

# MLWS News from the Parent Council

November 28, 2016

## Hello MLWS Families...

We hope that you had a joyous Thanksgiving celebration! As we continue our descent into the darker months, there is so much to be grateful for, with the beauty of the Advent Spiral and the hustle and bustle of the Winter Faire rapidly approaching. Parent Council is pleased to share this newsletter, which includes a Parent Council update, highlights activities of some of the classes and groups and provides information about upcoming events.

## PARENT COUNCIL UPDATE

Parent Council continues to work on the projects that the College and the parents identified as most important: a Welcome Committee for new families, Parent Council presence at public events, Faculty Nourishment, Food Drives at Music Shares and this newsletter. Our next meeting will be **Wednesday, December 14, 5:00-6:30pm**, and will include a half-hour 'social time' from 6:00-6:30. Please plan to attend or offer time to support our efforts!

## A PEEK INTO THE CLASSROOM

**From Mrs. Workman:** The Kindergarten class was busily preparing for the Lantern Walk, which took place on Huguenot Street this year. It was a beautiful parade of light walking on ancient grounds. The cold evening took on a special mood as we sang our lantern songs and were embraced by the tall pine trees. This week we will be preparing for our Winter Garden with a new circle, stories and crafts. And then comes our Winter Faire, for which the teachers and parents have been lovingly making crafts. On December 15, we will have our class breakfast celebration with the parents.

**From Mr. Steve Bernstein:** The Mountain Laurel Recorder Ensemble has been working hard on Monday afternoons after school on a J.S. Bach program for the Music Share on December 16th. The group will play a Bach Chorale and the 4th Movement from Brandenburg Concerto #1: Menuetto/Trio/Menuetto/Polacca/Menuetto.

**(Also) From Mr. Steve Bernstein:** The mighty Fifth Grade has been working on their skills for the Olympic games in May in their Wednesday double period games class. Since September, the class has learned the skills of running, baton passing, long jumping, javelin throwing, and are now engaged in getting the feel for the discus, which means learning how to hold and roll the discus. Throwing the discus will begin soon!

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Julia Vogt - MLWS Class of 2010. Julia is currently studying at Simmons College in Boston, MA. She is in her third year of a Women's and Gender Studies major and is also in a five-year Master's program for Elementary and Special Education. She hopes to teach in the Boston area after she finishes the program in 2019. (To learn more about Julia and the impact of her Mountain Laurel experience, please read at the letter included on the next page!)

*We are seeking news of other MLWS grads' successes, so if you have any info, please share it so we can print it!*

## TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

MLWS is pleased to announce that, following the lead of other Waldorf schools and for the health of our children, all internet connections at the school are now 'plug-in'.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesdays, Nov. 30, Dec. 7 & 14, 1:30-2:30pm:** *Parent Craft Group* Join Rosana Workman and make craft items for the Winter Faire. This is a part of Faire responsibilities for Kindergarten and First Grade. If you are unable to attend but still want to help, there are "take-home" craft bags available. Please see Mrs. Workman for the details.

**Friday, December 2, 7pm: 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus Concert** Benefit concert for Family of New Paltz/Woodstock at the Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in New Paltz. Also including performances by MLWS teacher Rachel Loshak and MLWS parent/congregation pastor Tobias Anderson.

### **Sunday, December 4: Advent Spiral**

4:30pm: K-4<sup>th</sup> Grade      6:00pm: 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade

If you have children in both age groups, you are welcome to choose to participate in one of the Spirals with all of your children!

### **Sunday, December 11: Winter Faire**

Please be sure to sign up to volunteer with your class's Faire responsibility, help spread the word in the larger community, and look through your recipe file for a tasty treat to make and donate to the Snowflake Café. Looking forward to seeing you there and co-creating the magic!

### **Tuesday, December 13, 6:30pm: Shepherd's Play**

Come out and see the MLWS faculty and staff perform in this holiday season play – it is their gift to us! A traditional peasant shepherd's play that was handed down by oral tradition for centuries in the small remote village of Oberufer, Austria, the play has been translated and performed at Waldorf Schools throughout the world.



Hello Friends,

My name is Julia Vogt, I am 20 years old and I am currently studying Elementary Education and Women's and Gender Studies at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts. I graduated from Mountain Laurel in 2010 in Jane Batterson's Class and still have deep ties to the school and the community. Some of my fondest memories from my school years are centered around the incredible opportunities we were given to explore the topics we were studying in a real life context; the farm trip in third grade, the fifth grade Olympics, our building projects, and our hikes on the rail trail during our Botany lessons. I also appreciated then, and even more so now, how much effort the school put into

building and growing community. Every single teacher knew my name and my parents' names, and not only that, but they knew me deeply, for exactly who I was as a child, a student, and a member of the community. Beautiful traditions like the Rose Ceremony and the Spiral of Light affirmed these deep connections to the community and made my school feel like a place I belonged, not just a place I went.

Mountain Laurel allowed me to grow and develop naturally, fluidly, as I was meant to do. For many people who know me now, a voracious reader and someone who adores literature, writing, and analysis in all forms, it is hard to believe that it did not always come so naturally to me. My grand transformation, shall I say my coming into my love of reading, I credit wholeheartedly to Mountain Laurel's willingness to give me the time and patience I needed to be ready. I was not forced or pushed into reading, I fell into it with open arms. I am so grateful that I was given the space to develop this passion on my own. I cannot say whether or not I would love it as much as I do today if I had been pushed too much before I was ready.

My transition to New Paltz High School was challenging, as I believe it is for any middle schooler moving upwards to new expectations, people, and experiences, regardless of whether they come from a public school, a Waldorf school, or anywhere else. I believe that my firm grounding in self-reliance, strong work ethic, and the importance of community helped me a great deal during this transition. Mountain Laurel taught me to value myself and my work, giving me the drive to do well not just for a grade, but for myself. Teachers commented on the attention I and other Waldorf graduates put into our work, especially our writing, and more than once I remember hearing teachers say how surprised and glad they were that I looked them in the eye when talking to them. These are values that were nurtured by Mountain Laurel, that gave me courage and resolve to face the changes of high school with grace.

I am currently studying at Simmons College, a Women's Centered college in Boston, and loving every moment of it. I chose Simmons because I was reminded of the community that had embraced me at Mountain Laurel, and wanted to continue learning and growing with like-minded people. I am now in my third year as a Women's and Gender Studies major and recently did some truly fascinating work for a nationwide project that involved researching militant suffragists in the Boston area who were mentioned in news articles during the time, but never written about in detail as other suffragists were. I was able to trace these women from mentions in papers and on census records in order to compile short biographies of their lives to be published by a women's history archive. In addition, I am in a five-year Master's program for Elementary and Special Education, a choice strongly influenced by the incredible people who taught and mentored me during my time at Mountain Laurel. I hope to teach in the Boston area after I finish the program in 2019 and to bring some of my Waldorf education knowledge to the public school classrooms. Every single child deserves the warmth, care, and attention I was given at Mountain Laurel, and that is what drives me to teach. A truly enormous thank you to every single person who made my childhood learning so beautiful, you will be in my heart my whole life.

All the Best,  
Julia