

The St Michael Steiner School

NEWSLETTER

10th May 2013

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Website: www.stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk

Dates for Your Diary

MAY

Mon 20th - Whitsun festival

Fri 24th - School ends for half term.

Fri 24th - Sun 26th
WALDORF EDUCATION:
A PRACTICAL EDUCATION -
A conference for parents.

JUNE

Mon 3rd - STAFF INSET - No school

Tues 4th - Back to school

Weds 5th - Class 2 Parents' Evening 7pm - 8:30pm

Sat 8th - OPEN DAY

JULY

Thur 4th - St John's (Note change of date) and End of Term Festival

Fri 5th - TERM ENDS FOR ALL CLASSES 12:30

SEPTEMBER

Weds 11th - TERM STARTS



The Spring sunshine has opened up the school grounds for the children again.

Above: Class 1 children climbing and (below) Maypole dancing with the Parent and Child group.



What's Happening in (and outside)the Classrooms?



Just this Wednesday gone, Class 3 had the privilege of starting to build our school's very first bread oven. Thirteen children from Julie Neale's class 3 at Michael Hall along with their gardening teacher and our very own Trustee, Simon Gillman, came to help start the process. It will only be done in about a week, but we look forward to making pizza and bread in the very near future!

A big thank you to Mr Gillman, Mrs Neale, Sarah Woods, Ms Baumann and, of course, all of the children, for their enthusiasm, energy and time. We're very excited about the project and we couldn't have done it without all of the support. Thank you.

Lara Kuppers



Class 3 Building Project

from the Early Years...

We returned from the Easter holidays to a cold and grey garden, with just a few brave daffodils nodding their heads in the chill winds, but quickly noticed some little, bright coloured eggs, hidden in nooks and crannies amongst the grasses, tree branches and the ancient roots of the mulberry tree. As we wondered who they were from, the children had plenty of ideas, and happily ran about, excitedly collecting these treasures which we enjoyed sharing.



Our Easter festival culminated this week when Mark's family from Russia brought their Russian Orthodox Easter, or Pascha, Festival. Encircling a beautiful Easter centerpiece, we sat entranced whilst Tanya sang a lyrical Easter aria. The children quietly received felted easter eggs and a piece of delicious traditional Russian Easter cake. Thank you Tanya and Mark, for this beautiful festival.


Father Sun has been warming the earth and each day the garden reveals more and more plants unfurling their leaves and petals: bluebells, white bells, hyacinths, forget-me-nots, pansies, buttercups and daisies. Our first spring in Hanworth feels a little like being in a 'lost' garden that is slowly showing itself to us, one season at a time. We are planting sunflowers, and developing a vegetable and herb garden, although the squirrels are very interested in it and helped themselves to a few seeds during the colder days of spring. Other creatures interested in our work have been the birds, especially the blue Jay and some blue tits, whom we watched through the window taking hay from our hanging baskets to line their nests!

Our whole team enjoyed a weekend conference last month entitled 'RESPECTFUL CARE: Understanding the first Three Years as the Foundation for a Healthy Life', organised by the Steiner Waldorf Early Years Group. Speakers included Dr Michaela Glöckler, known to some as co-author of A Guide to Child Health, Michaela is also the head of the Medical section at the Goetheanum; and Dorothy Marlen (formerly Dot Male), responsible for bringing the extraordinary work of the Hungarian Emmi Pikler to the UK. We all felt nourished and enriched by their wisdom and understanding and are glad to bringing this inspiration into our work with the children in our kindergarten and parent & child groups.

We would like to welcome Peter Elphick and his family to our kindergarten, and Georgie-Mae now joining her big sister Eliza with us.

Katie Sharrock
for the early years team

Parents' Conference at Half Term



STEINER WALDORF EDUCATION: A PRACTICAL EDUCATION

A conference
with practical workshops
for anyone
interested in finding
out what we do
and why we do it.

