



Wasatch

charter school

SPRING 2026 | ISSUE 3

A photograph showing the lower legs and feet of two children standing in a muddy puddle. The child on the left is wearing dark blue rain pants and grey rubber boots with yellow trim. The child on the right is wearing blue rain pants and yellow rubber boots. The puddle reflects the boots and the surrounding environment.

“Natural play strengthens children’s self-confidence and arouses their senses, their awareness of the world and all that moves in it, seen and unseen.”

*—Richard Louv,
Last Child in the Woods*

CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT: WALDORF GRADES 1–4

BY ROBERT MACDONALD
PEDAGOGICAL CO-DIRECTOR

Every child moves through a remarkable inner journey in their first years of school. Understanding what your child is experiencing developmentally can transform the way you see their behavior, their questions, and their growth. Robert Macdonald, our pedagogical co-director, offers a window into that journey and an invitation to see your child's development with new eyes.

Grades one through four in the Waldorf school mark many milestones in a child's development. It begins around the time a child starts to lose their baby teeth and transitions from the cozy, play-based womb of the kinderhouse, to the wooden tables, blackboards, and main lesson pages of the "big school." It culminates with the nine/ten year change, when, for the first time, children fully begin to have a true felt-sense for their individuality and separateness from the world around them. The first half of your child's experience at the Waldorf school is indeed a wondrous, adventure-filled time.

While there are many ways to understand this four year journey—many lenses through which to look upon it—one way to understand it is to consider the child's changing and developing relationship between their inner space and the outer world. At the very beginning of the extensive philosophical lectures given by Rudolf Steiner to the first Waldorf teachers before the opening of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, Steiner describes the goal of education as teaching children to sleep and to breathe. This is meant both literally and figuratively. There is no more essential human act that deals directly in the relationship between the inner human being and the world around them than breathing. We breathe air in, take what we need from it, expel what we don't, and breathe it back out into the world transformed. Young children breathe much more quickly than adults. Infants between 30–60 breaths per minute. Over time this slows until it reaches 12–20 breaths per minute in adults. This evolving and slowing breathing rhythm coincides with the gradual change in the relationship between the human being and the world around them.

"The first half of your child's experience at the Waldorf school is indeed a wondrous, adventure-filled time."

For the young child there is no felt separation between themselves and the world around them. They are connected to everything. Think of the difficulty a child has coming to the word "I" and how they often have to pass through the third person expression first. Think of the way a young child literally feels that material objects are part of them, and can grieve their loss as though a beloved friend has died. Steiner describes the young child as one entire sense organ.

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“For the young child there is no felt separation between themselves and the world around them. They are connected to everything.”

They take the world in with their whole beings. Imagination infuses everything. The trees and stones are as alive as the people. This might sound like a kind of animism. In fact, some might posit that it is, and that in the young child we have a vestige of this ancient way of seeing the world. Children of this age are ripe for fairy tales, stories of supernatural beings: gnomes, sylphs, brownies, etc. But this should not be thought of as mere fantasy. There is a deeper, more ancient wisdom about the world, and its intangible realms, that are clothed in animate form within these stories. And this wisdom is given to the young child in the language of imagination, story, and archetype—the language through which they can digest it. As the child slowly grows out of this oneness they start to encounter the contrast between good and evil, right and wrong, truth and lies. They experiment with lying themselves. They start to feel that they have a degree of agency to choose between these polar opposites. And they are ripe for stories of goodness and of mischief, of saints and animals. By about third grade children begin to enter a significant change in this relationship. They start to truly feel themselves as separate beings in a disconnected world. What lived both outside and within, now only exists without. The connectedness is vanishing. The “magic” is fading.

This can be a very upsetting time in the child’s development and can manifest in a variety of behaviors and feelings. If we draw upon mythology to understand it, we can say that children of this age are being driven out of the Garden of Eden. And so, in third grade they are given, as a healing balm, the ancient stories from the Hebrew tradition about the fall from paradise, about the wandering Israelites looking for a home on this earth. This essential and natural step in human development is the stirrings of the child’s higher self, the “I-body,” the spirit. And it is this “I-ness” that human beings have been evolving into for the last 2,000 years.

“...Working with the disparate “I’s” in a classroom gets at the very essence of community forming in our time.”

Here in 2026, we see all around us every day, if we look for it, the difficulties that arise when so many human “I’s” bump up against each other. As teachers we see it in the classroom constantly and we work with it every day, explicitly and implicitly, integrating it into all we teach. For example, in the fourth grade when we aim to soothe the inevitable fracturing of the class community by introducing mathematical fractions, and when we give them a homeopathic by introducing them to the larger-than-life personalities of the Norse Gods. Because this working with the disparate “I’s” in a classroom gets at the very essence of community forming in our time. Perhaps through this important work we can look forward to a future, to a new stage of human coexistence and community, when the “I,” with consciousness, can find its way back into oneness—with others, with nature, with the cosmos all around us.

THE PARENTING PAUSE

BY MARLA MACDONALD
EARLY CHILDHOOD & PARENT EDUCATOR

Many years ago I read a book by Greg Baer called *Real Love in Parenting*. I was drawn to the book simply by the title. Greg Baer's book title spoke to my soul, to the thing that I consider the most important thing we do as parents, and to my own deepest life desire: which is that I grow and learn and change, and face my wounds and inner-demons, so that I can *become* real, unconditional love as I mature.

I have been teaching parenting classes for more than thirty years now, and in all of the classes I have taught through the years, I have met one parent that said that they came from a home with "unconditional love" from their parents. That real love had given them a solid inner foundation upon which to build a strong and loving and respectful relationship with their children.

