

BLÁTHÚ Newsletter



An update for members and friends

Midsummer 2021

St. John's: Fourth June week

The light-filled beauty all around me everywhere,
It calls to me to leave my earthly dwelling,
On wings of fancy sweeping, swooping, soaring light as air,
Where sun-rays glimmer and where waves of warmth are welling.

My Angel calls - his love I shall not shun;
For in the sparkling light and glowing warmth of sun,
With joy we fly together - and are truly one.

From - In the Light of a Child, Michael Hedley Burton

Editorial June 2021

Despite the recent challenges that seem still to influence our entire life, Nature is telling us so strongly, look up, look out!

All the rose bushes are in full bloom and the scent is in its subtlety so intense that one smell is enough to make us smile.

We enjoy being outdoors while perceiving the almost overwhelming range of colours in bloom and blossoms, the change in the thickness of the green coat of trees and bushes and the loveliest birdsongs

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Adverts

of swallows busily building their nest on the walls of houses and sheds. With the recent eclipse of the sun we are becoming aware of the ever-changing phases of sun and moon and the different relationships between stars and planets that send us impulses. Will we notice and take them? A time where the increasing light is offering a "lose yourself"



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



experience while on the other hand we know that we also need to ground ourselves in order to “find ourselves”.

You will find a verse that supports you in this endeavour in one of the articles where you can do the steadfastness verse in the form of a pentagram.

In Reflection about the time where we are now, we know that it has gone on for millennia – tough times and easy times come and go, but St John's time will always be in mid-summer. This reassurance, when you feel that everything will be ok, without fail the festivals happen, the seasons change and mother Earth has flourished.

This is the invitation, go out and perceive. Lean on the tree, feel, see, sense, experience, listen and admire nature in its expression. It doesn't matter where you live, in the countryside or in the city with

the wealth of parks and green gardens there is no excuse not to experience it.

Heaven holds our “I am”. With this wish we want to release this summer newsletter with all the contributions collected. Why not decide to blossom so that in autumn you will harvest the fruits and collect the seeds of this amazing time. An analogy would be the dandelion with its multitude of seeds that fly off and come back next year with its wonderful flowers again and again, that feeds the bees, that tells us the sun is high in the sky and supports us. Notice our breathing. Feel that in and out supports you.

Take this thought: the earth is breathing out this beauty on our part of the Earth while our friends on the other side of the world live in the in-breath they are going toward the coldest time in the year. Imagine how it would be to have Christmas in June?

by Niamh Ruiseal and Ulrike Farnleitner

TOWARDS A KINDER, MORE COMPASSIONATE SOCIETY

Black Lives Matter

By Ulrike Farnleitner

This year almost 900 people participated in this online US WECAN-Waldorf Early Childhood Association North America conference and so did I. The WECAN board had worked during the last two years with the questions about the ways of diversity, equity and inclusion. Which steps to take when they looked at their mission statement and asked themselves in what ways do they experience the intentions expressed in their mission statement?

Protecting the dignity of childhood, to strive for diversity in racial and socioeconomic backgrounds was the core. The need was felt to develop in an ongoing way the bias in areas such as race, class and gender. The aim is to educate children in freedom; not only to see the needs of children

but also to see society, and the context of the structure that influences all of us.

Past experiences of racism and pain were acknowledged for many people in America that were caused through prejudice of the past and present. At the same time one could hear through all the statements a huge urge to reconcile the mistakes of the past for a better future built on commitment with conscious choices towards clarity, respect, equality, equity, collegiality and friendship. More conferences will be planned around this big theme with the vision of Black Lives Matter.

“We want to be authentic and honest, dedicated and committed to make this world a Brave work - a Brave space” said **Lalena Garcia** the main speaker of this conference and who contributed greatly throughout with words of acknowledgment

of the challenging past that resonated in minds and hearts of participants. “Despite inner work, we cannot see ourselves fully, for that we need from others. Others who can awaken us and hold up a mirror, aspects of ourselves we have not fully seen. The other allows us the opportunity to ask the questions: where are my limits? What do I need to recognize what I need to develop further”? Community is the antidote against isolation; we all want and need a beloved community.

Participants acknowledged that telling stories of their individual journey of liberation requires courage. Throughout the past, there have been great leaders, teachers, wise women as important parts of the community. Taking a collective step, means liberating the “black crayon” as a symbol. Just to explain, in some schools the black crayon is considered not the right colour for the young child. Which is of an even bigger question when you live in a multicultural environment. Working towards eliminating the lack of black in the basket of crayons and liberating the black crayon by liberating the oppressive idea that we can change the experiences of diverse racial background *who*

do not fit into the rainbow of lives.

