



The St Michael Steiner School

NEWSLETTER

9th October 2009

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Dates for Your Diary

OCTOBER

Wed 14th Class 3&4 and 5&6
parents' evening
7 - 8.30pm

Sat 17th Association AGM
10am - 12.30pm

Fri 23rd School ends for half
term.

Mon 26th - Fri 30th Half Term

NOVEMBER

Mon 2nd INSET (No school)

Tues 3rd Back to school

Fri 13th Martinmas festival

Sat 14th Open day

Mon 30th Advent festival

DECEMBER

Thur 17th Christmas festival
11am

Fri 18th Term ends 12.30pm

So ... What *IS* happening in the classrooms ?

Even if you only joined the school in September, you must have noticed by now that our school is a bit different from other schools. It looks different, it sounds different, it works differently, it has different aims and different results. It *is* different. But you knew that before ... and you know what to expect from it ... right?

You may also have heard that we have lessons with mysterious names like 'Eurythmy' and 'Form Drawing', that there are six-year olds - sometimes even seven-year olds! - in our Kindergartens, that we don't have a school football team, that the children can all draw and paint (what a coincidence!), that the boys seem to like knitting just as much as the girls, that we don't expect our Kindergarten children to read or add (shocking!), we don't have computers, white boards or Literacy Hour in our classrooms and yet there aren't enough books in your house to feed your nine-year-old's appetite and he asks you to give him 'really big sums!' for fun.

You may also have noticed that your child likes coming to school, but do you know why? Do you have a vague feeling that it's because she's 'artistic' and the education is 'gentle', then cross your fingers and hope that you have made the right decision, (all the time thinking, "well, I can always send her to a *proper* school later...") or do you really know what a wonderful opportunity opened up for your child the moment you took that step and sent her to our school? You have chosen this truly extra-ordinary education for your child, but do you know *how* extraordinary it really is?

Every term, the school offers you an opportunity to find out. If you are one of the lucky ones, you will have deepened your understanding of your child's educational experience - and at the same time enriched the life of every child (and teacher) in the school by becoming even more able to support our work together with enthusiasm and conviction - at the Education Workshop last Saturday. If not, well, you'll have another chance on Saturday 30th January. Don't miss out this time - we want you to know what we do.

Amanda Bell

From The Early Years

"Michael, angel bright
Flaming sword is guiding.
Sing a song of twinkling stars,
As they sparkle in the night,
Michael, angel bright
Flaming sword is guiding."

Words: J. Marcus

For the week leading up to our Michaelmas festival, kindergarten children and adults worked on many projects in our secret Garden, preparing for the festival day and the autumnal period ahead. On Friday, in contrast to our celebration of summer and harvest, an inner mood prevailed. The task of chapatti kneading and rolling dough as thinly as possible required focus and care. Our chapatti's cooked swiftly while we sat around our newly built brick oven, dreamily watching the bright living flames. Concentration was needed for threading our leafy bunting that decorated the fences, gazebo and Mother Earth's bower. These tasks culminated in our Mother Earth bulb-planting ceremony, when a mood of awe and wonder prevailed as we watched Mother Earth's 'helper' quietly plant our bulbs. We sang and munched on apples she had given us.

There were many highlights to our week outdoors: we thank Class 5 & 6 for helping us with our heavier tasks – responsibly wielding hammers, saws and spades, and engaging our children with their work; we thank Class 1 & 2 who made an outdoor presentation of their Michaelmas poem – such a feat of memory and expressive oratory.

One morning, we discovered a creature under a rolled away log: what could it be? Well, we wondered – a snake, or a lizard, or a salamander? One child reported at home that night that we had found a 'sleeping dragon', another said a 'baby alligator'. So many resulting stories and imaginings ensued. Keeping the questions open-ended for children at this age enables them to strengthen their imagination, a pre-requisite for botany lessons taught in Class 5 and for the freedom of thought we wish for our children to have acquired by the age of 21.

