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September 4, 2009

### **Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year!**

I want to especially thank all of the new families for joining our school community this year. We are grateful for the opportunity to educate your children and help guide them toward healthy and happy lives.

As we embark on our thirtieth year in San Francisco, many Waldorf traditions (some stretching back ninety years) remain, and many changes continue to take us in new and exciting directions. No better example exists of change encountering tradition than in our talented faculty.

David Weber, a Waldorf master teacher in both the grades and high school, teams with Phillip Greenlief, an innovative young composer-musician, to teach the high school choral and jazz groups, respectively. Hannah Lemberg, a graduate of Seattle Waldorf School, Macalester College, and the University of Birmingham (UK), works with Paul Gierlach, a twenty-five year Waldorf veteran, to help ninth graders navigate grammar in their Humanities classes. Over at the grade school, First grade teacher and founding parent Corinne Fendell will be assisted by Rhián David, a 2003 graduate of the high school and Waldorf “lifer.” Rhián and Corinne will together guide the new first graders (born in 2002/2003) through their initial school experience.

These partnerships reflect an evolution in Waldorf education that stretches beyond our community. As the pioneers of many North American Waldorf schools in the 1970s and 80s mature, the X Generation that followed them assumes more leadership roles. Their children (the Y Generation) come of age in an era where traditional Waldorf values and approaches merge, and sometimes collide, with the values of the 21st century digital revolution. An essential question we need to ask at this juncture is: how do we at SFWS maintain our core mission and vision—one rooted in a spiritual view of the evolving human being—while embracing the technological evolution occurring across the world, one that will strongly shape the children born in the 1990s and this century?

Some values of this Y Generation fit squarely within traditional Waldorf culture: global consciousness rooted in local awareness, ecologic sustainability, community collaboration, and openness to alternatives to the status quo. Other by-products of our modern culture seem more at odds with traditional Waldorf culture: the ease and volume of electronic communication can diminish our ability to distinguish meaningful exchanges from white noise; the accessibility of information reduces the significance of having to discover it; the emphasis on splashy visuals obscures the need to create our own inner pictures and processes. It is our challenge as parents and teachers together to navigate that sometimes slippery slope and to guide and protect our children at each stage of their development in a manner that is age appropriate.

We are strongly committed to engaging the community in conversations about these issues and can only succeed if this is a collaborative process. I mentioned above the strength of our skilled and

committed faculty. The second pillar of strength that supports us is you—our incredible body of dedicated, talented parents who help us carry our mission and vision. Waldorf education continues to offer one of the few “whole mind” approaches to enabling the Y Generation to confront and process the challenges ahead—but we cannot be successful without your input.

In that spirit, over the course of this year as a community we will be conducting a conversation in the form of a Strategic Planning process to address the needs of the school—programs, facilities, development, finances, enrollment, and community—for the next three to ten years. These conversations will provide an opportunity for all community members to wrestle with and contribute to the school’s deliberations about these larger questions as we look with hope and enthusiasm into the future.

Our first Town Hall meeting will introduce the Strategic Planning process, in addition to presenting a “state of the school.” It will take place on the evening of October 28th, 2009 at our high school campus, and you are all cordially invited. More details will follow in upcoming newsletters.

On a smaller scale, I look forward to meeting personally with each of you—student, parent, grandparent, alumnus, etc—to chat about what’s on your mind, whether a big issue or small. Although I may not be able to resolve or address your particular need or concern, I will certainly do my best.

I will be keeping **regular “office hours” for drop-in conversations** as follows\*:

**High School:**

Mondays, 10:30am-11:30am

Tuesdays, 10:30am-11:30am

**Grade School:**

Thursdays, 9:00am-10:00am

Fridays, 9:00am-10:00am

I will also be available for appointments outside of those times; please email me at [dingoglia@sfwaldorf.org](mailto:dingoglia@sfwaldorf.org) (preferred) or call 415-213-6124.

With best wishes for a wonderful school year,

Dan Ingoglia  
Head of Administration

*\* Please note that I will be teaching in the mornings from September 29 through October 16, 2009; I will try to keep office staff apprised of exceptions to my office hours during that period and generally.*