

SAN FRANCISCO WALDORF SCHOOL



8th Grade Graduation Speech: Deborah Krikorian

Dear Eighth Grade Students,

Some of my most gratifying memories of our time together are of observing natural phenomena with you, such as wearing our very distinctive (I won't say fashionable) glasses to view the full solar eclipse by the lake in seventh grade, or stargazing from canoes, or hiking in companionable silence under a luminous full moon. And I especially appreciate how some of you were dedicated enough to wake up very early one Saturday and join me to watch a lunar eclipse from Ocean Beach in the cold pre-dawn hours.

You may have wondered why, almost every morning in main lesson, I asked you to share comments on your observations of the night sky, the phase of the moon, the changing constellations, or perhaps the colors of the clouds, or the mood of sunrise or the quality of a lingering sunset. And indeed, we ended our time together once again considering the conditions, objects, movement, and activity in the sky above us. Why this emphasis on the sky?

For one thing, I have seen how alive and energized you become outdoors, in a natural setting. By observing and reflecting on the changeable skies above, we can reconnect on a daily basis to the memory of those moments in nature that renew and refresh our very souls. Gathering these daily observations builds an awareness of the world around us, helping us to live in harmony with it.

Secondly, despite our general Bay Area weather conditions, there are micro-climates with the short commuting radius of our class. Often I bemoan my fog-laden ceiling, while others of you can speak of the sun-warmed blue sky high above you, or the wind and waves you experience coming to and from school. Each of

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SFWHS Commencement Address 2013: Rahul Brown

Board of Trustees, Faculty of San Francisco Waldorf School, proud parents, graduates, and especially Joan Calderera, thank you. Not only have you given me the tremendous honor of speaking to you today, but the weeks of anxiety and procrastination around planning my talk have made me surprisingly proactive in areas of life where I usually procrastinate. So my sister-in-law, who recently graduated from dental school and is perpetually concerned about oral hygiene, also thanks to you for all the extra flossing this has meant for me :-)

The idea of delivering a commencement felt like an awesome responsibility. Or so I thought, until I harkened back to my own commencement from Redlands High School nearly two decades ago. The speeches given that night were a tremendous help in writing this one, because it turns out that I can't remember a single word any of the speakers said.

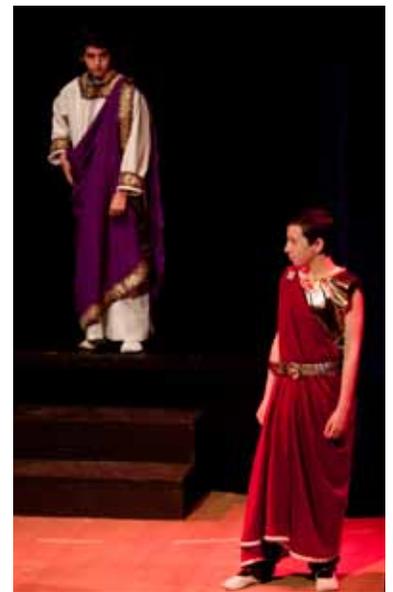
It sounds like a joke, but it reveals a deeper truth: most people will forget every word you say... but they will remember the quality of your presence.

In the coming years, you'll face a growing number of choices that seem like they bear heavily upon your destiny, but in fact the fundamental choice that aims your destiny - and determines the quality of your presence - is what you choose to believe.

Mahatma Gandhi described this truth best when he said, "Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your character, and your character becomes your destiny."

So San Francisco Waldorf class of 2013, what will you choose to believe? It's a question whose answer is nuanced and unique for each individual person. Yet in my own life, I've found three domains where exploring my beliefs has led to some liberating transformations.

Those three domains have been with money, service, and stillness.



*Grade 7 Play
Photo: Cory Powers*

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What you believe about money will have a massive impact on your destiny, so its worth giving this a rigorous examination, while even trying on some new beliefs every once in a while.

Mainstream culture gives us one-sided or conflicting messages at best. In the 60s, The Beatles famously sang that they didn't care much for money, because money couldn't buy them love. Of course they were already rich at the time. In the 2000s, we asked 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' and clearly felt that the answer was everyone since 82 countries created their own version of the show. We may have come full circle with Justin Bieber, as I actually found a Facebook page listing song lyrics that suggest he thinks money can buy love after all.

Growing up, I had an entrepreneurial streak and enjoyed finding creative ways to earn money long before I ever had a real job. At the same time, I had a deep a desire to uplift humanity, reduce suffering in the world, and know my maker. How could I combine that with the desire to make money?

Rather fittingly, it manifested in the aspiration to be a doctor by my freshman year of college. The noble profession seemed to feed that interest & idealism, and also came with a nice salary. But after three years of witnessing and participating in the survival-of-the-fittest culture of many pre-med classes, misery had become my constant companion. Through fierce competition, the atmosphere of kindness and the virtue of compassion had mostly evaporated, with some students even actively sabotaging others for their personal gain in an unrelenting drive to do anything it took to get ahead. I didn't want to get squeezed through that kind of system.

Looking deeper, I realized that the people I felt inspired to help were the millions around the world suffering and dying from preventable diseases whose lives could be saved with a few inexpensive medicines and procedures. I reasoned that I didn't need to be a doctor to serve these people, I just needed a lot of money. So I switched majors to economics and decided I needed to conquer business. I basically doubled-down on money.