"Eid has come to London town, wearing a beautiful rainbow gown". Many thanks to the kind grandmother who came and shared her story of Eid with us. Also for the delicious food and the dressing-up clothes she presented to us for our special celebration.

Thank you to the parent who discreetly photographed our preparations and our kind early years benefactor who purchased the items on our Michaelmas garden wish list. Our children gained so much from this week outdoors that we have decided to start our mornings outside in the garden from now on. A book close to our hearts on this subject is by our dear friend and advisor, Sally Schweizer, "Under the Sky" (published by Sophia Books). It has the added bonus of featuring our children in the Secret Garden on its front cover.

Thank you to parents for your hearty participation during our Early Years parents evening. Please make sure you have received a copy of the minutes from that evening, and also the information about our new daily rhythm.

Aristotle once said, "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."

*Confucius said: "Tell me and I will forget,
Show me and I may remember,
Involve me and I will understand."*

Leigha and Katie

What's Happening in the Classrooms?

Class 1&2 have just finished their first main lesson of the year which is Form Drawing and Writing. Class one were introduced to the basic elements of form drawing - the straight lines and curves. These forms are the basis for writing and reading. Form drawing is one of the foundations for the impressive art work which they will create in the future.

Class two children build on the skills they learned in Class one to create more challenging forms. They are currently doing vertical mirror forms which cross the midline. They are about to do mirror forms with a horizontal orientation.

In Writing, Class one were introduced to the shape and forms of the small and capital letters and their corresponding sounds. They will continue working on these throughout the year.

Class two will continue to practice the drawing of the letters of the alphabet with great emphasis on correct proportions. They are also writing the stories and verses that they are learning in the classroom. Beginning with poems already known by the children, they will read them aloud as a class, until all children are able to identify various words, and, in time, recognize them in new contexts.

The class also learned a story in verse which they presented to the whole school during the Michaelmas Festival.

Edwin Ladaga

Form Drawing and World of Work in Class 3&4

Class 3&4 spent September working with freehand geometric forms drawn from poems, songs and games that they learned by heart. Some of their work is currently on display in the reception area. October will be a month of practical work and this block began, appropriately, with Michaelmas, our annual festival of work, when they made lunch - soup, bread and apple crumble - for the other classes. The children have interviewed their parents about their jobs and as well as writing about this and other types of work, they will be learning new skills such as paper making, basketry, woodwork, felting, new kinds of knitting, weaving, baking and cooking. We will be gathering our own materials from the surrounding area as much as possible, all this with the aim of enriching their understanding of how the things they use, wear and eat are made, who makes them, how much skill and care is needed, how many people are usually involved in getting them to us and, of course, how lucky we are.

Amanda Bell

Class 5&6 began the year with a main lesson block on the geography of the British Isles. They are finishing off their projects in which each undertook to learn about a particular place and will present them to each other before the half-term. The poems below have also been inspired by the main lesson. Now, the main lesson is Botany with a focus on trees and on the ways plants give of themselves to humanity (e.g. sugar cane, tea, coffee, medicines,

etc.). The class spent a day at the Chelsea Physic Garden at the beginning of this week and learned about plant dyes and medicinal plants.

Brian Jacques

The Loch

Above the frozen, crystal loch,
In the Highlands of the North,
A golden fiery ball of sun
Sends its bright rays forth.

They ripple on the water deep,
They shimmer in the light.
The rays they shine and glimmer sweet,
Makes the water white.