This is the gift of learning that we are given through Steiner's work and education in the Waldorf school, where the practices and lessons in each grade are developed to match the child's development, where teachers are trained in what is developmentally appropriate for the child. We must be courageous and learn about child development so we do not follow the current trend of treating the child as a little adult, or exposing them to too much too soon, and rushing them along into being grown-up. Gandhi said, "We must be the change we wish to see." So it is.

We, the adults, must do what Jim Rhone said and "work harder on ourselves than we do on our jobs." We must be reflective parents, willing to see ourselves in our flaws and weaknesses, and to see all the ways we wall off our hearts and are afraid to give real love because many of us did not experience it ourselves. We must overcome our defensiveness about our parenting, and seek to truly understand ourselves and our child. No one knows a child like a parent does. And I believe your child chose you because you could care for them, and they could teach you how to care for them through the challenges they present to you. It is not an easy transformation, but it is a profoundly worthwhile one.

This work does not have to happen alone. Each year the Wasatch Family Foundation offers parenting classes to Wasatch families taught by Marla Macdonald. We hope you will join her by visiting wasatchfamilyfoundation.org.

Moments that Matter: Touchpoints at a Glance

- **Simplify to sustain.** Stripping away the noise, the rush and the overwhelm of daily life creates something both children and parents deeply need. Calm is not a luxury; It is nourishment for the soul.
- **You are your child's greatest teacher and student.** No one knows a child like their parent does. When we are willing to look honestly at ourselves, our wounds, our walls, and our fears, we become capable of a love that truly transforms both parent and child.
- **Don't rush the magic of childhood.** Children need time to be children. Understanding what is developmentally appropriate helps us resist the cultural pressure to "grow them up" too fast and protects the sacred unfolding that is theirs alone.
- **Try this: freewriting.** When you're feeling reactive or overwhelmed, try pouring your rawest thoughts onto paper completely honestly, hurting no one. Then tear it up. Watch how quickly your soul finds its way back to love.
- **Real love begins with real honesty.** Most of us did not grow up with unconditional love, and that is not a failure. It is simply where our work begins. The courage to see ourselves clearly is the first and most generous gift we can offer our children.



A TASTE OF THE KINDERHOUSE

At Wasatch Charter School, food and education grow together. Guided by our wellness policy and Waldorf philosophy, we see each meal as an extension of learning—rich in color, flavor, and connection. We serve and encourage whole, nutrient-dense foods free from artificial additives, and celebrate the rhythms of the seasons through gardening, festivals, and shared meals.

Families are partners in this work, packing lunches that reflect our food guidelines and inviting children to explore new tastes. In nourishing our children with wholesome food and mindful mealtimes, we nurture not only their health, but their sense of gratitude, community, and care for the earth.

Homemade *Golden Rice*



ITEMS YOU WILL NEED:

- ☐ Saute Pan
- ☐ Rice Cooker
- ☐ Serving bowl if in a group
- ☐ Serving spoon



INGREDIENTS:

- ☐ 2 c. dry, organic jasmine rice
- ☐ 6 Tbsp plus ¼ c. melted butter or coconut oil
- ☐ 2 tbsp chicken or vegetarian Better Than Bouillon
- ☐ 3½ c. water
- ☐ ½ tsp salt
- ☐ 2 Tbsp coconut aminos
- ☐ nutritional yeast

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Soak rice overnight and rinse in a colander until water runs clear.
- Sauté rice in the 6 Tbsp butter till toasted, then add the Bouillon, salt and coconut aminos.
- Add 3½ c. water and cook in a rice cooker.
 - When the rice is done stir in ¼ c. butter or oil.
- Top with nutritional yeast to taste and serve hot.

When human beings sit together and eat and drink, something occurs that goes beyond mere physical nourishment.



GROWTH FOR OUR BUILDING AND OUR STUDENT BODY:

BY HEATHER CAMPBELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

About five years ago, the school made the decision to expand to three classes per grade. That vision is now becoming a reality. As we reach full enrollment in the coming years, we will no longer have extra classroom space, and by the 2027–28 school year we will need to add another classroom to support our students.

After exploring many options, including acquiring additional property, the Board determined that the most responsible path forward is to invest in the campus we already own. The school plans to pursue a bonding process to fund a building expansion and some interior remodeling. In addition, remaining federal COVID funds that recently became available may help support part of this work. Thoughtful growth also helps strengthen the school, as increased enrollment supports the teachers and staff needed to serve more students. As plans develop, we remain committed to the values that shape our campus and holistic education; specialty programming, access to nature, natural light, and a thoughtful approach to the space we share.

If funding is approved and feasible, as early as June you may begin to see early site work, including possible improvements to the road behind the school. We will host community information sessions once plans are ready to share so families can learn more and ask questions. We are excited for this next chapter and grateful to grow together as a community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Subscribe to our WCS google calendar for up-to-date info. Calendar can be found on the website under the resources tab.

**3/28 Introduction to
Biodynamic Gardening**
10:00AM–12:00PM
Held at the Farm

3/31–4/2 Book Fair
Held in the gym

**4/1–4/2 Parent Teacher
Conferences**
Portfolio Review for
grades 6–8

4/14 Parent Evening
6:30–7:15PM
Healthy risk taking and
role of screens in a
Waldorf home and
school

4/25 Spring Showcase
3:00–5:00PM
Highland High School

**4/30 May Faire In School
(Students Only)**
Remember to dress your
students in white

**5/4 5th Grade Pentathlon
6th Grade Medieval Fair**
Student and Staff only



GET IN TOUCH

Is there something you would like to learn more about? Contact us by snapping the QR Code.