In my last year of college, I joined a close friend in starting a dot-com. It was the height of the first tech boom and limitless possibilities seemed open to anyone with ideas and the smarts to execute on them. The fast-paced and thrilling ride became a meteoric rise which culminated in a buyout only six months into the young company's existence. Yet what seemed like a success on the outside felt like one of my deepest failures on the inside.

You see, while the tech-boom took the lid off my excitement and enthusiasm, it also exploded my greed. When I actually got a whiff of big money, all my noble intentions around helping others got put on hold. Even before real money actually materialized, a senseless and dizzying consumerism came over me. Its embarrassing to talk about today, but suffice to say I spent serious time on EBay buying symbols of conquest and power like swords, and even considered buying a \$23,000 jet pack before I came to my senses.

Fear also came up every day. We felt we had to do whatever we could to get the best deal for the company, and as a result, were terrified of making a mistake and losing big. Sensing that, the folks buying us split my partner and I up and negotiated separately. The strategy worked and the final deal was sealed without me in the room. We both got much less than we could have, but what we really lost was our friendship. His actions felt like a betrayal that was hard to overlook. The chilling part was that if the tables were turned, I might have been the one perpetrating the betrayal.

Doubling down on money was a bad bet.

Money was once the means, but it somehow became the goal. It started as a tool that served us, then it became the tether that bound us, before finally becoming the noose that hung us. We knew how to measure the price of everything, but the value of nothing-- much less the worth of what mattered.

Finding out what mattered most brought me to the next area where exploring beliefs was key.

That's what began my exploration of service.

My concept around service began with thoughts that it was about helping and charity. In my few explorations with my concept of service in high school, I sometimes found it gratifying, other times felt like something was missing. I touched on what I was missing a couple of years after my dot-com-bust, when I came across a Fast Company article titled "The Perfect Vision of Dr V". It absolutely electrified me, and I totally recommend that you check it out.

Student Achievement :

Antinia Butler, 11th Grade

Antinia Maria Butler was recently selected for Bank of America's Student Leaders program, an eight week summer internship and leadership summit in San Francisco and Washington, DC. This highly competitive program will provide Antinia with a paid internship at a local non-profit, helping her strengthen her extra-curricular advocacy work as well as continue to support her in her longer term aspirations to become a lawyer.



As a foster youth herself, Antinia has become very involved in foster youth advocacy, especially on the legislative level. She has spent a lot of time this year volunteering with California Youth Connection (CYC), working with their team on legislation in Sacramento that should help close loopholes and abuse in the foster care system. Through CYC she goes to conferences, takes classes in politics, accountability, and how to write laws that are clear. She recently received an award from State Senator Mark Leno for the dedicated work that she has been providing CYC.

Antinia enrolled at SFWS as a Kitch scholar after completing middle school at Kipp Bayview Academy. While the transition to Waldorf was at times difficult, Antinia appreciates the opportunity that she has had to experience different teaching styles, social groups, and cultures. Even though she was the only one who came from her middle school, she made friends quickly and was class president in 10th grade.

In addition to her selection for the Bank of America's Student Leaders program, Antinia's hard work is paying off in other ways as well. This spring she won a space on a Historical Black College and University (HBCU's) tour and was able to visit six different colleges in the South. She is enthusiastic about a number of the colleges that she toured and was struck with some engaging observations about being a Californian in a different part of the country. Antinia says "I can't wait to live in the south! Everyone says to have an open mind, and it will be a different experience, another lens to look through."

Petrichor

By Fanta Mullennix, 8th Grade

Her gentle heart fell like birds shot from the sky,
The last beat sweeping through the air and night.
Her innocent love shone clear as daylight,
But was thrown back in the moanings of
midnight,
Where all suffused to grey and perished from sight.
Where faceless souls rung out of a nightmare
scene,
All unhealthy, and unclean.
This unknown world was endless it seemed.
But birds arose from the dream, only shaken from
the flight,
Their lissome feathers once again graced by light.
Reborn from the devastating lands of fright
But venturing higher skies, bearing a greater
might.
Some might have said they fled,
Others would say they faced all
the dread,
But only one truth remains,
whichever way,
For they chose to be alive rather
than withered to decay
It was sure there was never such
a sacred, efflorescent sight as
they
As there was no heart more
whole, loving,
And ebullient as hers after that
one day.



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us has his or her own environment which shapes the perspective with which we view the world. But we can learn to appreciate other less familiar environments, and therefore other perspectives, by first recognizing where we come from and what shapes our lives, and then listening and sharing with one another in the small microcosm of our class. Thus we gain a wider, more comprehensive view of the world beyond that which forms our own narrow perspectives.

Thirdly, the skies are just one area that provides endless opportunities for inquiry, for continued scientific exploration, for stretching our thinking beyond what we understand now, beyond what we even in our wildest imaginations think is possible. The other day we spoke about the power, magnitude, and life-giving qualities of the sun, the sun which is so constant that we often take it for granted. And yet what mysterious and profound wisdom lies in its movements as it journeys through the skies, taking our entire solar system, and therefore you and me, with it. We are part of an immense and glorious cosmic dance.