Back down to earth and in a boat,
That ruins the glassy film.
I sit and watch the red sun set,
And watch the pearl moon realm.
Naomi Sharrock

I sail away to a land where thou art sitting in an alder tree
A chilly breeze whispers through your hair
For the Queen of the North will soon be here
To whisper her cold and icy air
Over mossy rocks and marshy land.
But don't you fret you'll soon be glad
For the Queen of the North will be gone;
And the King of the Spring will be here soon
To spread his joy across the land
Over mossy rock and marshy land.
Geneva Day

The River Severn

I'm long, I'm short,
I'm cold, I'm warm,
I don't stop for the break of dawn.
I'm high, I'm low,
I'm fast, I'm slow,
I don't stop for anyone.
I'm green, I'm blue,
I'm shallow, I'm deep,
I never sleep.
I'm here, I'm there,
I'm everywhere,
My name: the River Severn.
Star Kennedy

The Wind

I glide past stars and meadows,
I whisper to the trees,
I creep through silent shadows,
I hum to the striped bees.
When it's cold, I'm stronger;
When it's warm, I'm weak;
I have no limb or body,
I have no mouth to speak.
I speed past mighty mountains,
Past forests and past streams;
I watch the graceful river
In her eye a glittering gleam.
Sophie Osman

I travel around different places,
While I go in and out of different ways;
I go slow and I go fast!
I go over stones and I go under bridges,
I go in and out, 'round and about
Until I go to my home the sea,
Where you will always find me!
Driela Pereira Collins

The Sea

Seas are cold and deep;
They have lots of fishes to eat;
They are very salty and strong;
They don't like boats and ships;
The most they hate is litter;
They like to destroy ships and boats
To feed their lovely fishes;
The fishes like to eat seaweed
But don't forget they like to be eaten by humans.
Sofiane Zaina

Happy Times in Edinburgh

Singing, laughing, playing, dancing,
These are the happy times in Edinburgh.
They drink, sleep, and eat,
But in the end the Edinburgh people laugh and play;
When night falls we slip away
But when the sun rises again
We rise and sing once again.
Amber Glover

The daring dog runs through the grass
Chasing its tail very fast.
It sprints and jumps as high as the sky
And when he whimpers I say please don't cry;
And at the end of a great day
It's time to eat his dinner and obey.
Bram Clayton

Renaissance and Physiology in Class 7&8

We began the year with the greatest thinkers and artists to have ever lived, sharing the view of their world vista. This view included visions of mathematical solutions to unsolved problems, symmetry, beauty, perspective, architecture, philosophy, conflict, turmoil, envy, greed, dedication, determination discovery and invention. Our studies led the way beautifully towards our current main lesson block; physiology of the human being. Again we are on a journey though this time we travel through the alimentary canal, the nervous system, the womb, the eyes and the heart just to name a few avenues! Although these topics could be considered to be contrasting, it is wonderful to discover that they are strongly linked and finding these connections brings even further awareness of the inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of all topics known to mankind.

Juanna Ladaga

The Education Workshop: Reviews

Educational Workshop? What it's wasn't: Worthy, Dull, Slow or Pedantic...

What it was: Stimulating, delightful, friendly, inspiring, humbling, enriching.

I recommend – insist if I could – that all parents attend, at least once. And bring a friend. Even better, bring a teacher. I also recommend changing the name of the event to reflect the nature of the occasion. Perhaps:

Back to school – the wonder of discovery OR Back to school – the wonder of education

Nick Barnard, Kindergarten parent

I found the education workshop to be a very rewarding experience. It was very helpful and for me to realize what questions people live with and to see parents having fun and sometimes, being just like their children! It was also lovely to receive such positive feedback and to feel such support for the education!

Thank you for giving up your morning and helping us to help your children!

Juanna Ladaga, Class 7&8 Teacher

As my child doesn't tell me much about school I find the education workshops a really useful way to learn more about the lessons. I am always very impressed to see how much our teachers know about the various stages of child development and how well thought out the curriculum is to target our children's needs at each particular stage. I came away feeling reassured that certain patterns of behaviour I pick up in my child are perfectly normal for his age and I am grateful for the caring and capable way in which he is guided through the various stages of learning.

Birgit Möller, Class 3&4 parent

Why You Can't Grow a Business Without Growing People By Jeffrey Hollender, CEO Seventh Generation, a US based company that produces ecologically responsible household products and toiletries.

