

Convergence: how science supports the wisdom of Waldorf Education

*A conference for everyone interested in a
radical and relevant education of children*

November 5 – 6, 2010

Keynote presenters Douglas Gerwin
and Patrice Maynard and ten workshops



Waldorf education has been in existence for over 90 years, with now a thousand schools in sixty countries. Especially in the new millennium, there has been a torrent of solid, reputable research supporting the wisdom of Waldorf education. This conference aims to summarize many of the findings. This is an invaluable, not-to-be-missed opportunity for parents, teachers, and other interested parties to get up to speed on what works so well in Waldorf schools.

Keynote speakers



Douglas Gerwin, Ph.D., is director of the Center for Anthroposophy in New Hampshire and co-director of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education. Himself a Waldorf graduate, Dr. Gerwin has taught for 30 years at university and high school levels in subjects ranging from biology and history to German and music. He is editor of four books related to Waldorf education as well as author of articles on adolescence and the Waldorf curriculum. Most recently he co-authored *Survey of Waldorf Graduates*, the first comprehensive look at how North American Waldorf graduates fare in college and beyond.



Patrice Maynard is the leader for Outreach and Development of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). She was a class teacher as well as a music teacher, taking one class through a complete cycle of eight grades and a second class through 5th grade at Hawthorne Valley School in upstate New York. Ms. Maynard is the parent of three Waldorf graduates, also a published poet, musician, and a quilter.

Schedule

Friday, November 5

From 6.30 pm Registration

7.30 Welcome and introduction

8.00 - 9.15 Keynote Part 1: Douglas Gerwin, "How contemporary research illumines stages in child development"

Saturday, November 6

9.00 am Introduction to the day

9.20 am Keynote Part 2: Patrice Maynard, "How stages in child development illumine contemporary rsearch"

10.30 Coffee break

11.15-12.30 Douglas and Patrice, "Elaborating and experiencing how children learn in Waldorf schools"

1.00-2.00 Lunch

2.15-3.45 pm Workshops (choose one)

4.10-4.50 Douglas Gerwin, "Sword and rose: how Waldorf schools address sexual education"

4.50-5.00 Closing





Workshops

Ten workshops develop the theme in different ways. Although all workshops will allow ample time for discussions and questions, it will be evident from the descriptions that some are more active than others, something you should have in mind when making your decision. Life is about making choices!

Agitating, Baking, Candying: practising the ABCs of research *Douglas Gerwin*

Like cooking, research begins with hunger and ends with a shared feast. With the aid of a four-phase protocol, we will gather ingredients, lay out stages for their preparation and transformation, and explore methods and tools of research both qualitative and quantitative.

Luddite or spot on? Understanding Waldorf's approach to technology *Patrice Maynard*

Technology has had its place in Waldorf schools since the first one was founded in 1919. The schools are still determined to cultivate technologies as age-appropriate tools for learning, so as to enhance morality and not as expedients in learning and in life. We should become conversant with the technology of the 21st century, while acknowledging the problems. The aim of the workshop is to explore this approach in some detail.

Moving towards freedom: eurythmy and spacial dynamics *Stacey Schwarz Snow and Jonathan Snow*

Waldorf education is about working to reach your full potential, and both eurythmy and spacial dynamics are pathways toward achieving this. Working with movement, children experience with their bodies what they will be asked to learn with their minds. Jonathan Snow and Stacey Schwarz Snow will lead participants in experiencing these forms of movement unique to Waldorf education.

Encountering beauty: the language of form through clay modelling *Warren Lee Cohen*

The language of form can approach an objective beauty through the skilled and insightful work of our hands. Explore with modelling clay the essential tension between beauty and ugliness as an artistic process of creative metamorphosis.

Thinking with the hands: the joy of crafts in the Waldorf curriculum *Leed Jackson*

In this workshop Leed will guide participants in form drawing and enamelling as examples of transforming outer action into inner experience. When you bring ideas into realization through craft activity, you balance intention with the unexpected fruits of creative work.