Finally, think of the full force of the sun, the wind that wreaked havoc with our tents, or the vulnerability of kayaks on the open sea, the unforgiving pull of currents at the beach. All result from understandable, natural laws, but despite advances in knowledge we still cannot so accurately predict, much less control, any of it. How reassuring, therefore, to realize that even the most dramatic storms are just Nature's way of restoring balance. We are partially conscious participants in a great system of dynamic change in which powerful, invisible, and life-altering forces are at work. By both small and massive movements, peace eventually returns, daily rhythms are re-established, fresh waters bring new life, and we breathe freely in an ocean of air, newly swept clean.

And so it is with this time of your life, as you go forward into high school. Things are changing, in ways unpredictable and unsettling. Currents will pull and push you in different directions, storms will arise but you will eventually find your balance in a newly enlivened and refreshed environment. And so, I don't wish you completely smooth sailing. Too much of a calm sea would be boring, perhaps even disastrous. It is by overcoming challenges that we gain in strength, in confidence, and find purpose.

Speaking of purpose, Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy, on which Waldorf education is based, said the purpose of our education is to develop free human beings, who in and of themselves, find purpose and meaning in their lives. As participants in Waldorf education, you have been given a head start in this life-long task. The love and support of all your teachers, your parents, your families, and your friends, are with you as you set out on the next phase of your life's journey. Go with joy, with grace, with strength.

Tulips, Chocolate and Eurythmy:

The San Francisco Youth Eurythmy Troupe in Holland and Belgium, 2013

Having crossed a single street from our hotel, we found ourselves at a grand and historic cultural nexus: before us stretched the green expanse of the Museumplein; to our left were the treasures of the Van Gogh Museum and the Old Masters of the Rijksmuseum; to our right stood the Modern Art Stedelijk Museum, and the perfectly proportioned Concertgebouw, said to have the best acoustics in Europe. History and culture around us, adventure and eurythmy before us – this must be Amsterdam!

Buoyed by the enthusiasm of our San Francisco performances, we were bringing our 2013 program, "The Wish of All Wishes" to Holland and Belgium. The Troupe's yearly tours are a self-standing enterprise, with all financial support coming from donors on three continents (Europe, Asia and North America), parent contributions and fundraising. This year's Troupe comprised 23 students from tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades, with Artistic Director Astrid Thiersch, speaker David Weber, pianist Lilia Zheltova and her accomplished cellist son Mischa, and our

dedicated colleague John Jackson. Our home shows at the JCC had been well attended and very enthusiastically received. With music by Chopin, Schubert, Mozart and Webern, verses and poems by Steiner and Silverstein, and the title story, a modern tale of desire and fulfillment, Astrid had crafted a rich offering of eurythmy.

We were met at the airport in Amsterdam by Liesbeth Heikens with Timo and Roos. It was wonderful to see the Mol/Heikens clan, dear friends who had contributed so much for many years to SFWS. Liesbeth had helped us make contact with Waldorf schools in Holland and Belgium, and we were thrilled to have her guide us into Amsterdam to find our new and state-of-the-art hostel, the Hotel Van Gogh. Walks through Museumplein and Leidseplein, and a canal boat cruise kept jet-lag at bay (nearly), and introduced us to this beautiful city by way of the famous canals.

A good Dutch buffet breakfast the next morning fueled us for some

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Alumni Corner

Gregory Lowell, (Class of 2006) is a forward observer with the 3rd Infantry Division of the US Army in Afghanistan. Forward observers are responsible for all indirect fire and the communication of battlefield intelligence. Soldiers who become forward observers require a high level of training and skill, both to work with high physical demands as well as the strategic and communications aspects of their roll.



Because of their strategic importance, they even require a security clearance. According to Greg, "I control and adjust surface to surface artillery and mortar fire, and provide terminal guidance for close air support. Basically, I'm the guy with the radio who calls up coordinates. It's a challenging but rewarding job."

Greg's battalion is doing "village stability operations," an initiative that is part of strengthening the Afghan response to insurgents by training the Afghan army and police and improving the quality of life so that the region will continue to be stable after the American combat forces withdraw. It does this by helping to connect the local populations to district level governance, giving the government an opportunity to regain legitimacy with the population, reducing the support for insurgents.

When Greg is not on a mission he has a lot of free time that is filled with quite a bit of reading. He says "I loaded up my kindle with a lot of books before we left with a lot of classics, spy thrillers and sci-fi/fantasy. Right now I'm going back and forth between Moby Dick and The Bourne Identity. On the classical front I'm planning on tackling the Mahabharata next (in abridged form, but still 2,000 pages)." Earlier in his deployment he read a lot of Tolkien and Heinlein.



A view from Greg's base in Afghanistan

A lot Greg's love of reading began at SFWS. He loved reading the Iliad, the Odyssey, Henry V, and Moby Dick and these books continue to call to him strongly. He describes many of the stories that he was told and the books that he read at SFWS and later in college as being instrumental in encouraging his military service. "Even the strongly anti-war stuff we read, like the poetry of Owen and Sassoon that we read with Ms. Gorman held a strange appeal for me."

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Alumni Reunions:

Founding Class of 1988 Celebrates 25-Year Reunion!

