



2024 Fall Newsletter

The mission of Corvallis Waldorf School is to educate independent thinkers who meet life with courage and respond with initiative and creativity to the needs of the world and their fellow human beings.



Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2024



A Note from the Executive Council

It's been a busy summer, followed by a bustling fall here at CWS. We were thrilled to start the school year with a fully staffed team and many new families joining our community.

While the ongoing construction project presented a few unexpected challenges, the support and resilience of our students, faculty, staff, and families allowed us to adjust and navigate them smoothly. With the project now in its final stages, we look forward to sharing the new buildings with all of you!

We've enjoyed beautiful autumn sunshine and mild weather, allowing us to use our outdoor spaces and host events without worrying about rain! The season kicked off with our new parent orientation, where we welcomed new families to the school and introduced them to the community.

Our Welcome Assembly was a heartwarming occasion, as we gathered together to introduce all the staff and sing a song in unison. A touching moment followed as sunflowers from our own garden were exchanged between 8th grade and 1st grade buddies, symbolizing friendship that will grow throughout the year and beyond.

Michaelmas, as always, was a highlight of the start of the school year. Students are exploring the theme of taming the dragons in their own lives—learning that “love can triumph over hatred, courage can overcome fear, and self-reflection can lead to personal growth.” These lessons are at the heart of our journey this year.

This week, we have our first round of family-teacher conferences. We value these connections, as they strengthen the partnership between school and home, which is vital for supporting our students. We are truly grateful to our families for their commitment to nurturing this partnership and supporting their children.

The annual report for the past school year is finalized, and we are happy to share it in this Fall 2024 Newsletter edition. You will also find staff and program spotlights in this issue and an update on the construction project.

Please keep an eye out for our Annual Appeal Letter, which will be mailed in the upcoming weeks. Your continued support makes all the difference, and we can't thank you enough!

Sincerely,
Karim Hafizov and Jeff Parker

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WALDORF PEDAGOGY

The Importance of Nature

At Corvallis Waldorf School, nature and outdoor play hold a central role in fostering healthy development in children. Walking through our hallways, visitors will see wet, muddy rain gear hanging on hooks, well-worn rain boots, and the red-cheeked faces of children fresh from an outdoor adventure. From preschool to 8th grade our students are immersed in the elements and daily experiences in nature.

This consistent immersion, rain or shine, builds resilience as well as a deep, joyful connection with nature. This experiential learning allows them to connect with the rhythms of nature first hand. The campus is just over ten acres and holds several fenced play yards for early childhood students, as well as a large, open sports field, and forest planted with a variety of trees from across Oregon.

Our Agricultural Arts program has developed several gardens, and intentionally planted many plants that have been integral to the lives of the Kalapuya, the first people of this valley. As students grow through the grades, they take frequent trips off campus to experience the many forests, rivers, and natural places in our state. By prioritizing nature in the curriculum, the Corvallis Waldorf School promotes a balanced development of mind, body, and spirit, preparing children to thrive both academically and personally.



Agricultural Arts

First Grade

First grade Ag Arts class enjoyed our first apple harvest in our young orchard. The orchard is tended by the eighth grade class and many of the trees were grafted by eighth graders in past years.



Fourth Grade

This fall, 4th grade harvested, bundled, and dried broomcorn, a sorghum relative. In the winter months, the students will weave the panicles into whisk brooms, save the best seeds for next year's crop, and put the rest towards 1st grade's winter bird feeder project.

Eighth Grade

8th grade Ag Arts worked to build the chicken coop as part of our study of basic construction.



Indigenous Peoples' Day

On Monday, October 14th, the school celebrated Indigenous Peoples' Day with a day of learning and land work. The grades classes gathered to acknowledge the presence and history of the Kalapuya people on the land where we live and to learn the resilient story of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde where many Kalapuya live today.

The 8th grade presented about traditional Kalapuya lifeways, the removal from the land and termination of tribal recognition (illustrated by a play by the 4th grade called Beaver and Coyote!), the restoration of Grand Ronde in 1983, and present day government and culture. The 6th grade then presented biographies of notable native people, both past and present, from across the North American continent.