A child's work: the critical importance of play in early childhood *Sue Martin*

Creative play has always been a pillar of Waldorf education. Now the importance of this idea is being recognized outside Waldorf schools, and dramatic role-playing has become the central feature of the educational philosophy of "executive function," thought to be critical in acquiring such basic skills as arithmetic and grammar. Sue Martin will demonstrate how creative play supports the Waldorf approach from children's earliest days.

No child left inside: learning the language of nature *Heather Church*

Direct contact with the natural world is essential to healthy spiritual development in childhood. It is becoming clear that "nature deficit disorder" is a mental and physical health issue. Heather Church will share her rich experience of taking children outside and rekindling parents' and teachers' confidence in authentic outdoor experience.

Support for Waldorf literacy practices in mainstream research *Linda Williams*

Over the past ten years there has been an explosion of cognitive and sociocultural research on the teaching of reading and writing. This workshop will summarize the connections between mainstream "best practices" and Waldorf pedagogy, and also provide some ideas for merging the best of both worlds.

Qualitatively Seeing the Place of Mathematics

John Grant McLoughlin

Qualities of numbers along with the place of movement, rhythms, and pattern establish a foundation for mathematics in Waldorf education. The workshop will explore the links between such emphases in mathematics and research in mathematics education. Stories from teachers will be incorporated into our discussion of the mathematical landscape encompassing research, curriculum, and methodology through the grades.

The glorious chaos of adolescence: integrating reason and emotion *Anne Greer*

Since the 1990s, research has shown that the adolescent brain goes through an enormous growth spurt that, if conditions are right, will facilitate connections between the right and left hemispheres and between the neocortex and the limbic system. This occurs at ages 14-21, when, Steiner said, reasoning and judgment are refined. How does Waldorf education help create the right conditions for emotional intelligence, careful reasoning, and understanding of 'the other'?

Presenters

Jonathan Snow and Stacey Schwarz Snow. *Jonathan completed eurythmy training in Stuttgart, Germany and obtained the eurythmy teacher BA in The Hague, Netherlands. He now teaches eurythmy at Toronto Waldorf School. Stacey trained in massage therapy, spacial dynamics, and cranio-sacral therapy. She has been a dancer and advertising copywriter but now teaches at the Toronto Waldorf School and the Rudolf Steiner Centre.*

Warren Lee Cohen, MA, *is the director of teacher education at the Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto. Warren is the author of Raising the Soul: practical exercises for personal development and Baking Bread with Children. He is an accomplished sculptor, Waldorf educator, author, and bread baker.*

Leed Jackson *teaches high school mathematics and crafts (woodwork and metalcraft) at Toronto Waldorf School. He is deeply interested in what alchemy means for our times, especially in understanding the secrets of the material world.*

Sue Martin *draws upon her many years of early childhood teaching at the Toronto Waldorf School and remedial training to work as a consultant for teachers and parents. She is currently teaching in the new part-time education program for early childhood teachers at the Rudolf Steiner Centre.*



Heather Church, *for five years a kindergarten teacher at Huronia Waldorf School, Barrie, started an innovative outdoor program. Later she took the program with her to Toronto Waldorf School, where for six years she was a lead kindergarten teacher. She is now founding a new initiative to support home, family, and community life.*

Linda Williams *taught for 17 years at the Detroit Waldorf School and at Urban Waldorf, a public school in Milwaukee, and was director of the Waldorf Institute of Southeastern Michigan. Dr. Williams is currently an assistant professor in the department of teacher education at Eastern Michigan University. Her current research interests include literacy instruction, the effect of learning to knit on academic achievement, and multicultural issues in Waldorf schools.*

John Grant McLoughlin *is a professor in the faculty of education at University of New Brunswick. John holds a cross-appointment to mathematics and statistics. He also teaches mathematics at the Rudolf Steiner Centre.*

Anne Greer *has taught English and drama for over forty years, including eighteen at the Toronto Waldorf School, and has been a visiting faculty member at several Waldorf high schools, at teacher education centres, and at the Rudolf Steiner Institute. She now lives in Nova Scotia and volunteers as a board member for the South Shore Waldorf School.*



Practical details

Registration

- Conference fee, \$90, includes a healthy vegetarian lunch and coffee break snack.
- Register early to secure your first choice of workshop, but give alternatives just in case.
- Mail cheque with enclosed registration form. To pay by credit card and register by phone, call the Rudolf Steiner Centre between 8.30 and 4.30.
- Advance registration essential.