We hosted a number of reunions this year for alumni. In the fall, the recent 8th grade, **Grade School Class of 2012**, returned to the eurythmy room. The winter solstice saw the high school Herbst Hall filled with alumni and alumni parents from SFWS as well as other Waldorf Schools for our **Annual Holiday Alumni & Family Reunion**. In March, the **GS Class of 2009** also met in the eurythmy room, and in June we hosted our annual **Summer Alumni Reunion** party at ThirstyBear Brewing Company with the **HS Class of 2003** our special guests celebrating their 10-year reunion!



Members of the Grade School Class of 1988 with their children in the grade school yard.

This spring we also hosted a reunion for the first graduating 8th grade class, the class of 1988. Most of the class joined us with their families on the patio by the library on a sunny May morning. While the children played in the yard the alumni had a lovely time reminiscing their time at school and sharing what they are up to in their lives now.



Members of the Class of 2003 with their grade school class teacher David Weber.

for my 10-year Harvard Kennedy School reunion. My children Gwendolyn and Henry are 4.5 years old and 9 months old. Gwen will start kindergarten at a Waldorf charter school in Ukiah in the fall!

Jason Cook: I am married to my wife Krista Cook and we have two small children, Penelope age 2 and Carson age 4. We own Lighthouse Realty and are always super busy managing employees, real estate sales, property management, but....the most important part of my day is playing with my kids, surfing/kite surfing and enjoying life on the Westside of Santa Cruz.

Anna Sopko: I have worked for SFUSD for the past 10 years. I am currently a reading specialist at Tenderloin Community School. I love my work! I completed an MFA in writing a few years ago which was also a lot of fun. My daughter Mila is four years old and delightful. We live in San Francisco and recently adopted a cat.

Ravi Pursley: I am finishing my first year as Director of Finance and Operations at the Berkwood Hedge School in Berkeley, CA, a progressive, constructivist K-5 elementary school with strong environmental and social justice roots. I'm married to the amazing Sandy Chan of Studio Paz architects and we have 2 lovely/wild little kids, Kaimana, who is in Kindergarten, and Makoa, age 3, who is in pre-school. We love to bike around Oakland's Lake Merritt, check out music and art at the monthly Art Murrur, and to grow peas, kale, and flowers in our local community garden plot.

More Alumni Updates

America Whitten (Class of 2009) will be graduating summa cum laude from UCSC with a BA in Psychology.

We were excited to see an interview with alumnus **Brett Thurber (Class of 2005)** in the June 2013 edition of Sunset Magazine - <http://www.sunset.com/magazine/>. The interview highlights his Bernal Heights electric bike shop The New Wheel - <http://www.newwheel.net/>.

Benjamin Finser (Class of 2009) graduated magna cum laude from Occidental College in Los Angeles with a BA in Economics on May 19th along with two other SFWHS alum (Katrina Tholaug and Niel Newmann). He is moving to Chicago in July to work as an analyst at an international small-cap equities investment fund.

Sarah Leslie (Class of 2006) has recently completed a set of handcrafted cookbooks. She writes:

"In college I took a class called The Book: Theory and Practice. I was attracted to the class because the professor, Barry Moser, or Bubba as we called him, had taught my uncle in prep school decades earlier, and perhaps more importantly, his class offered the opportunity to study the craft and art of books.



"The classroom is an art studio containing three presses, broadsides, posters, plants, and cases and cases of lead type. Bubba taught us how to

set type; how to place the letters upside down and backwards in an instrument we held in our other hand; how the arrangement of letters and spaces became words. Setting type became my meditation. Out of my love of this repetition, I created a cookbook that I wrote, illustrated, handset, printed, and bound. A main lesson book of sorts, one might say.

"Setting the type and printing the book took two semesters and many hours. Binding the book took much longer as its pages sat around for months, waiting until I had enough courage to fold them and punch holes in them. Only now, three years later, have I finished binding the book and printing the cover.

"My love for books and writing has persisted. I'll be going to CalArts in the Fall as a candidate for a MFA in creative writing."

Sarah is selling copies for \$150. You can reach her at alexandra.leslie@gmail.com

We love updates! Send in your updates or find out more about our alumni program at www.sfwaldorf.org/alumni or contact Seraph White at white@sfwaldorf.org.

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After high school, Greg took a gap year and worked for long enough to support a two month backpacking trip through Europe. He enlisted in the Army at the beginning of his senior year at St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he graduated with a degree in liberal arts in 2011. He started basic training two weeks after graduation. Greg says that he joined the Army for many reasons, "some combination of a desire for adventure, needing a job, patriotism, and wanting to 'be all that I can be.'" He plans to remain with the Army for the next few years at least, and would like to teach history at the high school or college level when he leaves active duty.

CLASS OF 2013 – COLLEGE MATRICULATION

American University
Bennington College
Bentley College
Boston College
University of British Columbia
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, San Diego
College of Marin
Colorado College
University of Colorado, Boulder (2)
Dominican University
Evergreen State College (2)
Haverford College
Humboldt State University
Lewis and Clark College
Miami University of Ohio
New York University
Occidental College
Oxford College of Emory
University
University of Redlands
Reed College
University of San Francisco
San Francisco State University (2)
Seton Hall University
Southern Oregon University
Tel Aviv University
Whitman College
University of Wisconsin



GS Bike to School Day

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marathon sightseeing. Can you see Amsterdam in a day? We gave it a good try! First we were off to the Rijksmuseum, where a large collection of Old Masters was still on view, despite almost-finished renovations. A tram ride took us to the Spui square, Begijnhof (cloister with the English Church), Kalverstraat (pedestrian shopping street), bookstores and café lunches. The city is at once charmingly old and thoroughly modern: traditional gezellig brown cafés sit next to shops selling the latest tech gear, all brightened by tulip bouquets in a dozen colors.