Lalena Garcia spoke very strongly. She mentioned the need to speak from the I am. “I can tell you from my experiences”, I take charge of my experience.” We acknowledged that nobody has access to a magic wand but that the process wins over the product and that we are all on the journey towards a more compassionate society where no longer a white supremacy culture counts but where “all live matters”, no matter what skin colour we carry or what culture we are born into.

Lalena Garcia made us aware that the main characters in 70% of stories and drawings in the school books are white people or different animals.

What does this tell us? How about to have different stories so that children can know, explore and experience that it is not only ok to have a different skin colour but that it is a given that we are different and that they can also identify with themes of everyday life. Children internalize what we say therefore we have to create more stories that benefit all children of this world.

FOR THE SEASONS: A VERSE

The Washing of the Feet

I thank you, silent stone on earth,
and gently lean to you below.
My life as plant I owe to you.

I thank you, grounds and meadows green
and bend down close to you below.
My life as animal depends on you.

I thank you animal, and plant and stone,
and bow down thankfully to you below.
You helped me to become all three.

And we thank you, you child of man,
And kneel in reverence before you:
only because you are, we are.

From all of God's creation, simple
or so manifold, rise thanks.
In thankfulness all being intertwines.

- by *Christian Morgenstern*

FOR THE SEASONS - SUMMER SOUPS

CUCUMBER & MELON SOUP

This delicate summer soup is delicious served hot or cold.

Serves a family of 4: **Serves 40 children:**

2 summer onions
2 celery stalks
3 carrots
4 cloves of garlic
3 tbsp basmati rice
3 tbsp organic coconut milk
1 large glass of herbal tea
1 cucumber
½ Galia melon

12 summer onions
2 bunches of celery stalks
2.5kg carrots
8 cloves of garlic
300ml oil
1.5kg basmati rice
2 cans of organic coconut milk
1 litre of herbal tea
6 cucumbers
3 Galia melons



Prepare the fruit and vegetable and cut them into thick slices.

Boil all the ingredients, except the cucumber and melon, until soft (around 30 minutes)

Leave the soup to cool a little before mixing in the cucumber and melon.

You may want to refrigerate the soup for a few hours unless you are planning to serve it hot.

Serve with bread.

GREEN PEA MINISTRONE

This delicious summer soup is mild and flavoursome. The children can see the ingredients here, which makes a change from always eating blended soups.

Serves a family of 4: **Serves 40 children:**

150g hulled or frozen peas
2 summer onions
500g new potatoes
2 sprigs of thyme
2 tbsp olive oil
1 litre of water
1 tsp herb salt
Freshly ground pepper.
70g wholegrain macaroni

2kg hulled or frozen peas
10 summer onions
5kg new potatoes
1 bunch of thyme
200ml olive oil
5 litres of water
3-4 tsp herb salt
Freshly ground pepper
1.5kg wholegrain macaroni

Prepare and chop the onions. Scrub and dice the potatoes.

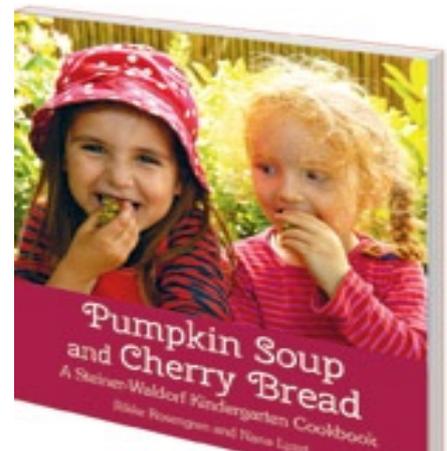
Sweat the onions and potatoes in oil in a heavy pan.

Add the thyme and water and let the soup simmer for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the macaroni in lightly salted water for 5-7 minutes (or according to the instructions on the packet)

Add the pasta and peas to the soup and season with salt and pepper.

Serve straight away with a slice of wholegrain bread.



These lovely summer recipes are from:

Pumpkin Soup and Cherry Bread - A Steiner-Waldorf Kindergarten Cookbook by Rikke Rosengren and Nana Lyset; Photography by Stine Heilmann; Foreword by Rasmus Kofoed; Translated by Agnes Broome
Floris books 9781782502005

FOR THE SEASONS - STORY-VERSE

THE LITTLE BOY WHO WANTED TO BE CARRIED ALONG ALL THE TIME

Poem by F. Ruckert Adapted by S. Konig

A dear little boy, all bonny and gay,
Went out for a walk on a bright, sunny day.
He hopped and he skipped and went dancing along
With a hey! And a ho! And a merry song.
'Til at last his feet were getting all sore,
And he cried out aloud, "I can't walk any more!
I do wish that someone would listen to me,
I wish that someone would carry me!"

And behold – a streamlet, a murmuring brook
Came flowing by, which the little boy took;
Through the waves, through the water the journey
did go
And the little boy said, "I like it so."