We then returned the focus to the land of this place and worked in class pairs to tend the First Foods we have on campus: 8th & 1st mulched the oak trees, 7th & 4th weeded and mulched the elderberry circle, 6th & 3rd weeded the camas, and 5th & 2nd prepared a new patch of soil and broadcasted biscuitroot seed given to us by the Grand Ronde tribal nursery.

On the way to the land work, each group traveled the track to see the This is Kalapuyan Land exhibit from Five Oaks Museum featuring present day Indigenous artists. The students ended the land tending by playing "Rock in the Fist," a game from the Blackfoot tribe.

The celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day is part of broader work we are doing together as a school. In August of this year, the CWS faculty and staff participated in the Education Summit at Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde where we learned from local tribal members how to decolonize and indigenize our curriculum in many ways.

We will continue this work throughout the year in many ways, such as by including native voices in the histories we learn, tending culturally significant plants throughout the seasons here on our campus land, studying present-day indigenous artists, reading works by contemporary indigenous authors, studying indigenous land management, learning a game taught to us at Grand Ronde, welcoming tribal guest presenters to our classrooms, and taking multiple field trips to Grand Ronde.





TEACHER SPOTLIGHT *Naomi Becker*

Since 2022, the Corvallis Waldorf School has worked with Naomi Becker to develop a reading support program for our students in grades 2-8. Naomi works with individual students and small groups to provide targeted instruction. She also works with teachers to assess students and helps teachers understand effective strategies for teaching reading skills.

Naomi discovered Waldorf education in Vermont, and after getting her teacher certification, joined the faculty at the Olympia Waldorf School in Washington. In seeking support for her own dyslexic son, Naomi was introduced to the *Wired for Reading* program. Taken by its imaginativeness and efficacy, she went through training in 2019, the same year she and her family moved to Corvallis.

Wired for Reading is a research based approach to teaching literacy that was developed by Laura Rogan, a teacher in Seattle who happened also to be dyslexic herself. When a student begins with Wired for Reading, they do not work with letters at all, only the sounds of the English language - first all the consonant sounds and then the vowel sounds. Once all the sounds are recognized and identified, then the approach playfully and cleverly breaks down the idiosyncrasies of English spelling into memorable images, stories and patterns. This method of learning fits perfectly with the imaginative approach we already use in Waldorf schools.

Naomi enjoys tutoring. She finds tailoring the material and approach to 1-2 students who are in need of extra support, and then watching them progress through material that was previously a challenge for them, to be very gratifying. She also finds a nerdy enjoyment in learning ever more about the mysteries of our unique Germanic/Latin hybrid language, English. Topics such as why the word "enough" is spelled the way it is, and why the letter "c" even exists, are right up her alley.

Waldorf education strives to give children well-rounded knowledge of the natural world and the creative heart. Every language has a character and a history of how it came to be. Including some understanding of that history in the process of learning to read helps us all, student and teacher, to be more aware of the language we are speaking and the potential power and beauty of our words.