We walked through the flower market to Rembrandtsplein, and on across the Amstel to the Hermitage, temporary home of much of the Van Gogh collection. Some students found the flea market and other venues of interest, and in late afternoon we gathered to tour the Anne Frank Huis. The poignant story of Anne and her family is brought to life in a most profound way here, and we were all very moved. Afterward, a stroll down the Prinsengracht brought us to an Indonesian restaurant for a delicious dinner, where we were joined by Liesbeth and Caspar, as well as Timo, who stayed with his former twelfth grade classmates at the hostel. It was a beautiful day in a beautiful city, and the warmth of good friendship helped mitigate the winter chill.

We woke to another sunny day (our Amsterdam visit slotted neatly between two snowstorms), and the students headed off for a last free morning, many making a satisfying trip to the Albert Cuyp street market. In the afternoon we loaded into a bus, and a 75 minute ride was all it took to shift the scene from the graceful old canal houses and monuments of Amsterdam to the muscular modernity of the port city of Rotterdam.

There we were hosted by Rudolf Steiner College, a high school with 750 students in grades seven through twelve. The four eurythmy teachers, our correspondent Jeanine Ritter and her colleagues Vincent, Laura, and Miriam, went out of their way to make us comfortable and

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It was a story about an ophthalmologist in South India with a mission to eradicate needless blindness in the world. He started an 11 bed eye clinic in his house doing cataract surgeries for free, since cataracts happen to be the largest preventable cause of blindness in the world. 'Free' doesn't have a business model that sounds like it could scale up to eradicating blindness, but somehow Dr. V kept going and turned his retirement project into the largest, most productive eye hospital in the world ... doing millions of surgeries a year. It still gave away 2/3 of its services for free, and managed a 40% profit from the patients who could afford to pay.

What's more, the hospital began sharing their operating techniques with other hospitals around the world such that their capacity to serve patients grew by sometimes 50X. Dr V seemed to have a completely different orientation toward business, money, and service. His model seemed to be built around compassion, and magic seemed to happen as a result.

Now Dr V already sounds pretty amazing, but it gets even more mind-blowing. He came from a village with no formal school, where he learned to read by drawing in the sand. From such daunting odds, he managed to go to college, and then medical school. He graduated as an OBGYN, but then contracted a rare form of rheumatoid arthritis that twisted his limbs and fingers with such excruciating pain that he spent 2 years in bed. When he finally managed to start moving around, he could no longer continue as an OBGYN. So he retrained as an ophthalmologist, learning to do surgeries in the tiniest, most delicate part of the body. And yet those gnarled hands alone performed more than 100,000 cataract surgeries.

Not only was his work inspiring, but his personal journey seemed mythic and herculean. Everything about him touched the core of my heart, and my aspirations around lifting humanity and reducing suffering in the world. His example felt like the antidote to my mistakes and the northstar that I could navigate by. I resolved that I had to meet him but I had no idea how.

A couple years later, I came across another manifestation of service that moved me. During the time I was starting a company, some other folks had decided to use the energy of the tech boom differently. A group called ServiceSpace started by making free websites for non-profits. Much like Dr. V, they were prolific and gave away millions of dollars of free services without charging a dime. But their true goal was to practice generosity, and that created the space for all kinds of new projects to emerge.

One day these two inspirations of mine collided when Dr. V showed up at ServiceSpace to give a brief talk! Knowing that they were connected further legitimized their mysterious connection around service, generosity, and compassion, and I decided I had to explore more. A few months later, I had quit my corporate job and was at Dr. V's hospital in South India ready to be of service.

At the hospital, the poor villager whose sight was saved would be so grateful that he'd organize vision camps that brought treatment to hundreds more. Or the goodwill of a family who was touched by the care would manifest in the unprecedented step of sending their unmarried daughters to the hospital for a few years to get trained and work as ophthalmic nurses. Seeing this kind of gratitude was awe-inspiring and uplifting, though my lack of language skills ultimately kept me from connecting more directly to these everyday stories.

Around this time a friend from ServiceSpace encouraged me to travel north to Gandhi Ashram. Given that I had local language proficiency in that region of India, I made the trip and connected with another

inspiring organization there called Manav Sadhna, that seemed similarly powered by generosity, compassion, even love. Their service manifested through a multitude of grassroots projects in the slums. And it was actually in the slums that my beliefs around money and service clarified even further.

While delivering books to a small library inside a community center set up by Manav Sadhna, I came across a guy who overturned all my assumptions about poor people. This guy was born in the slums, but informally trained by a doctor such that he was good enough to start earning about \$10 a month as a medical apprentice by age 9. Over the years he learned more complex diagnoses, minor surgeries & sutures, and pharmacology. By age 14, he'd quadrupled his income to \$40/ mo and became the primary breadwinner for his family. In the midst of this, he discovered that he was actually interested in engineering, and worked hard enough to save up for, and get into college. By this time, he had a full time school schedule, two jobs, and four hours of sleep a night. He did this 6 days of the week, and he'd spend his 7th day of the week tutoring other kids in the slum. He was physically fit despite rampant disease in the slums, highly disciplined, handsome, charismatic, compassion, and incredibly bright.