But the water was cold, of course you know,
And he cried aloud, "I don't like it, no!
I do wish that someone would listen to me,
I wish that someone would carry me!"

And lo – there came a fine little boat,
And he sat down inside, and the boat was afloat.
Along on the waves did the little boat go,
And the little boy said, "I like it so!"

But the boat, alas, was narrow and small,
And the little boy was afraid to fall.
So he cried out loud, "I don't like it, no!
I do wish that someone would listen to me,
I wish that someone would carry me!"

A snail came along, his fear was eased,
He sat high on its house and was very pleased.
And safe and steady their ride did go,
And the little boy said, "I like it so!"

But the snail was not horse, of course, you know,
He crept along and was terribly slow.
And the little boy cried, "I don't like it, no!
I do wish that someone would listen to me,
I wish that someone would carry me."

Then a kindly horseman came passing by
Who seated the boy on his saddle high.
The little boy on horseback sat,
And merrily said, "I do like that!"

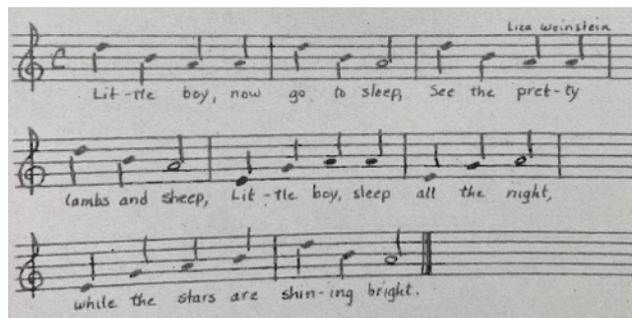
But the horse, you know, was galloping fast,
Over stick, over stone, over stiles at last.
That shook the little boy to and fro,
And he cried out loud, "I don't like it, no!
I do wish that someone would listen to me,
I wish that someone would carry me!"

Then a tree picked him up by his curly hair
And lifted him up, right into the air.
And hung him up in his branches high –
But did the little boy die?
Oh, no – he's dangling still in the tree's green crown,
Come on, little (*Johnny*), you take him down.

*As an alternative, one may use the following ending,
adapted by S. Konig:*

So then the horse was turning around
And threw that little boy down to the ground.
The fiery horse now galloped away.
While the little boy on the green grass lay.

'Til a shepherd came, very kind and old,
Who was leading his sheep along to the fold.
(Repeat as necessary)
Then the dear kind shepherd, good and old,
Took the little boy along to the fold.
And there he slept with the sheep all night.



The little boy slept with the sheep all night
'Til the sunshine came and the morning light.
When at last his mother, friendly and mild,
Came walking along, and she found her child.
She led him home like a bird to his nest,
And he said, "With my mother dear I like it best."

From **Plays for Puppets & Marionettes**, collected, created, adapted, and translated
by Bronja Zahlingen of the Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten, Vienna, Austria

FOR THE SEASONS - CRAFTS

Knitting pattern for a rabbit puppet

by Ulrike Farnleitner

Choose your wool not too thick, approx. needle size 2.5 - 3mm

FRONT:

*Cast on 24 stitches, knit plain all the way along- (not quite the length of your hand) approx. 48 rows.

To shape the arms, increase on the right and left of the needle 8 stitches (40 stitches) and knit 12 rows. Cast off 13 stitches on each end, leaving you with 14 stitches on the needle. This is now the head.

Continue with these 14 stitches plain in front and pearl in the back for 18 rows. Cast off.*

This is the front of your puppet.

BACK:

To create the back, repeat from * to *.

TAIL:

With a few stitches you can create a tail and sew it on the lower back. This tail is filled with a bit of wool.

EARS:

Knit the ears separately with 5 stitches, 8 rows and slowly decrease to a pointed end.

TO COMPLETE:

- Sew all together. It is your decision if you leave the end of the arms open where your finger then will come slightly through, or you might sew it closed.
- Then you put a ball of wool, unspun wool or what you have around your finger and leave a hole in it so that when you place this ball of wool into the head of the figure your finger has space to slip into the whole figure and meet this hole.
- Create a friendly face with stitched eyes and nose and a "moustache".

Now it is ready for the adventure to become the best friend of yourself and your children.



And a little story to underpin the importance of knitted and knotted friends:

My knitted rabbit was an amazing help as my grandson was not allowed to eat gluten. The rabbit convincingly told the little boy, that he definitely does not eat gluten either. Valentin was so happy to have a pal who shares with him this restriction of wheat bread, and not to eat gluten at all. He would quite often come to me and demand that the rabbit should tell him the story of the non-gluten issue over and over again. Together they laughed and talked at length. The rabbit then told the little one his love for eating carrots, fennel, juicy leaves and dandelions.

Guess now what the boy loves to eat? He loves raw carrots and nibbles on them like a little rabbit. He even tried dandelion blossoms but will leave them in future for the rabbit to nibble on!