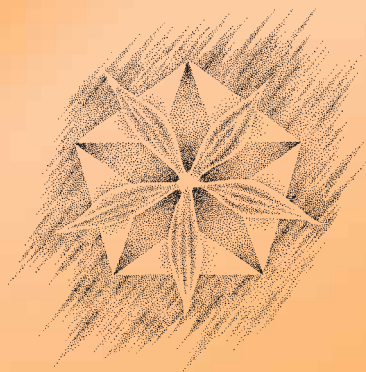
Conference address

Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto
9100 Bathurst St. #4, Thornhill ON
L4J 8C7 Canada
Phone 905-764-7570 Fax 905-889-3336
info@rsct.ca
www.rsct.ca

Accommodation alternatives

- Private room in home (bed and breakfast) \$30 per night, payable in cash to host. (Request no later than October 28.)
- Sleeping bag on floor of Toronto Waldorf School \$15 per night (limited space, book early, bring mats, sleeping bags, etc.).
- Make your own arrangements.

For further information call the conference coordinator, Diana Hughes 905-884-6047



Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto

Photos of children: courtesy of Toronto Waldorf School

Cover credit: "Father and son reach for the stars"
sculpture by Karin Weber <http://karinsartsculptures.blogspot.com>

Design: hands follow heart handsfollowheart@gmail.com

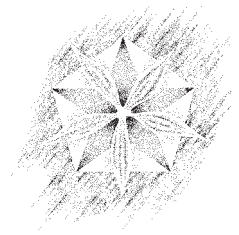


Dedicated to Allison Hudgins

Allison Hudgins learned about Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy just a few years before her death, but what she was then able to find in a burst of voracious reading and vivid experience changed her life. She was a lawyer, already interested in education: she represented the University of Toronto in some high-profile cases. She sent both her children to the Alan Howard Waldorf School in Toronto, quickly became involved as a board member, and then took on the task of enrolment director, introducing new parents to what Waldorf education has to offer.

In 2008 Allison attended a conference in the U. S. that startlingly revealed how new scientific research was echoing work and ideas that Steiner had first launched a century earlier. As a participant in the Rudolf Steiner Centre's Foundation Studies course, she presented a paper entitled "Scientific support for the wisdom of Rudolf Steiner's approach to education." After Allison's public presentation, Diana Hughes asked her to collaborate on a conference that would bring the latest research to the Waldorf communities, but go beyond that to meet the growing public that is interested in the needs of education today.

Allison died in March of this year at the tragically early age of 49. All who knew her, whether as lawyer, educator, or friend, recognized her enthusiasm, intelligence, and integrity. Her life was guided by firm principles and a strong sense of justice. We hope this conference will live up to her hopes and wishes.



Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto

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Registration form: mail in or telephone

Personal details

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov./State _____

Postal code/zip _____

Email address _____

Home phone _____

Day phone _____

Accommodation

Required? Yes ☐ No ☐

For Friday Nov. 5 ☐

For Saturday Nov. 6 ☐

Bed and breakfast
(\$30 a night payable to host) ☐

Sleeping bag in kindergarten (\$15 a night) ☐

Making your own arrangements ☐

Will you have a car? Yes ☐ No ☐

Workshop choices

First choice _____

If already full, second choice _____

Method of payment

Conference fee \$90, plus kindergarten
accommodation if selected, \$15 a night

Cheque ☐

Credit card if registering by phone (call the
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Contact

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