

SAN FRANCISCO WALDORF SCHOOL



2nd Grade
Santa Lucia Procession

High School Winter Concert:
Drum Ensemble



8th Grade Facepainting
at Winter Fair

All School Ice Skating Party



Congratulations to the 8th grade
girls volleyball team for winning
their division championships!



The Season of Light

We all felt like summer might never end! There were plenty of warm, October days, and even into November there were weekends that just begged to be spent outdoors, soaking up the sun. With the time change, and the preparations and passing of Halloween and Day of the Dead, I started noticing all of the lights in the windows and ads and decorations in the stores, and realized that yes, the holiday season is coming toward us, faster than ever. I pulled out my phone and reminded myself to get some lights for the apartment, candles for the spinner and to hold off on the eggnog latte until after Thanksgiving (almost made it). The "Season of Light" was on its way.

The future seems to be coming toward us at record speed, with unprecedented impressions from media, advertisers, overachieving bloggers; even the Muni buses remind us that we need tickets to the next concert or museum exhibition. All I want to do is hold still and remember the past, which seems to stretch out forever and become timeless in its history. I want to stay there. I want to stay in the warm embrace of the smell of autumn cooking. I would like to return to the pumpkin patch with my small children, pick apples and bake crisp until we all cry, 'Enough already!' But, as we know, we can't go back. We can't just sit there and let the future roll right over us, either.

So we do things to help us dance with the future, and create the memories that become our past. One of the ways we do this in school is to measure the year by acknowledging and celebrating festivals in a way that strive to make a common experience for all of us to share.

The festivals create a calendar and a rhythm for us at school. The festivals you celebrate at home do the same for your family. Sometimes there is overlap between school and home, and sometimes not. We try to find the essentials in each festival, and invite all to participate. As we lit candles in early December and I gazed at the faces of the students beautifully illuminated by candlelight, I was reminded what this "Season of Light" is all about. The light is in all of us. That light which is us in our truest form, in our essence, which is love, both simple and complex. Let us remember that love, and recognize and see the higher nature of everything with which we come into contact - our family, children, friends, people we don't necessarily get

Continued on page 2 "SEASON OF LIGHT"

Grade School: 2938 Washington Street, SF, CA 94115; tel. (415) 931-2750; info@sfwaldorf.org
High School: 470 West Portal Avenue, SF, CA 94127; tel. (415) 431-2736; highschool@sfwaldorf.org

San Francisco Waldorf School www.sfwaldorf.org. Comments regarding this Newsletter or requests for e-mail pdf copies can be sent to newsletter@sfwaldorf.org.



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Teaching Thinking to the Tenth Grade: A Mini Play

Golden Gate Park on a beautiful autumn Sunday afternoon. Two teachers from the Waldorf High School pass each other.

Dr. Burket is holding a bunch of papers, while Mr. Wong clutches a round dish-shaped object.

Wong: Well, hello there Dr. Burket, nice to see you out of doors in this fine weather.

Burket: Good day to you, Mr. Wong. Yes, it's a relief, though I sense that things might be changing soon.

W: Strange how things suddenly change, though in this town it seems there's always an Indian Summer around the corner.

B: True enough. If you don't mind, can I ask you why you're holding that dish-shaped object?

W: I'm actually off to practice hurling this discus. *(He holds up the discus and starts swinging his arm to demonstrate.)*

B: Is this a new hobby?

W: No, I'm working on my form for my Classical World main lesson with the tenth grade. As part of our routine, Mr. Jackson teaches the students discus hurling, shot putting, and javelin throwing. I believe you are in the middle of your Embryology main lesson with the other half of the tenth.

B: Indeed I am. And I've got this pile of marking to prove it! *(He waves the pile of papers as proof.)* By the way, I heard you're writing an article for the monthly bulletin. What's it about?

W: I'm trying to write one. It's supposed to be about how we teach thinking in the high school. Maybe you could help me.

(A flock of seagulls pass overhead)

W: Do you like birds?



B: Of course I do, I'm a natural scientist. Those were California Gulls by the way, *Larus californicus*, to be precise.

W: I like birds because they remind me of a moment in the *Iliad* when a seer named Kalkhas gets called out to reveal the truth behind a situation. Some people read palms, others tea leaves, Kalkhas scans the flight of birds.

B: Your point being...

W: Two points really. First, I ask the students to read for patterns in the text and then to grasp meaning in them.

B: In a way as if they were Kalkhas the seer.

W: Yes.