I fancied myself as a fairly good guy, but I had to admit that he was better me in every way that I could imagine, with the exception of wealth. It would take him 5 lifetimes to earn what I could earn in a single year. My mind couldn't wrap itself around the disparity.

The dissonance resolved when I realized I'm a steward, not the owner, of any money or resources that come into my life. Stewardship is about holding things only to pass them on to their rightful place, or protecting them to serve a higher purpose. That belief around money freed me from allowing it to become my purpose, and instead brought deeper meaning to everything that I've earned and spent since.

That encounter in the slum also shed deeper light on service. What could possibly motivate someone who was already so stretched to work that hard for others? Shouldn't he have relaxed or caught up on sleep on his day off?

Turned out that this guy felt grateful for all the knowledge he received. He was grateful to be able to support his parents. He was grateful to be able to study engineering. And his gratitude was naturally overflowing. Guess what? Dr V felt grateful to have the opportunity to save lives and receive thanks. As Nipun Mehta, one of the founders of ServiceSpace says, "Service doesn't start when you have something to give, it blossoms naturally when you have nothing left to take."

I realized that service is accompanied by a feeling of gratitude, because it originates from a fullness that overflows as generosity.

But how do you arrive at such a place of fullness?

Practicing stillness has played a major role in finding fullness for me, and that's the third domain I began to explore. And while I believe stillness is the biggest game-changer across these three domains I've talked about, it's also the most sacred and thus the one that I can say the fewest words about.

Stillness sounds boring, and seems counterproductive. As if that weren't enough, with so many things competing for our attention, it seems that hardly any space exists for stillness.

One of my biggest lessons in stillness came while I was caring for a man I found lying in the gutter near a train station in India. He was just a skeleton when I found him, and had become so dehydrated in the 110

I have been a Waldorf student since kindergarten. I started in the Waldorf School of the Peninsula, and came up to San Francisco for high school. For all but five years of my life I have been a Waldorf student—a fairly definitive characteristic. Although at every stage of my development I have received something unique and valuable from my education, I am only going to speak about what I have gathered in the final four years of my Waldorf odyssey.

One of the central themes I have taken from my high school experience is relativity. I was not taught to think of art and analysis as two different beings, and neither was I expected to see physics in a different light than philosophy. This holistic approach to seemingly polar opposites informed the way I encountered new subjects, and subsequently led me to a deeper understanding. Not only was I open to different topics, but once I began to grasp them I could see them as part of something greater. Instead of treating each subject as its own private mechanism, I began to see them as smaller pieces of a greater, almost cosmic mechanism—a contraption that could not be understood without full comprehension of its smallest cogs and wheels. To fathom Dostoyevsky's "Notes from the Underground"—a piece of writing as enigmatic as the mysteries of light—I approached it as a musician. Instead of trying to glean meaning from every sentence I let it wash over me as a whole, macerating my mind in the stream of Dostoyevsky's writing. Looking at the chart for the symphony instead of the charts for each violin, I began to understand something I had not seen before. By gaining this new perspective of it as a musical piece, I was able to penetrate its murky depths further and find some shining gems within.

The same can be said for my all areas of my study. I began to see similarities between the weaving of baskets and the weaving of Shakespeare's plays. In creating an ideal society, I could begin to feel the correspondence between forming metal and

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SFWHS Commencement: Barbara Horning, Class of 2013

Dear friends and family, it has been a long four years. But in these four years, we have all grown into educated young adults. Our teachers taught us, not just their subjects but lessons of the heart, mind, and soul. At the beginning of our journey together, we came in as freshmen, we were the lowest on the food chain and the shortest in the school. We struggled through our first main lessons and got to know the other grades through clubs and sports.

We got our first taste of high school science in Thermodynamics where we studied the effects of heat and cold. We also traveled the high seas with Mr. Wong in Pacific Rim. We compared animal and human forms in Physiology with Dr. Burket and ended the year with Idealism where we constructed all aspects of an ideal society. Here we ended the year of the "what" and moved into the year of "how."

In sophomore year we came back from summer vacation, only to get our first taste of Dr. Carini, in mechanics. Some of us realized that physics really was not our thing and some were happy for the challenge. We continued on to learn about ancient cultures and their influence on modern life in Classical world with Mr. Wong. We made our way up through the ranks of politics in Government and studied left and right wing ideals. We inched through ancient literature and studied many religious texts. We wove through trigonometry and mapped out landforms.

We wrote through poetics with Ms. Calderera and many of us found voices we had long forgotten. We dove into embryology and discovered the mysteries of life and growth while also realizing some fears we had for our own futures.

Junior year started with one question, who? As we got older, we started to question everything more, and more. As the boys grew into their bodies, the girls grew into their souls. We started the year off with a trip to mount Lassen and studied the stars. We brought our experiences into the classroom for astronomy and perspired for hours over our astronomy charts. We started to study in depth the characters of Hamlet and Parzival in world literature and explored the heroes' self-discovery and inner journey. We dissected cellular biology with Dr. Burket and propelled through

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Portal



The San Francisco Waldorf High School

Literary Magazine

To order a copy of the Literary Magazine, please contact the front desk.