FOR PARENTS: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

by Ulrike Farnleitner

What ideas do we have as parents, and educators for supporting children in their development? Regardless of what kind of pedagogy we have chosen, when we work with children we will always be working in and acting out our relationship to the child. Our concern is to raise and support children in the best way we can. We learn over time how this relationship is meant to develop. What do we adults need to cultivate this ever deepening context of connection? I speak here of a heart to heart connection and presume that we do have such a relationships with the children in our family, and those in our care in the kindergarten/school. When it comes to looking after our children, the most important thing to safeguard is their future, a future of which adults are co-designers.

What do we do when our natural intuition is undermined through situations that are demanding and challenging? How do we become an expert in our lives and our children's lives? According to our temperament and own upbringing, we have many talents and skills at hand and **now** is the time to access them and to use them wisely. To keep the role we have taken on as the adult in this relationship means that we are role-modelling; we are living examples for our values and ideas, wishes and aspirations.

Our children will challenge us in manifold ways, but there is an underlying demand in all that they do, and that is "love me, no matter what". And then we realise it is of utter importance for our children who we truly **are**. How will we show this to our beloved ones? What do we do to gain insight to restore natural intuition and interact in ways that support healthy development? What do I do in order to be who I am? This puts ourselves on the road to self-development. According to the anthroposophical concept, the human spirit is not a finished entity but in permanent evolution. That means we are on the way to gain insights.

Freedom is often understood as being **from** something but maybe it is meant **for** something. Art and Nature are the huge helpers in the search for the next steps as well as helping us to differentiate what is essential and what is not. You might also cultivate a devotion to truth and knowledge which is strengthening while you struggle against your own prejudices. Honesty and surrender might help as well as a good laugh about all the endeavours that might fail.

As Samuel Becket once said: *"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."*

Verse

by Herbert Hahn

Remember daily that you are continuing the work
of the spiritual world with the children.
You are the preparers of the path for these young souls,
who wish to form their lives in these difficult times.
The spiritual world will always stand by you in this task.
This is the wellspring of strength which you so need.

FOR PARENTS: BOOK REVIEW

By Fiona Coady

WALDORF GAMES HANDBOOK FOR THE EARLY YEARS

Games to Play and Sing
with Children aged 3-7.

Kim John Payne, Cory Waletzko and Valerie Baadh
Garrett

Hawthorn Press, ISBN: 978-1-912480-26-5

www.hawthornpress.com

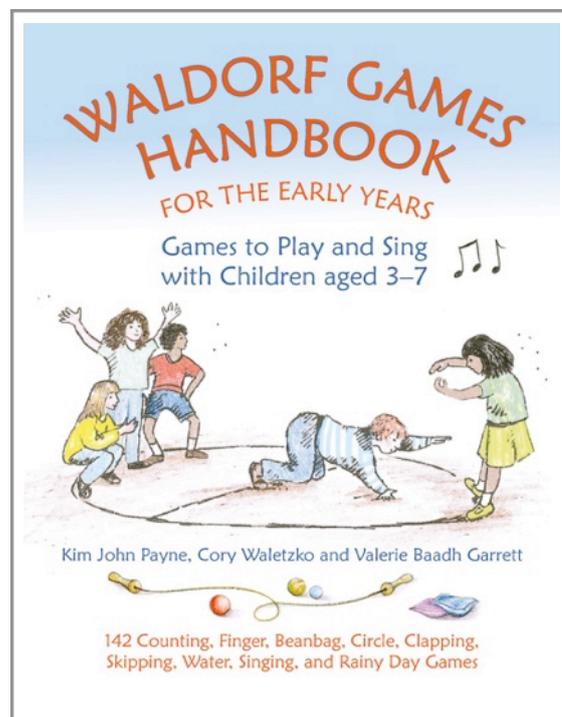
“There are many wonderful options of varying complexities for the different ages and stages of development. With seasonal songs and games. This is a wonderful book for anyone working with children especially Kindergarten teachers. They are a joyful tool for connection. I cannot wait to bring more of the games to life with the children in my class”.

- *Roisin Brennan, Féileacáin Teacher,
Kilkenny Steiner School.*

When planning the content for our Summer Newsletter, we decided that we would like to add games/activities for parents to support them through the summer months, which was great news for me as a parent of 2 young children! So I started the task of looking for ideas when I got an email out of the blue, asking if I had heard about a new book published by Hawthorn Press called WALDORF GAMES HANDBOOK for the Early Years. I could not have asked for a better resource. One email later, and there was a copy coming my way. It is always lovely to buy or receive a book by post, to have it in your hand and finally be able to flick through it and see all the gifts it has to offer. And this book did not disappoint!