B: And second?

W: Well, on a wider level I hope that these sixteen-year olds might also recognize something in the scene as part of a larger changing whole. In this case how people have always looked for signs from higher worlds to interpret life, and yet over time they also begin to follow an impulse to rely on themselves.

B: Can you be more specific?

W: Well, from the time of Homer in 800BC to the time of Golden Age Athens in the latter part of the 400's it's as if the Greeks changed the way they thought about things. I'd describe it as shift from mythological to historical and philosophical thinking. From a dependence and interplay with the gods, to a reliance on one's own perceptions, experience, and knowledge. You look intrigued.

B: That is not so far away from what we do in Embryology.

W: How so?

B: Well, we study the phenomenon of creation, generation, cell division, reproduction, development and differentiation, those kinds of things. As far as possible we do lab work and practical things to show the movement or evolution of an embryo. Kind of sounds like you do the movement to reinforce an understanding of the evolution of thought.

W: That sounds about right. What was that definition of Phenomenology that we talked about the other day?

B: Let me see. Oh yeah, 'Developing an understanding of things as they appear in our experience of them.

W: That's the one! It feels like your class attends to the physical world.

B: And your class attends to the metaphysical one.

Continued from page 1 "SEASON OF LIGHT"

along with, colleagues, our schools, places of worship, cultural organizations - everyone and everything holds the essential spark of this Season of Light. Each person in our lives, each entity we partner with has a higher being that is always there, and wanting to come forward. We just have to love them, figure out how to lift any obstacles to letting it come forward, and love the process. It's what we strive to do here as teachers, every day.

Festivals are an opportunity to stay centered and focus on essentials, especially when the burdens and distractions of the media barrage begin to feel heavy. Attention to differences rather than commonalities can obscure the light of a relationship or situation; festivals bring us together and can renew the light of the relationship. Through conscious participation in festivals, we celebrate the growth of our families in a familiar and welcome rhythm.

Many joys to you and all of your families, near and far, in this Season of Light and in the New Year.

*The gift of Light
We thankfully take
But it shall be
Not alone for our sake
The more we give light
The one to the other
The more that it glows
And spreads ever farther.
Until every heart
By love set aflame
In every place
Great Joy shall proclaim
Not long will continue
The dark of the year.
The Light draws near.*

Lisa Sargent, Grade School Music Teacher

W: Why then am I holding this discus and you are holding a pile of words?

B: Hmm.

W: Perhaps the physical and metaphysical are not mutually exclusive.

B: Perhaps we're showing that they are actually mutually inclusive. Food for thought.

W: Hmm.

B: So, ready to write the article?

W: I don't know. I was thinking of doing it as a Platonic dialogue but I'm not sure it's going to work.

Nick Wong, High School Humanities Teacher

Keeping Up with “The Outdoor Classroom”

Nature Grants Awarded

The Outdoor Classroom is pleased to announce its first round of environmental enrichment grants, awards that will support a class kayaking trip in Point Reyes, a sailing excursion on the Bay, and a rock climbing expedition to Pinnacles National Park. In addition to class trip funding, our nursery program will purchase rain tarps and other outdoor gear for their daily Presidio outings.

As reported in previous newsletters, the Outdoor Classroom is a three-year school-wide initiative that's designed to support and expand our existing nature-rich curriculum. It is inspired by the work of Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods* and *The Nature Principle*, and is part of an international movement to connect students with the natural world.

“Our teachers already do an incredible job bringing students and nature together,” said Amy Belkora, initiative leader and school Gardening Program Director. “These grants serve to enhance their students’ outdoor experiences -- supplementing, for example, the fifth grade Pinnacles botany trip with rock climbing instruction. The outing will provide physical and emotional challenges appropriate for the fifth grade child, and help to deepen student understanding of rock-based flora.”

The next round of bi-annual grant funding is scheduled for February.

Farming and Films Featured

The Outdoor Classroom is a three-pronged program that includes grant funding, teacher development, and community outreach. October was a busy month on the community outreach front with a lecture on biodynamic farming and farm-based education by Gloria and Stephen Decater of Live Power Community Farm (www.livepower.org).