Businesses talk endlessly about their most valuable assets being their human resources, yet most who work in corporate America would be hard-pressed to support this belief. A March 7, 2004 Gallup poll revealed that only 26% of U.S. employees are fully engaged with their job at any time, and 19% of employees is actively disengaged. The annual cost nationwide to employ this actively disengaged group? More than \$300 billion. Is there a solution? It seems to me that for any business to grow in a sustained and sustainable manner, it must "grow" the people it employs. Not just train, but develop employees as whole people, recognizing that full potential only comes through engaging the whole person – body, mind, and spirit. So when I read a recent survey of Waldorf school graduates that showed 89% are "highly satisfied in their choice of occupation" I was intrigued. The survey also showed that in their professional lives, Waldorf graduates care most about ethical principles (82%) and helping others (82%).

According to the survey, Waldorf graduates share three predominant characteristics: **Thinking outside the box:** Waldorf school graduates value the opportunity to think for themselves and to translate their new ideas into practice.

Relationships are important: They value lasting human relationships and seek out opportunities to be of help to other people. **Guided by ethical principles:** They are guided by an inner moral compass that helps them navigate the trials and challenges of their lives. They carry high ethical principles into their personal and professional lives.

When asked to rank which aspects of their current or most recent employment were most important to them, Waldorf graduates rated "good work atmosphere" as very important or extremely important, followed by "ethical principles of the profession," "the chance to help others," "chance to introduce one's own ideas," and "self-reliance at work." By contrast, very few graduates rated "high income," or "life-long job security" as very or extremely important.

Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf Education

What is it about Waldorf education that grows these kinds of people? When we moved to Vermont in 1995 and enrolled our children in the Lake Champlain Waldorf School we hardly knew what we were getting into. The school building was painted with pastel colors and the rooms were designed in any shape but square. We were mildly uncomfortable with what felt like a 60's orientation that insisted on wooden toys; no movies, TV, or computers in the younger grades; German language instruction; the celebration of holidays we had never heard of (like Michaelmas and Martinmas); and an abundance of fairies and gnomes. Our children would learn how to knit, make wooden eggs, and play two instruments. We worried if they would ever be ready for college. Little did I know that I had stumbled on an educational philosophy that would mirror what I came to believe are the essential educational elements for our own staff at Seventh Generation.

In April of 1919, Rudolf Steiner visited the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany. The German nation, defeated in war, was teetering on the brink of economic, social, and political chaos. Steiner spoke to the workers about the need for social renewal, for a new way of organizing society and its political and cultural life. Emil Molt, the owner of the factory, asked Steiner if he would establish and lead a school for the children of the company's employees. Steiner agreed but set four conditions, each of which went against common practice of the day: 1) that the school be open to all children; 2) that it be coeducational; 3) that it be a unified twelve-year school; 4) that the teachers, those individuals actually in contact with the children, have primary control of the school, with a minimum interference from the state or from economic sources.

Independent Thinkers, Global Citizens

Steiner's conditions were radical for the time, but Molt gladly agreed to them. On September 7, 1919, the Independent Waldorf School opened its doors. Today there are approximately 1,000 Waldorf schools in over 40 countries. Waldorf schools have flourished in some of the most polarized communities on the planet. Under the apartheid regime in South Africa, a Waldorf school was one of the few in which children of all races attended the same classes. The Waldorf training college in Cape Town, was described by UNESCO as an organization which had a great consequence in the conquest of apartheid. In Israel, the Harduf Kibbutz Waldorf school includes both Jewish and Arab faculty and students. It also runs an Arab-language Waldorf teacher training. And in Brazil, a Waldorf teacher, Ute Craemer, founded a community service organization that provides training and work, health care and Waldorf education in the poverty-stricken slums of Favelas.

