

My child has been drawn to Morris Dancing since the first time we saw it at Waldorf School of Princeton in 2008, one year before kindergarten began. Three years later, it was a highlight to starting 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, as now being involved would become a reality.

Morris Dancing is a living tradition of dance and music, ancient in its origins. We know that even in the fifteenth century, Morris Dancing was already an established practice.

From my child's perspective, it is a fun, exhilarating time to gather with a group of fellow students and enjoy dancing. The sound of the accordion, or fiddle when accompanying, is uplifting and inspires fluidity in the dance and the children.

From my perspective, I see the most wonderful transformation happen to all the children, especially my own, as they participate. We all know the benefits of having our children at a Waldorf school. What the curriculum offers supports the development of the whole child. It prepares our children to face the world with a unique clarity and understanding of the world around them. What some may not be aware of is that Morris Dancing supports these same ideals as well. The group needs to work together to perform. It challenges each student in a non-competitive format. They need to be aware of those around them in order to keep in sync with their partner and the group, as well as remain focused to keep track of the steps and movements. The specific steps and arm movements that are taught naturally encourage each individual to cross the mid line and strengthen coordination skills, both of which are essential in the healthy growth of our children. The concentration needed to successfully complete each dance exercises the brain as well as enhances the heart of each child.

I see how it fills my child with self-confidence and great sense of accomplishment as I watch the group work together at practice.

To see them perform with handkerchiefs, sticks, or with bells on is mesmerizing, and there isn't one passerby that can help but stop and watch, enthralled in the moment.

The opportunity for Morris Dancing is available to all children in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and up. Mr. Jamie Watson teaches, guides, and supports all of the children in the most warm and caring way. He would be more than happy to discuss anything further personally with any of our community.

I encourage you to look into this enrichment for your child when it resumes in the new year. All are welcome anytime during the weekly Wednesday scheduled practices. Nice weather has the group out in the parking lot from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Your children are welcome to come by and try it out for a day. Maybe it will spark an interest in them that will develop into the light that my child has radiated since beginning.

I hope to see you there!