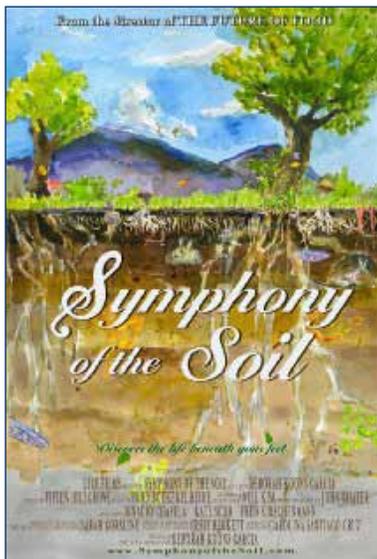
Later that month, The Outdoor Classroom co-sponsored the showing of “Symphony of the Soil,” a documentary by filmmaker Deborah Koons Garcia that was described in *The New York Times* as “... an ode to the miracle of the Earth’s topmost layer.” Attended by students, parents and faculty, the film closed the City’s eight-film Greater Good Film Festival of 2013. The film trailer and DVD sales are available at www.symphonyofthesoil.com/

Announcements about upcoming public outreach events will be made in early 2014. All the latest news and happenings about the Bay Area’s environment and natural world are available anytime at The Outdoor Classroom’s blog: <http://sfwsoutdoorclassroom.blogspot.com/>.

The Outdoor Classroom Coordinator is grade school gardening teacher Amy Belkora. She is supported by high school outdoor education teacher

Matt Hart and a 10-member all-school committee of parents, board members, teachers, and staff. The committee is currently focusing on ways to give students frequent, local excursions into nearby wild spaces in San Francisco.

We welcome questions and conversation about any Outdoor Classroom programming. We also encourage additional donations to help teachers enhance their work in nature with the students and possibly expand the duration and scope of this initiative. Contact Amy Belkora for more information.



Fairy Walk Thank You from the PA

Thank you to all who participated in the Fairy Walk this year! A heartfelt thank you to our fearless Co-Chairs Mari DiNardo and Candace Tam; our steadfast team leaders Paul Sabharwal, Kevin Rowney, Monique Duncan, Heidi Ostroff, Stephanie Lum, John Hoffsis, Therese Tuttle, Krista Loretto, Amber Isaacs, Michele Hoalduc Nguyen, Justin Ganz and Divo Brevik; and our generous donors Paul and Carina Sabharwal and Mary and Joseph Manzare.

Parent Volunteers:

Yoriko Yamamoto, Marc Ojanen, Aneta Goldman, Jennifer Hoban, Andrew Chacko, Brian Hennessey, Stephanie Mueller, Terry Pelka, Christie Every, Janet Stone, Doc Sabharwal, Caihong Zhou, Melinda Scully, Mauricio Trabuco, James Munden, Babak Behnia, Ghita Harris-Newton, Marshall White, Sabrina Nouri Moosa, Jonathan Drum, Terry Pelka, Allison Carroll, Jodi Jirsa, Flora Ojanen, Katja Radke, Takeshi Ito, Joanna Fugalli-Frost, Carolyn Gereau, Cynthia Randolph, Grace Kim, Maryam Ghajar, Jeneal Johns, Manami Ito, Anna Kourepis, Laura Hudgens, Annalisa Chasen, Mena Trott Lazar, Robert Tachaires, Shima Noori, Joseph Lugar, Lucy Goodhart, Ari Salomon, Yoriko Yamamoto, Peter Campbell, Orrin Ailloni-Charas, Ged Goodhart, Julia Sterling, Dennis Busenitz and anyone whose name does not appear here but graciously

helped out, including our many wonderful students from both the grade school and high school.

Photos from this year’s fairy walk are at <http://bit.ly/18jVi1T>



High School Parent Council

In October, the Parent Council hosted a conversation about our school’s new governance structure. After a brief overview from Craig Appel, President of the Board, the floor was opened to questions and comments. The discussion was frank and spirited, with most of the two dozen attendees voicing their views on a variety of issues. If you would be interested in attending a similar meeting after the holidays, please email Jim Stearns at stearnsf@aol.com.

We are also reaching out to parents in each high school class to get feedback on drugs and drug education at the school. The High School is being very proactive on this issue, but we want to make sure parents are heard. Please email your class representative and let them know: Do you have concerns about drugs on campus? Does your student feel safe at school? Is there peer pressure from fellow students around drugs and alcohol?

Please reach out and let us know if you have an issue you would like us to discuss, or want to get involved!