The Consciousness Factor

When we enrolled our first two children, Meika and Alexander in the Lake Champlain School, we knew none of this. It was only twelve years later that I made the connection between Rudolf Steiner's vision and what we were trying to create at Seventh Generation. Carol Sanford, a renowned consultant who began to work with Seventh Generation in the middle of 2005, told me: "You can't grow a business without growing the people who are working there." Sanford had worked as a consultant all over the world. Her clients included DuPont, Weyerhaeuser, Clorox, Colgate Palmolive, Merck, Boeing Commercial Aircraft, Ford Motor Company, Nike, and Smith Kline Beecham. According to Sanford, "The most important factor in innovation, growth and business success is something no one talks about directly. It is something everyone can feel, but not everyone can name. It is the human consciousness factor, the ability to exercise the capacities that make us fully human". Are we bringing a way of thinking and acting that makes us creative and flexible, as well as disciplined? Without this consciousness, we repeat old patterns when new ones are demanded, we go down side roads leading away from the future to which we aspire, and we choose partial solutions and approaches. We satisfy ourselves with "thinking," not thinking; bringing old thoughts and ideas into the present conversation and not even noticing. *Thinking*, creatively and concretely, is at the heart of Waldorf education.

Growing up conscious

Professors who have taught Waldorf students as college undergraduates noticed three characteristics that recurred across the academic disciplines and across a wide range of campuses. They included a primary holistic and integrative quality to their thinking and the ability to integrate seemingly unrelated subjects with clarity and courage. A second characteristic repeatedly cited is their creative and imaginative capacities. Skill in drawing and painting that allowed students to see more than others did and have more confidence in their imagination. A third characteristic often noted is their moral ballast and social caring for others. If businesses' most valuable assets are their human resources, we might learn a great deal from Waldorf schools: a commitment to beauty in the workplace, to ethical business practice, and to understanding the importance of the inter-relationship of work with life, and people with people.

The Craft Group Schedule for Autumn Term 2009

- 10 September - Knitted squares for blanket (1)
- 17 September - Harvest chains for windows in hallway
- 24 September - Knitted squares for blanket (2)
- 1 October - Crochet amigurumi (snowman, santa, pumpkin, Christmas mouse, ghost, pumpkin boy, witch)
- 8 October - Felt hats for dressing up in Klndergarten
- 15 October - Pumpkin babies for nature table
- 22 October - Knitted animals (together with class 7&8 in their class room)
- 5 November - Leaf frames for windows in hallway
- 12 November - Baking workshop (muffins for Open Day)
- 19 November - Purses and needle books from felt
- 26 November - Transparent stars to decorate windows in hallway
- 3 December - Finish off any outstanding projects
- 10 December - Cooking workshop (TBC)

All craft group sessions take place at Tricia Nearn's house at 17 Melrose Road, London SW18 1ND. They are held each Thursday from 09:00am to 12:00 noon.

Consent Forms

If you have not done so already, please return your signed consent form to school as soon as possible.

Lara

New Phone List

We finally have the new phone lists out. Thank you to all of you who have helped me update our files. This copy will be the only copy we will send out for the year and any new additions or changes will be sent out in our newsletters for you to update yourselves. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, there are no e-mail addresses in the new phone list, although this does not prevent you from e-mailing each other for non-official and non-school business. Happy phoning!

Lara

The Bursary Fund

This is a reminder of the appeal for donations to our bursary fund, either in a one-off gift, a regular monthly contribution, however small, or by sponsoring a child for a period of time.

You can donate by cheque, standing order, bank transfer or via our website. Please mark your contributions 'Bursary Fund'.

Thank you.

The Giving Machine

This is an extremely easy and simple way to raise money for the school without any additional personal cost. Simply go to thegivingmachine.com and choose the store you require and shop as normal. The shop will then donate a percentage to charity of your choice and in this case it will be to the St Michael Steiner School. There are hundreds of stores to choose from. Below are few participants. Please remember every time you shop online from toys to car insurance and clothes to groceries every little will make a difference.

The Fund Raising Group



Would you like to see this newsletter in colour and detail?