24th, 25th & 26th May 2013

The St Michael Steiner School

Workshops offered:

Eurythmy with Michele Hunter
Music with Juanna Ladaga
The Kindergarten with Katie Sharrock and Leigha Hipkin
Clay Modelling with Kilian Voss
Drawing with Amanda Bell
Games and Sport with Rob Sim
School Organisation with members of The College of Teachers

We are offering this conference, which we hope will become an annual event, because we no longer live in a time when parents drop their children off at school and leave what happens there to the Teachers. Parents in the 21st century want to understand how their children are being educated; they know that what we do in Waldorf schools is unusual, but often the rationale behind it is not clear. To make the picture even more murky, there are many myths and a great deal of misinformation in the world about Waldorf education. We want to show you our picture.

Our aim is that the themes of these conferences will arise out of the issues that are living in our school, so that what we present is current and comes out of what inspires us - what we are actually doing and thinking about right now.

Over the last two years, because we recognise a serious decline in practical skills in society, we have concentrated on developing further the practical aspects of our work with the children. We hope that, through this conference, we will be able to demonstrate why we think this is such an important issue and how we are working with it.

The conference programme is organised with an introductory talk on Friday evening about the principles upon which Waldorf education is founded, followed by an opportunity to ask questions, which Teachers can then incorporate into their workshops on Saturday and Sunday.

The workshops will include short talks, practical work and discussion.

On Sunday, there will be a rounding up with an opportunity for participants to share their thoughts and experiences.

All of this is interspersed with tea and coffee breaks and delicious snacks and meals, giving space for vital individual conversations, out of which will come more questions and observations.

We very much look forward to welcoming you. Please spread the word!

Booking Forms are in the leaflets in reception

Summary of the School AGM

The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 20th April.

It proved to be a very wholesome and honest meeting leaving all the teachers with a sense of optimism and strength for the future of the school. Of our four trustees, two were present: Rob Sim and Simon Gillman. Richard Evans and Ann Druitt sent their apologies. Ann Druitt was due to step down from role but she had offered to stay on for a further year. She was duly re elected by all present. Ann had been present at various meetings during the week before the AGM.

Eleni Karakonstanti will be the Class One teacher from September 2013.

Stella Bell Ottewill will take on the role of administrator, beginning September 2013. This will leave Andrea free to manage the finances and Deborah free to manage the reception area with all its frequent interruptions and demands.

Vreni Peter, a loyal ex-teacher of the school, will be returning to Switzerland and hence is stepping down from her role as a Bursary group member.

Lara Koppers spoke of the life of the school since we have moved and of the role of the college of teachers which has seemed slightly daunting this year as the college have had to deal with staffing issues, building and financial matters, as well as their work observing and studying the children and overseeing the yearly curriculum, festivals, and the open days to help promote the school and raise its profile in the new area.

The highlights of the meeting included a much clearer picture of the school finances, which have been conscientiously and methodically pulled into shape by our Bursar Andrea Ladanyi. She was praised and acknowledged for doing all the finance work without the use of a computer accounting system such as Sage (although this is now needed). Details of the financial discussions can be found in the minutes of the meeting, which will be emailed to you all. There is some debt due to the cost of the rental of the new premises, which began long before we moved in and the cost of the move. Also some considerable debt of unpaid fees by families who have since left the school. Steps are now being taken to secure regular, timely payments from all parents.

Parents asked for more regular invoicing and asked if the fees would rise again next year. Andrea stated that in reality they would, but hopefully not as much as this year.

The question of St Michael's becoming a Free School was brought up by a parent. This has been looked into by Amanda Bell and she will continue to do so. However, there is a danger that a Free school might not be as magical as it sounds for those wanting Steiner Waldorf education! The Hereford Steiner School has a considerable deficit because the money they get from the government is not enough and hence the curriculum is threatened. They have decided to cut crafts, German and Eurythmy in order to save money!

Other issues discussed were advertising, the lease and the rent, Upper School exams and the building works to be carried out August 2014 and promoting of the Kindergarten, which is the foundation of the whole school.

The support, value and commitment given to the school by our trustees speaks louder than any discussion we might have. Simon Gillman spoke of the difficulties facing Waldorf schools as we live in a time where there is a tendency to standardise everything. We have to look at finances very honestly and see the payment of fees as an investment in keeping the education alive and available for all children in the future. Rob Sim spoke of the benefits he has seen amongst the children since we have moved and that the college and community have faced the challenge of relocating and, also, achieved a very important step – that is to open the first Waldorf Steiner Upper School in London in 70 years.