Yes, I expected the obvious; ideas for games, how to play them, rhymes to accompany them, and different games for different ages. But before we even got to that expectation, there was a world of information I was not expecting, appropriately all under the section “Hidden Treasures”. This includes language of the playground, how to pick teams, ending the games.... It creates a whole world that you immerse yourself into before you even start to actually play.

Then the wonderful gift of explaining the four different temperaments and how each one plays.



This especially was insightful for me being the mother of a 5-year-old “The Napoleon. The Choleric”. This had been mentioned to me before, but to have it explained in this chapter in relation to games and how to deal with my son in this context was a real treat. Before where there may have been frustration, there is now a level of compassion and connection.

Following this is the chapter on equipment. Not an endless list of items I need to go out and buy, but simple items, many of which we would have already had around the house but just never connected with playing as suggested in the book. And ways of adapting items, adding to them, redesigning them and in some cases even making them from scratch from recycled material. I know we may be short on time these days, yet now I can see the possibility of actually using this activity as another way to play and share time with my children.

And finally we have 96 pages filled with games 3-6 years, 6-7 years, water games, snow games and indoor/ rainy day games and mixed age games. It almost seemed a little bit overwhelming at the beginning, so many games to choose from. So I just picked one: **Mix a Pancake!**

Mix a Pancake!

A slowly spoken verse with full movements; offers the child a sense of belonging and being 'held'.

Sit with legs crossed and child sitting inside folded legs, facing outwards, so the child is 'in the pan'.

Mix a pancake!

(Wrap arms around child, then rock together in a circle)

Stir a pancake!

(Clockwise once)

POP in in a pan

(Then circle again)

Fry a pancake!

(Lift child up just a little bit, and down)

Toss a pancakeAnd

(Circle around clockwise again)

Catch it if you can!

(Hold child's ribs and together roll backwards and forwards. Hug child quickly)

It may seem like a simple little game and rhyme, but it gave me access to something new. Before, when my little boy was overwhelmed or upset by something, I would take him aside and just hold him. By playing "Mix a Pancake!" this allowed me to provide the same intention and bring some fun to it, to connect and allow him be held without focus on the upset. And that is the thing I loved most about this book.

Everything that is presented is done from the obvious practical level, but also adds a deeper element that provides a much bigger listening for the child.

I can see the infinite value this would have for practitioners in early childhood settings, and as a parent, it is definitely a book that is coming on holiday this Summer!!!!



IASWECE: SNAPSHOTS OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

by Ulrike Farnleitner

The bi-annual IASWECE www.iaswece.org meeting was held online. Nevertheless it was such a joy to at least to “see” colleagues through the medium of the screen.

Ireland is represented through Bláthú and is one of the almost 40 member countries of this international association.

We started our meeting hours with a conversation, listening to current issues in the different countries; which was followed by a verse and some eurythmy. “Working with diversity” was then our core theme, and we got a brief introduction with news from New Zealand, USA and Israel.

We worked with a verse that Rudolf Steiner had created for difficult times:

***Steadfast I stand in the world.
With certainty I tread the path of life.
Love I cherish in the core of my being.
Hope I carry into every deed.
Confidence I imprint upon my
thinking.
These five lead me to my goal,
These five give me my existence.***

If we faithfully practice exercises like this we will experience some strengthening of our life forces. And like with all these exercises, they invite us to do them in order to receive their gift.

During our four days we then explored diversity in most creative ways, having been sent an original Swazi story, (you can find it on www.blathu.org), as well as guided by the preparation group via a creative process.

We welcomed Philip Reubke as a guest, now working for the pedagogical section in Dornach, who was for so many years a member of the IASWECE coordination group. He presented us

with an update of future events and planned conferences. Much of his work is available to you on the IASWECE website.

I am sure you had signed the ELIANT -European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy petition when it came into your email account! To strengthen the advocacy work on the topic of digital media, the ELIANT petition to keep the *availability of choice* for screen-free kindergartens and an age-appropriate approach in media education was given a final boost and closed with more than 100,000 signatures!

One of IASWECE’s task was to collaborate with ECSWE- the European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education, ELIANT and others to lobby for the integration of some important amendments in the EU Digital Education Action Plan 2021 -2027. Council members from the Czech Republic, Germany and Romania, were actively involved in writing to the MEP’s (Members of the EU Parliament) of their country asking them to vote on these amendments. Through this joint effort we were successful and the report now includes important aspects such as *the importance of an age-appropriate curriculum*, the need for in-person teaching, and a call for unbiased and longitudinal research on the effects of digital media on children’s health. Please find here the link for more details to the adopted report. <https://ecswe.eu/european-parliament-takes-up-ecswe-proposals/>

If you are interested, there is a Puppetry conference 29th July to 1st August with some well-known puppeteers at : <https://www.puppetryandstorytelling.org>
Only be aware of the different time zone, 7 hours difference!