Parent Council Steering Committee

Marilyn Chism, Lisa Anderson & Martha Luna, 12th grade
Jim Stearns, Lorraine Woodruff-Long
& Margaret Grisz-Dow, 11th grade
Karen Staller & Tammy McMillen, 10th grade
Margo Engels & Jen Wallace, 9th grade

Alumni Corner

Waldorf and College: Interview with Andre Amarotico (Class of 2012)

by a 10th Grade Parent



As our 10th grader begins thinking a bit about college, including the possibility of choosing a competitive university, I began to wonder what it would actually be like for her to attend one coming from a Waldorf education. I've enjoyed reading various alumni interviews that touched on life in college and beyond, so when I ran into 2012 SFWHS grad **Andre Amarotico** I asked if he would share his impressions after his freshman year at Stanford. He graciously agreed. After hearing his reflections I asked if I could share them with the community. Here is part of

our e-mail conversation.

10th Grade Parent: I'm curious about what it is like going to Stanford after going through Waldorf. I'm curious about the academic transition. What sorts of classes did you take at Stanford and how was it relative to how it was for you at SFWHS? I suppose it would give some context to know how you did at SFWHS and how challenging it was or wasn't for you. It is really hard for me to extrapolate from what I see at SFWHS to some of what I know about undergraduate classes at Stanford. My daughter also wonders about how Waldorf is preparing her, as she sees how different her classes and homework are from what friends and relatives are doing in various rigorous forms of traditional education. So anything you can share would be helpful.

Andre Amarotico: So for starters there's the academic transition between Waldorf High School and Stanford. My experience has been a good one! In the months approaching my freshman year I was anticipating a significantly larger work load (especially more reading), and a much higher level of academic vigor than the relatively laid back and personal learning atmosphere of the high school. While it was harder and more academically vigorous when I actually got here, I felt very prepared to tackle the challenge.... Just for some context at SFWHS I had all A's except a few B's in math classes. In general I did have to work pretty hard in high school especially in math. It was not as bad as a lot of my Stanford peers had to work, but it was not a bumpless ride either...

At Stanford it has been similar with grades (Mostly A's and a few B's). Waldorf prepared me very well for Stanford! In fact I often feel more prepared than a lot of people around me. In classes here it pays to have some background knowledge of the different subjects that Waldorf teaches and other schools might not. For example I can't tell you how many times I've been able to bring up Transcendentalism in classes and had professors look at me like I had just started speaking their language. Another thing that I attribute in part to Waldorf is the idea that teachers like to interact with students through answering questions. While this may seem obvious it seems like everyone forgets this in college. In lecture halls with hundreds of people this concept still applies and teachers often remember me for my questions. I've even had my name go into slide shows for huge lectures just because I asked a question.

One other important thing to remember about any high school to college transition (and Stanford is no exception) is that while there is more work there is much more time to do it in. In high school one has to drive or bus to school, spend a significant portion of the day in class, and then make the commute home. This disappears in college as you live walking distance from class, and usually have 3 or 4 classes a quarter (you sometimes even have a 4 day week!). The bottom line is that more time to do work made the transition a lot less difficult than I had anticipated.

Parent: I'm also curious about what it is like friend-wise, to be with lots of people who may have participated in the hyper-competitive do-what-it-takes-to-get-into-Stanford high school process, when the whole tenor of the SFWHS education is so not that.

Andre: With regard to the friend making and people: There are some super competitive people here who don't think that anything matters but intellect and the money you can make from having it. That being said they are not every one. There are people with minds that aren't machines and hearts that pump real blood. I knew this as soon as I started hanging out more and more with friends I had made through theater and even my Italian class.

It is absolutely true that many of the motivated, driven people at Stanford have a different sensibility. They have the best intentions for the world in mind and are not self absorbed (many of my close friends are prime examples).

Alumni Updates

After two years at CloudOn in Palo Alto, where she worked as a product manager, **Alyssa Woodman (SFWHS Class of 2006)** started a new position at Tesla as a project manager for a team of engineers. She has also returned to her love of equestrian vaulting, coaching a trot team at Mount Eden Vaulting Club in Saratoga.



Merlin Woodman (SFWHS Class of 2008) is working for Parallels in Renton, WA, as a market research analyst. He lives in Seattle and continues his passion for sailing - which was awakened in the first week of ninth grade (by Michael Kuschner) when he joined the SFWHS sailing team. He now crews on a yacht whenever he can.

Katherine Feller (SFWS Class of 2006) is currently performing at the Dickens fair this holiday season. She is also in rehearsal for *Die Fledermaus* with the Lamplighters, which will open in January. She has been keeping busy with various work, rehearsals, and performances.