Pat Alexander

A Reminder from the Parents' Handbook

Clothing

Children's clothing should be simple, neat and appropriate for the weather. Trousers or skirts should not trail on the ground and clothes should fit well so that the children do not have to hold them up or worry about them in any way. Generally, clothing should allow movement, should it be required in any lesson. Outdoor shoes will be worn for games lessons and so it may be necessary for the children to wear or bring trainers on the days when they have games. Long hair must be tied back for PE, woodwork, chemistry etc.

In the Lower School (Classes 1 – 5), we do not allow:

Slogans, cartoons or logos larger than 10cm on clothing
Jewellery, except watches and stud earrings for pierced ears
Nail varnish, dyed hair or make-up
Bare midriffs or tops with 'spaghetti' straps
Backless shoes or high heels
Very short skirts or shorts

In the Middle School, (Classes 6 – 8)

We expect pupils to come to school in appropriate, modest, practical clothing that does not inhibit their full participation in their lessons and is not offensive to anyone. Clothes with slogans or cartoons on them and torn clothes, including tights, may not be worn. Jewellery may be worn but must be removed for PE lessons or other activities where it could be hazardous (e.g. some science and craft lessons). Dyed hair and nail varnish are not allowed. Make-up should not be obvious and may not be applied or reapplied during the school day. Tattoos, including temporary ones, and body piercings, other than in the ears, must not be visible. We ask parents to support these guidelines and if necessary, staff will speak to pupils who push the boundaries.

In the High School, (Classes 9 - 12)

High School students are expected to come to school appropriately dressed. Clothing should be appropriate, practical, inoffensive and modest. Very short skirts or shorts are inappropriate. Torn clothes, including tights, may not be worn. Hair may not be dyed unnatural colours. Tattoos and body piercings, other than in the ears, must not be visible. Make-up should be discreet and may not be applied or reapplied during the school day. Staff will advise students if necessary.

WHITSUN FESTIVAL

We will celebrate Whitsun ON MONDAY 20TH MAY.

The festival is for the teachers and children only and will happen at the beginning of the school day. We ask that all the children from Classes 1 to 5 are dressed in white (beige or pale trousers/shorts for the boys will be fine) and that older children in Classes 7 and 9 would wear something white.

We look forward to the wonderful vision that this makes and to the harmonious merging of the singing and the many different languages spoken.

Class 7 Toasties

Class 7 are making toasties at lunch time on Mondays to fundraise for their Class 8 trip next year.

Toasties cost £1.50 each and fillings offered are Cheese, Margarita or Apple and cinnamon.

If you would like to order one, please send the money with your child on Monday.

Thank you for your support.

Class 7

amandabell@mac.com

Community Section

Please note that the school does not endorse or recommend, either in general or in particular, anything offered in the Community Pages and parents are advised to check the qualifications of practitioners or people offering services here



Vegfromhome

Local food for local people

Fruit and veg as it used to taste

Grown locally so it's fresher, and delivered to your door or via the school when you want it - and at fair prices!

We're based in Surbiton and grow all our produce within a mile of our home, including in our garden...

We deliver free of charge in the evening and at weekends

Jams, pickles and chutneys are also available

www.vegfromhome.com

Give us a try!

BABYSITTING & CLEANING

Hello my name is Naomi and I am 14 years old. I came to this school for eight years! My mum is Katie the kindergarten teacher! In July 2014 I am going on a school expedition to Botswana, we will be working on an environmental project and trekking in the Kalahari. I need to raise lots of money in order to go!

I am happy to babysit and clean for people who live within a reasonable distance of Kingston. I am free to do this on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 5 onwards, on Fridays from 8, and at the weekends from 1!

Please email or call me if you are interested

Email: sharrocknones@btinternet.com

Mobile: 07927372920



Thank you! ;-)

HANDMADE NATURAL SOAP

Lavender, Rose Geranium, Clary Sage and Lemongrass, Orange Geranium

Price: £3 each or two for £5

Please contact Brian Jacques (Class 9 Guardian)

brian.jacques@stmichaelsteinerschool.co.uk

Steiner educated childminder/babysitter

seeking part-time work. Lots of experience with children. Warm, friendly, able to support the education. Hours and payment negotiable.

Get in touch with Stella on

stella@stellabellottewill.com or telephone 07525 204 570