committee and sits on the Communications Committee as well. Margot joined the board as Treasurer in 2020. She continues to be inspired by her fellow board members and the Waldorf community.



## **Alison Toews - WISE Director**

Alison Toews brings a diverse and unconventional career path to her role as a board member. After high school, she pursued culinary training and was tentatively hired as a head chef for a hotel in Bali. However, she chose a different path and became the first female rig hand in British Columbia, working on oil rigs in Fort St. John. When her oldest child was two months old, Alison returned to university, earning two Bachelor's degrees in Psychology and Sociology. She is now pursuing a Master of Arts in Community Engagement (MACE) at the University of Alberta.

Alison's passion for education is deeply personal. Having ADHD, she struggled in traditional school settings. Returning to university as an adult, she discovered the strengths that come with ADHD and developed an insatiable love for learning. Her appreciation for Waldorf education grew from watching her own children flourish in an environment that values individuality, creativity, and unique learning styles. As a board member, she is eager to contribute her expertise in strategic planning, policy development, and community-based initiatives to help create meaningful and lasting impacts.





## February

Blue skies and ice  
wherever we go,  
slipping and sliding  
deep in the snow.

Uphill and downhill,  
neither leaf nor green:  
the sun bright and clear,  
no grass to be seen.

Woolies and hoods,  
on toboggans all day.  
Gloves on our hands  
and spring far away.

Back home Mama's baking  
big loaves and small.  
How hungry we are -  
we'll soon eat them all!








-Elsa Beskow

## Newsletter Submissions

We encourage your comments, suggestions, and submissions to [newsletter@thewise.ca](mailto: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.

## The WISE Charter School

-  Phone 780-466-3312
-  Address 7211 96A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T6B 1B5
-  Website [www.thewise.ca](http://www.thewise.ca)
-  Email (K.C.) [registrar@thewise.ca](mailto:registrar@thewise.ca)  
(Jaimee) [info@thewise.ca](mailto:info@thewise.ca)  
(Mary) [principal@thewise.ca](mailto:principal@thewise.ca)  
(Keely) [administrator@thewise.ca](mailto:administrator@thewise.ca)
-  Facebook [The WISE Charter School and  
Waldorf Early Childhood Programs](#)
-  Facebook [The WISE Parent Connection](#)  
Parent Group
-  Instagram [waldorf\\_yeg](#)

## Waldorf Education Society of Edmonton (WESE)

-  Phone 780-466-3312
-  Address 7211 96A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T6B 1B5
-  Website [www.wese.ca](http://www.wese.ca)  
[Waldorf Early Childhood Education](#)
-  Email [president@wese.ca](mailto:president@wese.ca)  
[parentpartnership@wese.ca](mailto:parentpartnership@wese.ca)
-  Facebook [The Waldorf Education Society of  
Edmonton](#)