Sofia Alicastro (SFWS Class of 2010) was highlighted by Lewis and Clark College for her internship at the Cannes International Film Festival. <http://college.lclark.edu/live/news/23835>

Allason Leitz (SFWS Class of 2010), in her Senior year at Seattle University, learned Swahili over the past summer and will spend next Summer continuing her work with Yole! Africa. She plans to work for a year or two and then look at graduate school. She said, "I almost know exactly what I want to do for Grad School, but I am just making sure."

Send in your updates or find out more about our alumni program at www.sfwaldorf.org/alumni.

Save the Date:

San Francisco Youth Eurythmy Troupe presents **In Sun Light and In Soul Light**
Tuesday, January 28 at 7 pm and Wednesday, January 29 at 4 pm

SFWS Harvest Family Dance

Enriching the Spirit of Community

This year's all school Harvest celebration - a "Harvest Family Dance & Dinner" held on Saturday, November 9th at the GS, drew a full house with ages ranging from 2 to 80+. Young children, teenagers, parents, teachers, and grandparents came together. Harvest themes of pumpkins and squash, hay bales with wheelbarrows, and maple leaves, along with live traditional music, transformed Dakin Hall into Dakin "Barn" for the evening.

The festivities began with an 8th grade fundraiser - a delicious harvest dinner of soup, salad, apple crisp, and cider in the foyer of Dakin Hall. In a relaxed and colorful atmosphere, families ate together by candlelight and enjoyed each other's company.

The Harvest Dance then opened with caller Erik Hoffman gathering the community into a large circle dance. Leaping into the center with this fiddle, Erik called, "Alleman left... alleman right... into the center... do-si-do your partner... and promenade." All ages joined hands and peels of laughter could be heard for the rest of the evening, as Erik guided the community through a range of dances including: The Virginia Reel (without the reel); Rural Felicity (a variant of The Flying Scotsman); and some Kentucky Running Set figures such as Circles and Stars, Duck for the Oyster, Birdie in the Cage, La Escoba (the New Mexican version of The Broom Dance), Sasha, The Orcadian Strip the Willow (a Scottish dance), and several waltzes.

Music was performed by Erik Thor and Hands Four, with Ingrid Noyes on banjo and accordion, Michael Harmon on guitar, and Erik Hoffman on fiddle. Throughout the evening, the band welcomed our school community musicians to join them on stage. Parents John Hoffsis and Joshua Sondheimer played guitar and students Jeremy Engels (Gr 9), Isabella Daniels (Gr 5), Ariel Ratsep (Gr5), Aidan Sondheimer (Gr 4), and Delilah Daniels (Gr 2) played violin.

One of the prime inspirations for the event was the Krikorian Folk Dancing Fund, which was established last June by the GS class of 2013. The class set up this fund in honor of their class teacher Deborah Krikorian who is an avid folk dancer and one who has strived to keep folk dancing alive at SFWS. Many of her students, now in high school, came to the dance and even our dear Ms. Krikorian kicked up her heels on the dance floor!

Folk dancing with live music brings warmth, joy, and a connecting spirit to a community. Monika Leitz, an 8th grade parent and the GS Eurythmy teacher, and I organized this event out of a love for folk music and with the wish to build a stronger community through music and dance. We hope to schedule more folk music events at SFWS. If you are interested in joining this effort, please contact us. We currently have a Winter Family Dance of contra and circle dances scheduled for Saturday, February 8th at the GS Dakin Hall.

A special thanks to everyone who helped put on this event! With a warm round of applause to the 8th grade class and their parents; Natalie Wong, a HS senior, who drew all of the harvest images for promoting the event; Seraph White for making the flyer and webpage; Cory Powers and Rein Ratsep for setting the stage and lights; Steven King and Justin Ganz for their support; and our 9th grade students Chloe Taylor, Melanie Beavan-Szabo, Spencer Nemetz, Olivia Dreilinger, Sidra Hitching, Garrett Price, Jeremy Engels, and Maya King for their enthusiastic support at the dance.