This Newsletter - as well as back issues and all future issues - is available in full colour on our website at

www.stmichaelsteiner.wandsworth.sch.uk

SCHOOL CDS

CDs of "Songs for Autumn & Winter" and "Songs for Spring & Summer" are now available from Lara at reception. All proceeds go to the school. £8 each, £14 for 2, £6 each for 10 or more.

Newsletter Contributions

The next newsletter will be distributed on Friday 13th November. Deadline for contributions is 6pm Wednesday 11th November.

Email them please, to: amandabell@mac.com

Community Pages

Please note that the school does not endorse or recommend anything offered in the Community Pages

National Apple Day

To celebrate National Apple Day on October 21st, the following events are taking place in London:

Sunday 11th October. Roots & Shoots Walnut Tree Walk, Lambeth SE11 6DN. Taste the first pressing of Rots & Shoots famous apple juice and celebrate the arrival of autumn. Display of 100 varieties of apple to be sold at the end of the day. Producers stalls and Trees. Apple juice pressing. Apple games. Storytelling. Childrens art, facepainting. The Lion's part. 11.00am – 4.00pm. Adults £1, children free. (020 7587 1131) www.rootsandshoots.org.uk (vocational training and environment charity)



Sunday October 25th Borough Market, Southwark will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Bramley. Southwark Cathedral will be decorated with a cornucopia of apples and an Apple Day Cathedral Choral Eucharist at 11am and Borough Market will be open promising an array of apple-y activities including an apple-peeling competition and apple-pressing. The drama troupe **The Lion's Part** in The Green Market with games for all in the South West Churchyard with The Ministry of Fun. The Refectory will be serving a Bramley menu. The Lion's Part will come complete with a huge Corn Queene effigy heavy with 'Plenty' - wheat, barley and other grains, and apples, root vegetables and foliage from the Borough Market - appears in a procession around the front of the Globe, Bankside, with the Company of actors and the time-honoured Hobby Horse in attendance, strung with cakes and loaves and led by the Berry Man - Autumn incarnation of the Green Man - decked with wild fruits and foliage. He carries an Apple Tree to where it will be placed within the Bankside area, with general songs and music on the surrounding streets of the Market for everyone.

Dear Parents,

Carole Dessaigne (Morgane's mum, class 7) will be offering the following therapies at a discounted price to all parents and anybody involved in the school :

- body massage
- natural face lift
- reiki
- nutrition
- hypnotherapy

A 1 hour treatment will only cost £40 (normally £50), 11/2 £50 (normally £65). £5 from each treatment will also be donated to class 7/8.

For more information, or to book an appointment, contact Carole on 07903391333.

Carole Dessaigne

PC Laptop needed

Juanna, class 7&8 teacher is looking for an unwanted pc laptop with Windows Vista, XP, 2000 or equivalent, for schoolwork. Please e-mail Juanna at juanna@dsl.pipex.com

Childminder Wanted

I am looking for a registered childminder ,a.s.a.p, working nearby school for 3 (short) days per week. My son Gustaw is 3 years old. I am part of the early years team. Please contact Malgorzata on: 07849748705

CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY - BABIES AND CHILDREN - CASE STUDIES

I'm a qualified and registered (Craniosacral Association UK) Craniosacral therapist and parent of Liliflor who is in class one and two. As part of my ongoing post grad-studies in Craniosacral Therapy I m looking for babies and children for case studies. Im looking for babies and children who are suffering with any physical or emotional distress. From Sleeping problems to more serious issues. Craniosacral therapy can treat almost any condition as it does not focus on the condition one is experiencing but on the health that already exists in the human being. The required sessions (minimum of 8) will be free of charge. Parent(s) must attend to the sessions and be open to be treated too. Parent will be asked to keep a diary where observations will be written with regards to their child's behaviour and any changes that occur during the period between treatments. Commitment and punctuality is essential from those who are interested in participating. If you would like to find out more please ring me on the numbers below or email me: gadotigallindo@yahoo.co.uk Tania Gallindo : 020 8480 0909 or 07906153180