ALUMNI PROFILE

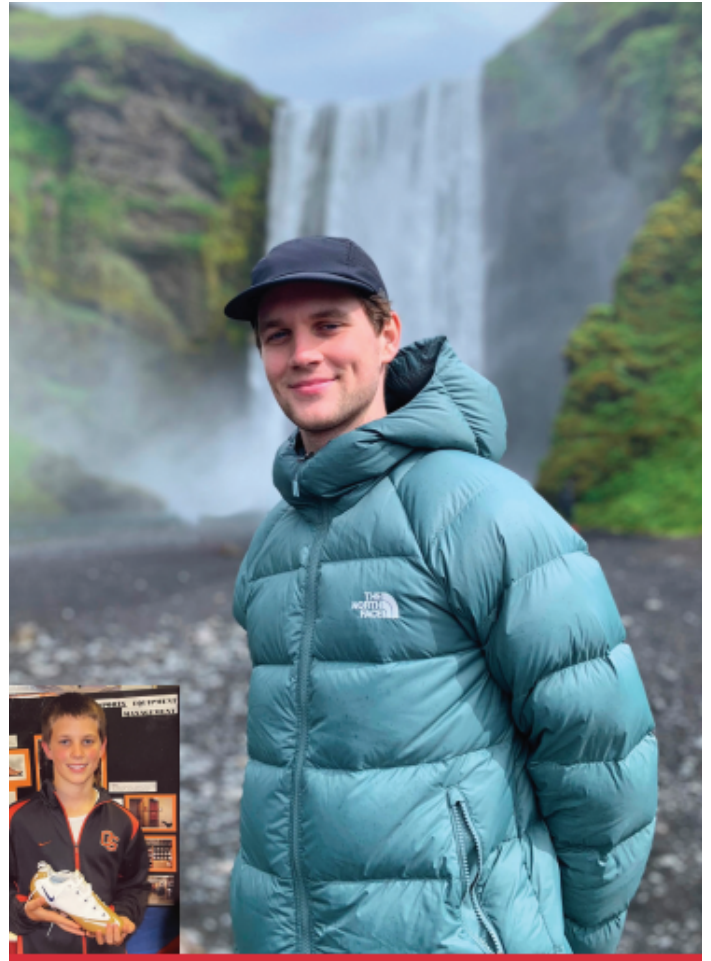
This spotlight was written by Beverly Amico has been paraphrased/abridged for this newsletter. See the full story featured AWSNA publication [School Renewal](#).

Ian Black's family was introduced to Steiner education in Heidelberg, Germany, where Ian's father was a dentist in the military. At the age of two, Ian and his family moved to Corvallis, Oregon. Ian was enrolled in the Corvallis Waldorf school, where he remained through Grade 8.

At the age of 12, Ian submitted a stack of drawings, sketches of basketball shoes, to the Nike headquarters. Two weeks later Nike invited Ian to visit their Innovation Kitchen. This serendipitous event turned into a yearlong mentorship program with Tom Luedecke, a designer working on Kobe Bryant's signature shoe series at the time.

Today, his role encompasses innovation, inline design, and athlete work, including working alongside world class athletes playing for clubs such as Arsenal, Liverpool, Chelsea, and Real Madrid. Working closely with a small and agile team, the challenges and dynamism of the role reflect the evolving landscape of athletic footwear design. And, as a bonus, Ian's apartment and home office looks out over the Manchester City football club stadium

As a young person, Ian not only loved athletics, but also music, drawing, painting, and knitting. Waldorf education provided him with the space to find his unique path in life, giving him the space to create without boundaries. "I found a way to combine my love for athletics and my love for art into one." Ian Black's journey is a testament to the intertwining of art and athleticism. His story serves as an inspiration for students who wish to blend passion with profession – illustrating that sometimes, the most extraordinary paths lead to the perfect pair of shoes.





A LABOR OF LOVE

Our new school flock of 14 hens and 1 sweet rooster are officially here at Corvallis Waldorf School and part of our Agricultural Arts Program! The flock will not only provide the students with animal husbandry experience, many eggs, and the joy of watching chickens, but will also make important contributions to our land. Animals are an integral part of any Biodynamic and Permaculture-based system, and we are excited to put the chickens to work by eating pests, working the soil, and adding their rich manure to our compost pile.

We are grateful for the contributions of many that have made this project possible! Many thanks to our weekend construction volunteers who built the external frame of the run (James Robles, Brian Summers, Peter Fuegy, Jena Scholten, and Cody Kraatz), to the 8th grade Agricultural Arts class who built the internal part of the coop and run and observation benches as part of their class work on construction, to Dave Eckert for helping pick up the lumber and materials, to Jamie Sajovic and Mikey Rodriquez who cleared the build site and donated their rooster, to the Capriles family for the donation of their chicken flock, and to the Benton County Agriculture and Wildlife Protection Program who funded the project.



MICHAELMAS & MORE



Michaelmas is the first of what we call, in the Waldorf tradition, a festival of light. As the days get shorter and the nights get longer, we begin to gather the light into our hearts and in our spirits. We are thankful to celebrate more festivals of Light as the days get shorter.

