

## **The Winter Garden Festival**

### **Please join us in marking this special time of year**

#### **Saturday, December 3rd**

- 4:30 Mrs. Cirianni-Jones' Rose Garden class
- 5:30 Mrs. Kessler's Sunflower Garden
- 6:30 Community Walk

#### **Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**

- 3:30 Ms. Dunlap's Lilac Garden class
- 4:30 Mrs. Hamilton's First Grade class
- 5:30 Ms. Benson's Second Grade class

Classes will gather in the grade school building and the event will take place in Hagens Hall.

November winds are busy at work clearing away all signs of the autumn harvest. The earth will soon become very still. Darkness has already begun to set in. As the natural world prepares for a deep winter sleep, we must gather our forces, and bring forth courage and strength to enter into the season that becomes increasingly darker.

Throughout history, humanity has marked this period with celebration at the point of the Winter Solstice. Today, through our awakened consciousness, we recognize not only the outer signs of change, but can feel the transformation inside ourselves. We enter into a time of waiting, a time to observe the dark vastness in space and then the turning to the light of the sun. That is the promise that we look forward to at the end of this dark and still time... the return of the Light.

There are as many ways to celebrate this time of year, as there are individuals. Here at the Waldorf School, our Kindergartens, and the First and Second Grades will join together with their classes, on the evenings listed above, to walk the Winter Garden path.

The Winter Garden Ceremony will take place in Hagens Hall. A beautiful double spiral of greens will mark the path for the journey each of the children will be invited to take. Along the magical path of greens, representations from the mineral, plant and animal kingdom, as well as the elemental and human realm, will greet and guide the children towards the great Light in the center where they will light their own candle. The children will journey back through the path of greens to find a golden star that awaits their shining candle. There they will place their own light and watch as the garden goes from darkness to light. There is a deep mystery and profound impression left on each soul who walks the Winter Garden path. This very special festival will offer strength and guidance during the time of darkness as well as the year to come.

Please be aware of a few practical details. Children should dress in festival wear that is safe and functional for walking past lit flame. Avoid wide flared skirts and dresses. All loose clothing and hair should be tied back.

The intention behind the festival is to provide a meaningful experience for the children – an experience that will plant the seeds of Light and Strength into each child that they can carry with them throughout the dark, cold season and beyond. This is not a social event, but a festival filled with reverence. Please help the teachers to maintain a quiet mood throughout the festival. In addition, there are no cameras allowed at this festival.

A quiet car ride free of electronic experiences and returning home to a quiet candle lit house for a warm dinner would deeply honor the festival of Light and “carry” the children peacefully into their sleep, and ultimately, through the season. Also, if you have more than one child in the classes listed above, please feel free to choose one festival time to attend and enjoy with your family. Likewise you may choose to have each of your children attend only with their own class. Let your teachers know what will work best for your family.

Once again we are offering an opportunity for anyone who wishes to experience this magical event at the Community Walk on Saturday evening. Adults and children age 4 and older, and who are not enrolled in any of the above classes, are invited to participate. Please contact the Main office to reserve a space.

Offerings of evergreen branches and moss are needed and greatly appreciated in helping to create the spiral. Please let your child’s teacher know if you are able to offer support in this way. We are looking forward to gathering with you and creating a magical experience for ourselves and the children.

Blessings on the Season

The Faculty of the Waldorf School of Princeton