- Mary Anne McGill, 4th grade parent & HS librarian



Public Events Coming Up

- January 28 - 29 **Eurythmy Troupe Performance** JCCSF
- Friday, April 4 **Grandparents & Special Friends Day** high school campus
- Friday, April 11 **Grandparents & Special Friends Day** grade school campus
- Saturday, May 10 **Spring Night Benefit Auction** General's Residence
- Friday, May 16 **Founders' Night** high school campus
- Saturday, June 14 **Summer Alumni Reunion** location TBD

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

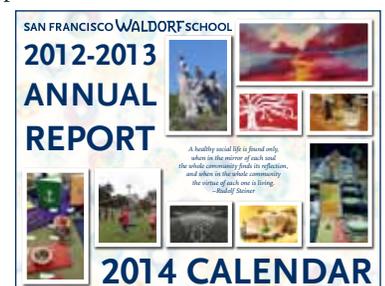
News from the Advancement Office

Thank you so much to everyone who has already made a gift to the 2013-2014 100% Participation Annual Fund. We are happy to announce that three classes have already reached 100% giving with many more close behind. Please join us in extending a special thanks to Grade 8, K1, and K2 and their Advancement Liaisons Tad Kinney, Michael Danzansky, Bob Lehto, Scott Gallardo, John Froy, Mari DiNardo, JoAnn Rollins, Kevin Rowney, and Iain Macdonald.

As we come to the end of the calendar year, it is the time to consider reducing your 2013 taxes by making a gift to the school. Gifts can be made by cash, check, securities, and credit card. All are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please contact Mitch Mitchell with any questions at mmitchell@sfwaldorf.org.

In other Advancement news, we are pleased to welcome Grace Kim, our new Special Gifts Coordinator. Grace has a daughter in K3 and brings extensive development experience from her work at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

We also recently sent out Annual Reports in the colorful form of a calendar. Please enjoy! If you did not receive one and would like to, please let us know at advancement@sfwaldorf.org.





Winter Fair Appreciation

We would like to thank everyone in the community for participating in the 35th Annual Winter Fair at San Francisco Waldorf School. The crisp air, clear skies, and good cheer made this one of the loveliest Winter Fairs ever. Many thanks to everyone for helping make this such a successful community building and fundraising event.

Appreciations & Thanks

Winter Fair would not be possible without the incredible volunteer effort from the school community. Thank you for all of the support before, during, and after the Fair. Its success is a testament to our community and the overall willingness to pitch in to make events like this meaningful and memorable.

Special thanks are due to the following people:

The Winter Fair Coordinators **Jeni Vullings** and **Laura Hudgens** have been hard at work since last winter, sorting through the myriad of details that are essential to making an event like this even imaginable. Their hard work and heart-felt dedication to the school was in evidence at every step of the way. Many sincere thanks to them.

Food and Drinks: This year's food - incredible sandwiches and beautiful salads - was donated by 6th and 7th grade parents **Joel Bleskacek** and **Maxine Siu** and PLOW, their restaurant in Potrero Hill. We are very grateful for their help in planning and preparing a wonderful meal that fed over 400 attendees of the Fair.

We also offer huge thanks to the following coordinators for each class who supported the many different activities. With these leaders, the Fair worked seamlessly.



Merchant Coordinator: **Heather Mitchell**

Kindergarten Coordinators: **Stephanie Alston** and **Amy Tachoiros**

Cookie House: **Grace Kim** and **Therese Tuttle**

Pocket People: **Michele de Jesus**

Grade 1 Games: **Fernando Ruarte**, **Oblio Jenkins**, **Lily Ford**,

Shannon Bryant and **Justin Ganz**

Grade 2 Crafts: **Kirstin Bach** and **Diana Stewart**

Grade 3 Fairy House: **Monique Duncan**

Grade 4 Decorations: **Terry Pelka**

Grade 5 Sleeping Giant: **Moira Walsh**

Grade 6 Hot Food: **Maxine Siu**, **Joel Bleskacek**, and **Lesley Fisher**

Grade 7 Cake Walk: **Paula McCabe** and **Michael Kelleher**

Grade 8 Setup, Cleanup and Babysitting: **Jim Finn** and

Shannon Burchard

Teacher Training Storytelling: **Katherine Delefkaran**

Outside Music: **Davia Schendel** and **Diane Aurelius**

Fair Accounting: **Peggy Duvette**, **Lisa Lehto** and **Amelia Pryor**

Many thanks to the Parents Association and Book Closet for staffing and merchandising the PA Room. A special thanks to the Book Closet Coordinator **Cynthia Dewar-Kudsi**, the PA co-chairs **Melinda Scully**, **Candace Tam**, and **Lisa Lehto** and the PA Faculty Advisor **Ann Grandin**.

We are extremely grateful to the facilities and administrative support provided by **Rein Ratsep**, **Cory Powers**, **Mitch Mitchell**, and **Seraph White**, all of whom worked many hours behind the scenes to help prepare for the Fair.

