

Matthew Lee – Groundbreaking Speech 2011

Oftentimes we have big ideas. These ideas are what define our hopes and dreams. These are the things that we strive and live for. These are the goals we aim for, and the bars we set. However, more often than not, we eventually find that our hopes and dreams are too big. When this happens, what can we do? We can step away, give up, and devote our attention and energy towards other, possibly more realistic goals. Or, we can step up, re-imagine our plan, adapt and overcome. Neither is necessarily an incorrect choice, however, I feel that a stronger person will choose the latter. And I am proud to say that the latter is what our community here has chosen.

We had big ideas about a new expansion for many years. However, the recession and other unforeseen obstacles blocked our path to this goal. We were caught in a very uncomfortable position. Looking back, we realize how easy it would have been to give up and walk away. And justifiably so! But instead, we persevered, we were stubborn. We said, “no.” This was one dream, one goal which we were not willing to give up. And so we find ourselves here today.

The earth that we stand on here is physically and chemically no different than that of any other common dirt that you have ever seen in your life. However, to us, the individuals here, it has a very special meaning. This land represents tremendous efforts of a few, and the will of many. Recently, we students wrote down wishes that we have for the future of this school. These wishes were then combined and dissolved in water. In a few minutes, we will pour our combined wishes upon this ground in the hopes that they will manifest themselves in the future.

This ceremony today is in honor of a great step along the path to achieving one of our goals. It took us many years, and a great amount of effort and work, in order to bring us here. However, this is not the end of our journey. Quite contrary to that, it is in fact the beginning. We stand here today upon a milestone. The path that lies ahead is undoubtedly littered with obstructions. However, by way of being here today, we see that we have overcome obstacles before, and we can do it again. But, we cannot become complacent. We must continue to persevere and push on with even more effort than ever before. Patience is indeed a virtue.

In our modern age, every facet of daily life is based on the illusion of instant gratification. Patience is something which has become lost in our race for the instantaneous. However, in times such as this, we need to stop and remember, that “good things come to those who wait,” and that “slow and steady wins the race.” The most efficient route from A to B is not necessarily the line between them. So in closing, my friends, I give you this advice, should you falter and become frustrated along the path ahead. You need but remember that though our ideas are what define our hopes and dreams, it is what we do in the moment when we realize that things have not turned out quite how we expected them to, that defines who we are.

Matthew Lee
Class of 2011

Ingrid Feck – Groundbreaking 2011

I am really happy to share this special moment with you. You may wonder what is so special about sitting in a weed patch, so I will give you a picture of what this moment means to many of us.

I came to this school for the first time 20 years ago. At that time the oldest students at the school were in second grade. The school occupied three classrooms in a building in Fountain Valley, which no longer exists. Since that time the school has quite obviously grown and undergone many changes. I remember the great excitement when we graduated our first group of 8th graders. It seemed then that the school was now really an official educational institution. And these 8th graders seemed very tall and mature. Then, four years ago, we extended the program to go all the way to 12th grade. This year we are actually having our first 12th grade graduation. So as you can see, the school has grown, and grown, and then grown some more. But with all the growing and the many changes that come with growth, one thing has not changed, and that is the personality of our school community. There has always been a group of very enthusiastic and caring teachers. There has always been an eternally dedicated and supportive parent body. And most importantly, the school has always buzzed with the energy of bright, dynamic, and creative students.

The school community has moved locations several times, but always the character of it stayed intact. We moved into existing buildings and we gave the buildings and their surrounding a bit of our personality. We painted the rooms in lively colors. We planted trees and flowers. We built play structures, and we even put in a basketball court. But it has always been the dream of this community to own its own building. Today we celebrate that we finally will build our own building, which will signify the school's personality in every aspect.

Some years down the road, some of our current students may come back, maybe even as enthusiastic and caring teachers or as dedicated and supportive parents. They will be able to tell their students or children, "I was there when this was only a weed patch. Then we built this building. I walked in this building, I worked in this building, and I learned in this building. This building has seen more stories than you can imagine, and it stands to see many more."

Today is the day when we begin building memories, which will become the stories of our school's new community building.

Rob Meadows – Groundbreaking 2011

Today is truly a special day. As we celebrate this historic milestone of our growing school in the wonderful City of Costa Mesa, it is a time to reflect and recognize some pioneering students, who, without the courage and confidence in the teachers and community, we would not be here today. It was around 2004 when a group of parents got together to discuss a vision of establishing grades 9-12 for our school. The group was small, as I recall, but very dedicated and committed. They were trying to drum up

community support as well as support from our Board and College. They met frequently and researched with others, what would be needed to start the first class. Surprisingly enough, the resources and temporary facilities came a little more easily than all of us expected, especially with the strong support of our schools leaders. So we set aside an area on campus. Had some trailers donated by some wonderful supporters, convinced some teachers to agree to teach the curriculum and before we knew it, we had all the tangible things in place. As I said, we had all the TANGIBLE things in place. What we did not know and were most nervous about, was would students actually enroll and attend? The initial pioneering class would have to have a very entrepreneurial spirit about them as well as a strong trust in the Waldorf Community that they would receive an education that would prepare them for the life decisions and direction they wanted to choose as young adults. The road could very rocky and unpredictable. A much easier decision for these students and parents would be to take the safe route and enroll in another school with a well established curriculum and protocol.

Not this group. This pioneering class said we WILL take the risks, we WILL help establish the clubs, we WILL help the sports teams, we WILL help with the accreditation, we WILL help provide feedback to the teachers and administration and we WILL make this school successful! No fear in this group; ust a highly confident determined group of students taking a leadership role in making this an integral part of the school. Think about it. Going to a high school where you are a senior from your freshman year on! I guess there were a few benefits!

We will forever be grateful to these students and parents for taking this initial leap of faith in enrolling in this school and seeing it through all four years. The class may be small but it is mighty. It will forever be remembered and associated with the dream of establishing a high school that will be enjoyed by many classes that follow. But there will only be ONE pioneering class and that is the class of 2011. We are here today to celebrate the seed this class planted 4 years ago which will grow into a magnificent new building which will improve the quality of education for future students and do so in an environmentally friendly manner. This is a legacy that will be difficult to surpass, although it may take this class a few years to realize their contributions.

So at this time I would like to recognize these students and ask them to join me up here for a round of applause.

Abaigeal Flannery

Matthew Lee- a Waldorf Student since 4th grade

Zach Martin- A Waldorf Student since 2nd grade

Lukas Friebauer- A Waldorf Student since Kindergarten

Now these last three students have been in Waldorf since Pre-Kindergarten! I think it only appropriate that they all three come up together as the longest tenured students in the 20 plus year history of the Waldorf School of Orange County.

Ian Schwieterman, Alexis Meadows, and Jeremy Feck.

I would like to conclude with a quote I think is very appropriate for our celebration today. It is from Margaret Mead and goes as follows: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”.