Not Forgetting Knots - a review of CPD

by Fiona Bury

I remember the first time I saw a story being told in a Steiner kindergarten, about fifteen years ago, in Australia. I watched the children. They watched the story. Little eyes, transfixed by the unfolding before them. I was mesmerised by their focus, their attention, their sense of awe. The presentation of the story was so simple, and I, a child of the '80s, was confused. There were no big bangs, no sparkly dresses, no tap dancing. What was it that was drawing the children in to this tale?



Ulrike Farnleitner has been working with the National Childhood Network to bring a flavour of natural storytelling to a wide audience of caregivers. Many are new to the idea of storytelling, and are more comfortable reading books to children. This is undoubtedly a very worthy activity, which supports child development on many levels. But something else happens, something magical, when a child is told a story 'from your mouth', as my son used to say. 'From your mouth' stories also come from the heart, from the imagination, from the wild beyond.

When a child encounters a 'from your mouth' story their own imagination fills in the gaps between the spoken word and the full experience of living within the tale for those few magical minutes. The simpler the presentation, the more space there is for the child to inhabit the story in their own way. Take knots for example. A simple knot tied into a scarf, a tissue, or your sleeve can become a rabbit, a mouse, a vehicle or a mirror of our own inner selves. While attending Ulrike's webinars, I have loved seeing her weave her story magic with knots. It was so touching to watch her create a silken knot-lady who had a grand time, going for a walk and caring for her knot-baby. I can see my own life story knotted into the silk, and even over zoom I am wholly taken in.

Storytelling is beautiful in so many ways, but I particularly love the fact that we don't need to buy expensive props to make it accessible to all. Just knot your pocket handkerchief, and see where the story takes you.

For more resources on Storytelling & Puppetry, go to our virtual workshop at www.blathu.org/online-workshops and listen to Kindergarten Teachers share their experience and inspiration.

Date and time for our next workshop : Weds 30th June 2021, 7 to 8.30pm on Zoom

BLÁTHÚ WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR READERS

Our Mentoring Visit

by *Sabrina O'Brien*

Having someone from outside your work group observing you can be a nerve wracking experience but Ulrike, our Bláthú mentor puts everyone at ease and the children just connect with her.

While there were a lot of learning moments from Ulrike's visit one in particular stood out with our morning group, Ulrike sat on the ground and patted down the sand and then slowly drew a circle using her finger in the sand, now it stood out from the rest of the sand as something different, something special! She then took a petal that had fallen from the tree overhead and placed it with care within the circle. Children walking past on their way to gather water took an interest, something different in the sand! A circle!! What is that inside the circle? Ulrike without speaking added other items - leaves, moss. "It looks like a garden" exclaims one child. "A circle garden" says another. Ulrike smiled, then there was excited movement as children looked around to gather their special items to add to the garden. They worked together to get the garden just right, conversation soon lead to animals and a leaf turned into an animal who then had to be feed

using a variety of funny food that the children had created.

It was amazing to see how a simple circle in the sand can transform into such an imaginative activity between child and adult. Without our visitor we would have missed out on this experience. Mentor visits should be seen not as an inspection but as a way for us as educators to continue our learning journey, to help us notice and question things, parts of our daily routine that perhaps we have been doing for so long that we didn't realise they may need changing - *why are we doing this, do we need to do it this way, what can we improve on ?*

Once the visit ended we were left with plenty of food for thought and are looking forward to bringing some small but important changes to our little kindergarten.

For further information on Mentoring with BLÁTHÚ, please contact Fiona in the office, nc.blathu@gmail.com

Are Kindergarten Children Colour-blind?

By *Ruth Marshall*

When my son Iain, now in his thirties, was in kindergarten at Cooleenbridge (now Raheenwood), one of his friends there was Danu. Danu is Irish, born to a white Irish mother and a black African father. Her skin is brown, and her hair black and wiry. Iain's hair was similarly wiry, like a halo of sheep fleece around his head. He was blonde, and his skin white.

It was many years later that the adult Iain told me that he had had no idea that Danu was black until he was much older. She was simply another of the children in kindergarten, and a friend.

These differences are perhaps not seen by children, who instead see only good friends, until the external world imposes its classifications of difference upon them. The images portrayed in

books, films, TV, media, have their effects in conditioning children to have particular expectations and beliefs about difference.

Ireland today is considerably more multi-cultural than it was 30 years ago, and surely all of us belong, regardless of race, class, gender and ethnicity - black, white, brown, yellow, pink, red, rainbow, traveller, etc. Similarly, our families are host to a variety of loving relationships, including single parents, two mums, two dads, as well as the "traditional" family pattern of mum, dad and the kids.

If our stories reflect and include the diversity that is normal for today's children, as well as what is traditional, we can nurture acceptance - self-acceptance, as well as acceptance of others.