At CWS, we are grateful to share a story each year that represents this idea of courage, of taking stock, and begging the question, what is it that we need to tame in our own selves? In this archetypal story, a dragon, that is devouring all things in the land, is coming towards a village. With the help of the spirit world, courage, friendship and love, the folks of a village face the dragon and must find a way to tame it.

We too can face and tame difficulties that set us back and hinder us.

The children look forward to each year as they watch, sometimes from when they are kindergartners through all of the grades. Each year holds the excitement of the new role that is somewhat familiar. The deeper truth is that each one of these archetypal character roles in the Michaelmas play represents us as human beings.

- *The Festivals Committee*

Handwork

Third and fifth grade dyed yarn using cochineal, indigo, and weld.

"Handwork is the practice of developing intangible skills. Perseverance and patience, creative thinking and confidence, and of course, prolonged focus. The practice of taking care, working in rhythm and quieting the mind are equally beneficial. This requires an enormous effort for many of us to develop, and when we invite children to fill their pockets with these tools, it becomes much easier to create balance and steadfastness throughout their lives."

- Sadie Lifton,
Handwork Teacher



5th Nature Art

Fifth grade's nature art created in the way of Andy Goldsworthy. The class is studying botany used pine cones, bamboo leaves, stones, and leaves of differing colors to create their masterpieces.

CWS
Winter
Concert

Join us December 13th at
6:00pm at the First
United Methodist Church
in Corvallis for the Winter
Strings Concert.



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Campus Improvements

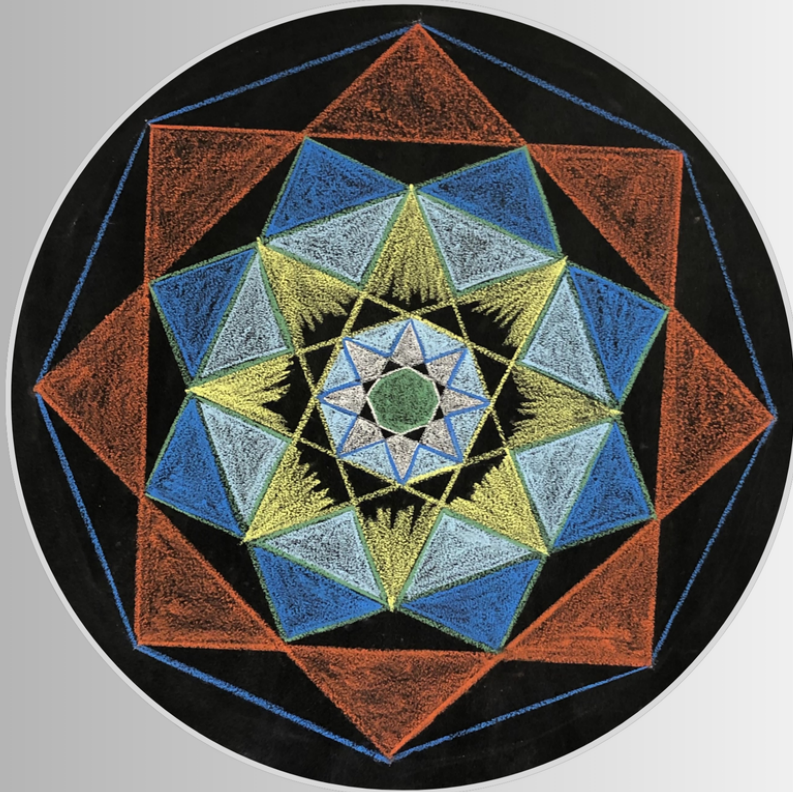
The construction project is nearing completion. The old modular building was replaced with new and modern structures that will house grades 5 through 8. A heartfelt thank you to all those who supported the project financially and to everyone who helped move this project from a vision to a reality.



ANNUAL REPORT

We are happy to announce that our Annual Report for the 2023-2024 school year is complete and available for your perusal.

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Corvallis
Waldorf School