The Race to Nowhere

Liana Shimizu-Castellanos, Grade 10

The race to nowhere leaves everyone behind.
While we try to get there, we can be so unkind.
Always hurrying to keep up with the Jones's,
never stopping to smell the sweet roses.
Get ready to start, now get ready to go,
You don't want to be late, miss out on the show.
If you can't keep up, well, that's just too bad!
No time to stop to see why we feel sad.
Fear of abandonment will keep us on track;
stay moving forward, with no looking back.
Drop out of the race, you'll be left alone to cry.
We'll miss you at first, then we'll pass you on by.
Run, run, run on, run on 'til you drop.
So what would happen if we all were to stop?
Admitted we want more out of this life
than getting ahead, with all of this strife?
Take time for each other, take time to take care,
help out those without, and learn how to share.
Who cares about who wins! Hear the beauty call!
I believe what we're missing, is really it all!

Life is not a destination that must be reached;
though it seems as though that's what is preached.
Wake up! Throw out these rules and step out of line!
Let's make our own journeys; let's savor our time!

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degree heat that his tongue had cracked from drying up. When I gave him water, it literally ran out from wounds on his arms & legs-- wounds I later learned came from rats that nibbled at him as he lay on the road. Due to his severe condition, I had him admitted to the hospital.

Yet hospitals in India, esp. gov't hospitals, are so different that the ones here. They don't feed patients, so I had to bring him meals twice a day. They don't bathe patients, so I would give him baths. They had no wheelchairs, so I'd carry him to get xrays. I even cleaned his feces when he soiled himself, and ran open vials of blood for testing when they thought he had HIV.

The schedule of caring for him was harrowing given my full time official duties. I would barely get a few hours of sleep at night, and still be falling behind on work. Yet the biggest challenge was to continue to serve him with my whole heart despite the doctors telling me that he could die any day. The physical and emotional demands pushed me to my limits and I seemed close to breaking down every single day.

And yet it was in stillness that I was filled back up with renewed strength each day. It was in stillness that I found the power to choose my attitude and taste freedom. It was in stillness that I found gratitude.

Through stillness I began to know myself. And knowing yourself is the key to unlocking all the other knowledge there is.

This sounds like a tall order, but I have an easy way for you to take small steps.

If you're a graduating senior, you received 10 smile cards. I encourage you to do an act of kindness and leave the card behind for the recipient to pay it forward. If you do it right, it will quickly turn into a lot of fun. Practicing generosity with no strings attached will bring you to service. Service may transform your relationship to money, and even give you a few glimpses of stillness.

Class of 2013, may you all choose your beliefs wisely and grow in happiness, generosity, and stillness.

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forming a civilization. The biological evolution we studied in the lab was comparable to Parzival's spiritual evolution we read about in medieval texts. The visual poetry of photography seems even more magnificent with knowledge of the chemical reactions of film. While reading Viktor Frankl's book *Man's Search for Meaning*, I could not help but see the many consequences of quantum mechanics manifest themselves in humanity's struggle to find meaning. Bohr's Uncertainty Principle suddenly gained an incredible amount of depth in juxtaposition with psychology.

As I said, this holistic manner of learning allows the student to see all fields of study as a part of some truer greatness. There is a comparison to be made: to study the small truths in order to gain a fuller understanding of the great truths is like studying the human being itself. We are incredibly multifaceted creatures. We can be seen as products of thousands and thousands of miniscule biological reactions, or on an even smaller scale, chemical ones. Our lives can be shown to be products of psychology, wherein the human mind is the ultimate. 'Our lives can be shown to be the result of unbreakable physical laws, some of which we know and some of which we cannot even begin to imagine. We are artistic beings; our legacy will be what we create. The myriad of ways to understand the human is a somewhat of a labyrinth, and once one chooses a particular path, it becomes harder and harder to turn back and start anew. An expert in biology for example, will have trouble understanding where in the human body Mozart's music came from. It can be easy to get lost in this labyrinth, for as one goes deeper and deeper down their chosen path, it becomes more difficult to remember the reason they started walking in the first place. There is a danger of becoming the Minotaur, confined in his maze, instead of the more complete human one originally set out to find.

In my four years at the Waldorf high school, I have been able to glimpse this vast labyrinth of humanity, and it is daunting. But because Waldorf has taught me to think universally and completely, I have been lucky enough to receive a ball of yam. I can tie one end to a post just outside of the labyrinth so that no matter how deep I plunge down any winding corridor, the dark walls rising high overhead, I can find my way back out. I can come out, and see the labyrinth as it really is, as a whole, and be reminded that any path I choose is just one of an infinite amount, winding and twisting together to form the beautiful confusion of humanity.

Continued from page 7 "HORNING"

projective geometry where we explored concepts of space and time. We were captivated by electricity and magnetism and unlocked the world of physics on a whole new level. We listened through music history with Mr. Weber and learned about music through the ages. We came back to our roots and explored U.S. History and created our own opinions on the many events that have happened in America. We ended the year with a new understanding of the people in the world and also a lot of new stresses when looking forward to college applications and senior projects.