RIP Freya Jaffke

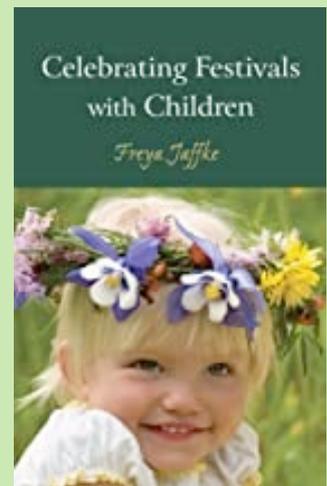
Freya Jaffke passed away in the early morning hours on 1st June 2021

Many of us will remember her – from training courses, conferences and Waldorf Kindergarten Association events and from her many books that she wrote and were translated into many languages.

She was active from 1960 to 1990 in the Waldorf Kindergarten at the Freie Georgenschule in Reutlingen. In 1971 she was a co-founder of the Waldorf Kindergarten Training Seminar in Stuttgart. There, while still carrying her group of children, she accompanied the first cohort of students through to the completion of their studies and then returned full-time to her beloved kindergarten practice. Through her work in the training courses she became painfully aware of the lack of professional literature and based on this experience she began to write. The publisher Verlag Freies Geistesleben carries 16 of her little books, and in 2021 she still continued to work with care on new editions. Translations are available from www.florisbooks.co.uk & www.bookdepository.com

In 1990 she was released from her kindergarten activity in order to travel throughout the world to give courses in Waldorf early childhood education. She spent her twilight years at the Cusanus House in Stuttgart and enriched the community there with her marionette plays.

Her endeavor to bring understanding for childhood will live on in our hearts and in all the publications she had created.



New Initiatives

We have noticed an increase in people/groups enquiring about how to set up a kindergarten, Steiner School in their area with some very keen interest in the following areas:

- Cork City
- Sligo
- Howth/Sutton, Co. Dublin
- Durrow, Co. Laois
- Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

If you would like to connect with any of these groups, please email Fiona at nc.blathu@gmail.com

**ALTERNATIVE TO MAINSTREAM EDUCATION
FOR 3 - 6-YEAR-OLDS
STAFF WANTED!!**

We are about to start a forest school, outdoor, Steiner, free play space here **in Durrow, Co Laois**. We have a 3-acre paddock with the most beautiful old oak tree. We have partially renovated stables with car park, electricity and running water, complete with compost toilet for the moment until we get funding. This is on the outskirts of 22kms of the most beautiful woodland walks. We have 12-fee paying students aged between 3 and 6. We have an additional list of kids hoping to join. We need full time/part time staff, facilitators/teachers/supervisors. There is also a demand for weekend workshops and summer holiday camp projects. If you have qualifications in early years, art, theatre, dance, music, cob/willow building, puppetry, yoga, mindfulness, muddy puddler, forest school, Steiner type training please do contact us.

If you know anyone who might know someone that would be interested in a job and who is qualified to work with young children - we are looking for staff to start right away!!

Please email kittcola@gmail.com or call 0879265423.

Croí na Coille Primary School is expanding and moving to their new premises at **Buttercup Farm, Croom, Co. Limerick** in September. This new space affords much more freedom and they have expanded their classrooms. The Junior infant room will require an **SNA** in September 2021, and it will be necessary to recruit a **teaching assistant/SNA** for the older classes.

If you or someone you know is suitable for either of these positions, please email nc.blathu@gmail.com



Brigit's Hearth Early Years Care

Office Administrator (Permanent, Part-Time, 20 hours per week)

Brigit's Hearth is seeking an Office Administrator. This position requires a personable, welcoming and thoughtful disposition, while representing Brigit's Hearth in a professional manner to officials from various organisations, including Tusla, Pobal, Department of Education and Department of Children. It is essential that the person for this role is organised, able to multitask and work flexibly. Knowledge of, and experience working with, online platforms including Hive and Pip Portal, is an advantage. A high level of IT skills is essential, as the position includes the management of all financial aspects of the facility - payroll, bookkeeping, banking and invoicing. Preference will be given to applicants with knowledge in Steiner Waldorf philosophy/education.

Please send CVs and cover letters explaining your interest in the position to: brigitshearth@gmail.com, quoting ADMIN JOB in the subject line. Salary is dependent on experience. Further details of the position are available on request.

Please check our website for information about our work and ethos –www.brigitshearth.org
Closing date for applications is midnight 25/06/2021. Interviews will take place the following week. The position begins in August.




Kilkenny Steiner School Ireland
RECRUITING A FOUNDING TEACHER

Kilkenny Steiner School is expanding. We are now seeking to recruit a founding teacher who is interested in teaching in our new Secondary School commencing in September 2021.

