STATE FUNDING NEWS

The decision to refuse planning consent for the Hereford Steiner Academy will be challenged at a public inquiry in mid-November. Local opposition to the development of the school site has escalated, mainly due to the efforts of a very strongly motivated group of parents. The proposal for a maintained Steiner school in Hereford has been held up for a review of whether spending money from the public purse on the present school accommodation can be justified. Even if the only possibility would happen right now and someone offered a better site, the rest would be straightforward and we would be able to build and run a flagship Steiner school in capital.

SYLVIE SKLAN - SWSF

GATF Children's Fund

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The Trustees are keen to increase fund so we can support more families. Grants are agreed annually in the autumn. All schools and kindergartens are sent a form to fill in to apply for help on behalf of families in need. We cannot accept requests direct from parents. Having allocated this year’s money we are now looking for donations to help next year.

The Trustees give priority to families in need of short term help to keep the children in school for reasons such as poor health of a parent, loss of employment etc.

DONATIONS CAN BE SENT TO: GATF, 11 Charing Cross Street, Stourbridge DBY 1LT.

Cheques payable to ‘GATF Children’s Fund.’

JANE AVISON - GATF

KILDARE STEINER SCHOOL – our new building

The finished building contains two good size classrooms with a fitted kitchen area in both. The school opened for business in Sept 2007.

AIDAN HARNEY - KILDARE STEINER SCHOOL

LEANING OUT THE CLASSROOM

For one week they follow our programme and for the second week they devise their own, in the form of a project.

The students return to school refreshed having achieved so much on a personal level, as well as working hard. Each student then presents his/her project back to school as an exhibition and to the parents as a talk.

On their return there are no more morning lessons; this valuable time is used for GCSE revision.

We have found that students recognise this main lesson as a bringing to an end of their time with us and greatly value the experience. It can also be likened to taking a deep breath of all that is unique to Steiner education before meeting a different world: the world of exams and performance/goal orientated, prescribed learning.

After the exams we are then free to focus on the Class 10 play, summer ball (which the students organise, run and perform in) and their English journal. And so the journey ends. Working, performing and supporting each other, in order to get the best from each other.

IAN POWELL - KILDARE STEINER SCHOOL

STEINER WALDORF SCHOOLS FELLOWSHIP (The Association of Steiner Waldorf Schools in the UK and Ireland)

Registered Office: Kidbrooke Park, Forest Row, Sussex RH18 5JA. Tel 01342 822115 Fax: 01342 826004

www.steineralumni.org.uk info@swsf.org.uk Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowships Ltd. Produced by Christopher Clouder and Lara Cousins.

EARTLY CHILDHOOD PROJECT UNVEILED

The core theme of the project will be to explore how, why and what teachers are seeking to understand, learn and understand about their children’s growth, learning and development. The project will explore the importance of the interconnection of child’s unique life-journey - in enabling the teacher to reflect on the child’s nature and learning. The focus on observing the whole child – physical; emotional; cognitive; social – in preference to emphasising externally-generated check-lists of pre-determined learning outcomes and targets is likely to provide one fertile line of enquiry.

A Project Steering Group has been formed; the project will be led by Professor David Reynolds; writer and researcher Mary Jane Drummond has agreed to work as a consultant to the project. The initial research work will centre on the early years settings at the Hereford School, although it is anticipated that other Steiner settings will be invited to take part. Jane Nicol and Sally Jenkinson will participate in the project as ‘Steiner specialists’ and colleagues from the Faculty of Education at the University of Plymouth will undertake the gathering and analysis of data.


TREVOR MEMPAM - SWSF

Align for learning 2008

Sixteen years ago Rosemary Gebert and Linda Churnside initiated the Waldorf Remedial Teacher Training Seminar at Michael Hall. The course ran for one year and approximately 20 colleagues completed it and went on to develop remedial departments throughout Steiner Waldorf schools in the UK. Since then the need for Special Needs teachers has certainly grown while the facility to train has, for the most part, been relegated to in-service training of single individuals, short courses or some brief input within the context of the existing teacher training programmes.

January 2008 will see the launch of ALIGN FOR LEARNING – a Special Educational Needs (SEN) training seminar designed for both Steiner Waldorf teachers who seek to specialise in SEN, and for SEN teachers in the state sector who seek to broaden their understanding and scope for Learning Support from a Waldorf perspective.

The course will run for one weekend each month until December 2008 with Easter and summer intensive weeks. The course will address factors that prevent children from gaining access to the curriculum – factors stemming from behaviour, learning, perception and/or motor difficulties.

Exploration into learning styles and teaching styles that can lead to effective means of accommodation, differentiation and integration will be central to the course content.

The weekends will combine relevant elements of:

- Movement games
- Literacy/pumpery
- Form drawing
- Study, Theory, and models of understanding
- Professional administration

Between group weekends, participants will undertake individual assessments, support and implement Individual Education Plans (IEP) research and further independent study.

The course will be conducted by Ann Swan with support from colleagues at Michael Hall. There will be weekend presentations from outstanding specialist such as: Sally Gouldson (on motor development and reflex integration, Camilla Leslie Johansen – Sound Therapist and specialist on auditory processing difficulties, Mahesh Sharma – numeracy assessment and effective remediation, Chris Guy – Bi-Lateral Integration and movement exercises.

These particular weekend presentations will be offered as single workshops opened to non course participants as well.

For more information contact Ann Swan, SWIDW, another@another.co.uk or tel: 01342 82 4740.

ANN SWAIN – MICHAIL HALL SCHOOLS

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**Internation Association of Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education (IASWCE)**

I attended the last meeting of this Association, as the UK representative for early childhood. This was held in Finland in October, and was attended by 20 representatives from over 50 countries (some share a representative, e.g. South America) where there are schools, early childhood centres or new initiatives, either as kindergartners or teacher training.

The association IASWCE has the following goals and ideals:

- cooperation among colleagues throughout the world through meetings, conferences, workshops, etc.;
- deepening and renewing the work with the young child out of the sources of Waldorf education and support its quality;
- fostering training and continuing development of caregivers and early childhood educators;
- undertaking and supporting collaborative research on contemporary questions about the care and education of the young child;
- supporting collaboration with parents, other educators and the wider society about the needs of the young child;
- protecting the freedom and the name of Steiner/Waldorf early childhood education;
- providing resources, information and publications on Waldorf early childhood education and its programs worldwide;
- offering support – pedagogical and financial projects in countries around the world.

The Association includes kindergarten teachers, child- and extended care providers, seminars and training courses and those who work with children from birth to three years.

In each meeting the group discusses trends, questions and burning issues facing children and families today, and tries to see how this can be addressed in an active way by the participants who take these questions back to their own country associations. The issues and studies considered in this meeting included the play of the early formal education, communication difficulties, the culture of fear, movement (including early reflexes and motor skills), supporting parents and working with the picture of how Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood centres worldwide can address the needs of the child and the family in the 21st Century.

IASWCE also provides support to initiatives in countries where they are funded and are (by now) widespread. Funding is made through membership fees. The yearly number and quality of speakers and workshops from all areas of Waldorf will be announced in the next newsletter.

**JANNI NICOL - SWSF**