Our final year brought us to the question of "why". We challenged ourselves with questions of morality in Goethe's *Faust* and questioned the American transcendentalists such as Thoreau and Emerson. Although the stress from college applications and senior activities was tough, we got to choose what we would study. This freedom let us make our own decisions about what we wanted to study and many pursued biology or language, and there were even some brave souls who chose honors physics, and those of us who were interested in politics and religion chose the world affair and comparative religions class. Each of these paths helped give our questions some answers. Our teachers took us on a journey into Optics, Economics and zoology and pushed us harder than ever. However we have prevailed. We ended the year with a study of symptoms, where we were asked to look under the surface and delve into the real problems that affect society. Senior year helped us and our own moral compasses so that we can become part of society. We are all moving into the world today and all of our teachers and peers have contributed to that. From freshmen to seniors we grew and changed each year and we find ourselves here today, as strong, well rounded and intelligent individuals.

On behalf of the senior class, I would like to honor a teacher who has been our supporter throughout these four years and especially helped us this last year. Joan Calderera has guided our class to graduation. We could not have done it without her, her passion and drive helped bring us to this stage. She worked tirelessly on our production of our town. Called donors when we needed money for our class trip and made sure everyone had checked off all the items on their lists for graduation. She is truly an amazing woman to have dealt with us and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts, Ms. Calderera could you please come up.



Public Events Coming Up

Monday, August 26	High School Classes Begin
Wednesday, August 28	Grade School Classes Begin
Friday, September 27	All School Assembly Stern Grove
Sunday, October 27	Fairy Walk grade school campus
Sunday, December 8	Winter Fair grade school campus

Visit our online calendars and news pages at www.sfwaldorf.org for more details about events.



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welcome, with an abundance of delicious snacks and drinks, a candlelit dinner, and attentiveness to our every need.

After an intense round of rehearsal, ironing, light cues, dinner, costumes and make-up, we were finally ready for our first public performance. The students were eager to do eurythmy again, and they brought fine energy to the stage throughout the full program. The audience was hugely enthusiastic, responding with whooping, hollering, and a standing ovation. The Mol/Heikens family attended, and Liesbeth proudly pronounced, "You brought the beauty of San Francisco to Holland!"

We gathered early the next morning to prepare for two school performances. Eurythmy is not taught in the upper grades of this high school, yet the teachers felt our performance would help enliven the students' interest in eurythmy. The younger students were enchanted throughout the first program, and despite some initial self-conscious laughter, the older ones were quickly drawn in, responding especially to the theme of the tale and its modern presentation. As we prepared to depart, the students talked and exchanged email addresses. We were seen off by a group of students and teachers, having brought a vibrant and much appreciated experience to the school.

An easy two-hour bus ride brought us to beautiful Gent, Belgium, and the Vrije Rudolf Steinerschool Gent. It is a unified K-12 school with about 250 students, and we felt immediately at home. One enters off a busy street through a castle-like portal and passes through the first building to discover a campus that opens up all the way to the next street, with many buildings, paths, trees and yards, a delightful Waldorf village.

Our hosts were busy in the hall and the nearby kitchen, preparing stage lighting, hot chocolate, coffee, and snacks. We were very warmly welcomed by Mia Lemaitre and Xavier De Keyser, who had founded the school some thirty years before, and were clearly involved heart and soul in carrying it. We rehearsed on a large and beautifully lit stage, and after dinner with some colleagues the students were fetched by school families for the first of a two-night home stay. The weather was quite cold but clear, and we were warmed inside and out by the welcome of this special community.

The students arrived early in the morning for our grand finale

performance day: back-to-back shows for grades one through six, then for seven through twelve, and an evening performance for the public. Other Waldorf grade schools from the area joined the audience at the first performance, and the effect of the eurythmy program was magical. The Troupe presented eurythmy of great power and beauty, and the audiences for both shows were riveted, with not a peep in the house.

Our hosts had arranged visits to classes and time for conversation among the students after lunch. Good connections were made in conversations on topics ranging from eurythmy and Waldorf (what distinguishes a Waldorf student?), to university, art, music, hobbies and sports. Teachers expressed that our visit had brought lightness and joy, changing the atmosphere of the school.

Our third performance, and last of the tour, was surrounded with a special glow. We had a knowledgeable and highly appreciative audience. We were graced with special visits from our alumna Bella (now studying eurythmy in Stuttgart), a former classmate, Justine, who traveled from Paris, and special friends from Brussels. Many teachers and little children who love eurythmy came for the second and third time; they felt we had truly blessed their school, and we felt blessed also. This was a very poignant last performance for our seniors, as they did the full program a final time. Observing the sweep of eight performances from backstage, Astrid saw that the students' confidence had grown tremendously, as they made the art of eurythmy their own.

The next day was our last in Belgium. The students from both schools said their heartfelt adieux, and we began a day-long exploration of beautiful Gent. The very cold weather provided an incentive to see the impressive buildings from inside as well as out, and so we discovered the cathedral, a castle, and many museums, sensational chocolate shops, and cafés. A celebratory dinner with friends from Gent, Utrecht and San Francisco was the perfect coda to our tour.

The human soul is enlivened both by performing and by seeing eurythmy. We become aware of something truly human within us, and this awareness creates social connections of depth and sensitivity, from the heart. We are most grateful to our sponsors, our hosts, and to the art we practice that students around the world can meet in this meaningful way.

– David Weber, April 2013

Visit us at www.sfwaldorf.org/high-school/arts/eurythmy-troupe