Kilkenny Steiner School, which has been operating successfully from early years to Class 6 for many years, is starting a new secondary school project to begin in September 2021. We are offering a 3-year junior cycle programme (Classes 7, 8, 9 - to align with the Irish mainstream system). We are looking for a teacher with enthusiasm and energy to accompany this first group on their journey. The teacher will work in a part time role from September 2021 for 1 year with a full time commitment from September 2022.

The candidate will ideally be a qualified Steiner School teacher who is committed to Steiner's pedagogy and has experience using Steiner's approach. Previous teaching experience is essential. The interested candidate should be a resourceful, creative and flexible person, happy and excited to work in a pioneering situation. They should be capable of working in a team and of engaging with others in the creation and development of a new educational project. Applicants must be fluent in English.

WHAT WE CAN OFFER THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

To be part of an exciting pioneering process to develop a new Steiner Secondary School programme at our existing Steiner Primary School with the support of a very enthusiastic parenting and teaching body in a deeply rewarding working environment.

An opportunity for creativity and practising the true art of teaching—promoting the full and balanced personal development of the child.

Small classes with active and enthusiastic children.
 An independent school following the international Steiner Waldorf curriculum; set in a rural, tranquil, idyllic location in the (occasionally) sunny South East of Ireland.

Does this opportunity speak to you? If so please send a cover letter and CV to: kilkennysteinerschool@gmail.com
 Website: www.kilkennysteinerschool.com



Kildare Steiner School Teaching Opportunities

The Kildare Steiner School is expanding. We are now seeking to recruit full and part-time teachers for September 2021 who are interested in teaching at our Primary (Lower) school, particularly at class levels 4, 5 and 6 and in our Secondary (Middle) School at class levels 7, 8 and 9.

The ideal full-time candidates will be enthusiastic team workers and be committed to the philosophy and methods of Steiner Waldorf education. Some previous teaching experience is essential. Applicants must be fluent in English and must be eligible to work in Ireland / EU.

What we can offer the successful candidates

- An opportunity for creativity and practicing the true art of teaching—promoting the full and balanced personal development of the child;
- Small classes with active and enthusiastic children;
- A school where the negative influence of electronic media and consumerist culture is minimised;
- Supportive parents and staff, and a deeply rewarding, working environment;
- An independent school following the international Steiner Waldorf curriculum.

For further information and to apply

The Secretary, Job Application: info@kildaresteinerschool.ie or post to: The Secretary, Job Application, Kildare Steiner School, Rathargid, Garmanstown, Dunlavin, Co Kildare, Ireland.

Closing date: Friday 18th June 2021

KildareSteinerSchool.ie KildareSteinerSecondarySchool.com

TRAINING - Foundation year in Anthroposophy

Our aim is: to offer a training that inspires and enthuses participants for living and for life. The course supports the development of independent thinking, creativity, self-knowledge and resilience.

Testimonials:

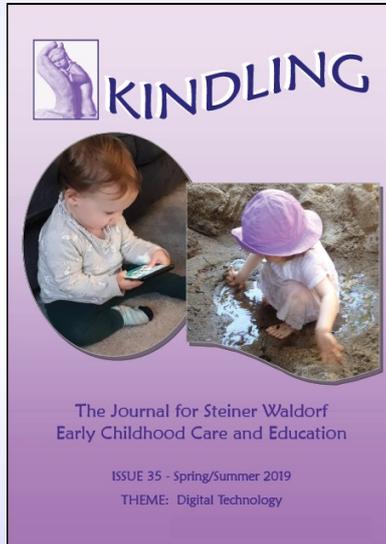
“This is a wonderful course. It’s great to have mentors teaching a variety of deep teachings while leaving room for art and play. This course is helping me understand about myself and others. It has put being a human being in a new light”. Thank you so much for the course.”

“A nourishing, life changing journey! The Orientation in Anthroposophy was an important step in my teacher training. It changed my way of thinking, improved my skills and helped me to connect to myself and the people around me. I learned a lot of practical skills and looked forward to every meeting. Course leaders were very professional, welcoming and accommodating.”

www.soulscape.eu

KINDLING Journal for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Care and Education

Published twice yearly in the UK in printed format only, this Journal contains themed articles, songs, stories, crafts, puppetry, research, health, news, book reviews, and more...



For more information and to subscribe please email your name and address to earlyyearsnews@aol.com (one 'y') or phone 00 44 1223 890988

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Please check the **BLÁTHÚ**
website

for news of upcoming
events

www.blathu.org

Or contact Fiona at
nc.blathu@gmail.com
for more information

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<https://www.wheel.ie/>

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Croílár, Mountshannon,
Co. Clare V94D9X9

Tel: **089 2411816**

Email: nc.blathu@gmail.com

Web: www.blathu.org

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Design and layout : Ruth Marshall

Tel: 087 6945060 Email: ruth.a.marshall@gmail.com www.ruthmarshallarts.weebly.com