



21 March 2017

Dear AWS Parents,

Thanks to stellar efforts by the AWS community, we are happy to report that we have developed a balanced budget for the upcoming school year. The Waldorf model of education is invaluable but not inexpensive. Our program contains all the elements of a high-quality, rigorous education, many of which are considered “extras” at other schools. We are approaching the time for re-enrollment, and wanted to outline some changes for the upcoming year that will support our school’s path towards a sustainable future.

As we noted in our February 13 letter, we made a number of changes this school year to reduce expenditures. We were able to continue providing the same excellent level of Waldorf education. However, these changes required a workload that was not sustainable by our teachers and staff. Therefore, throughout this year, work has been ongoing to methodically devise a plan for the school that is sustainable – both for next year and for the future – while maintaining the quality educational program our children deserve. Changes for the coming year include:

- A new sustainable Middle School vision developed through the excellent work of the Middle School Task Force
- The addition of a third Kindergarten class continuing the mixed-ages model and the restoration of the separate 3-day nursery program
- The restoration of full Music, Practical Arts, and Woodworking programs
- The addition of an Educational Director to oversee curriculum and mentoring
- The restoration of a separate Administrator position
- A modest salary increase for our teachers to support teacher retention given that the starting pay of \$28,500 for full-time teachers has not changed since the school’s founding in 1991
- A significant increase to the budgeted teacher training funding to more fully support the professional development of our teachers and staff
- Dedicated funding to support our goal of becoming accredited in 2018 by both the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and the New York State Association of Independent Schools (NYSAIS).

As indicated above, all these changes are necessary in order to insure that our school delivers the highest quality Waldorf education possible. In part to support these changes, the annual tuition will increase 6%. This increase is both smaller than last year’s increase and only modestly higher than the typical increases over the past several years. We are also instituting a new parent fundraising commitment, to be met through a new Annual Raffle. Each family will be asked to sell raffle tickets prior to a drawing event that will occur next spring, to meet a fundraising commitment of \$500 per parent. This Annual Raffle/fundraising commitment is modeled on a program that has proven very successful at

another Waldorf school of similar size and structure and is similar to fundraising commitments at other local schools.

The reasons for instituting this fundraising commitment are multiple. Given the present level of financial assistance provided by the school, only about one-third of a tuition increase can be expected to reach our bottom line. This makes it very difficult to meet the school's needs solely via tuition increases. The raffle is a way of involving the entire community in raising our income level. The raffle will also be structured to include high-dollar prizes that will make the tickets attractive to people outside of the Waldorf community, thus widening our fundraising base. Further details of the Annual Raffle/fundraising commitment are provided in the re-enrollment package, which will be sent later this week.

To celebrate Enrollment Week (March 27 – April 3), we invite you to the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, March 28. Hear about how far we've come; where we are, and what lies ahead. There will be accreditation and budget updates. There will also be time for questions.

Our school has always been a labor of love, sustained by parents and teachers who understand the power of its philosophy and its community. We hope you'll join us on March 28th to work together in bringing Aurora Waldorf School into its 27th year with inspiration and strength!

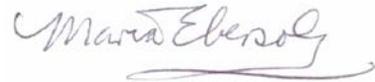
Sincerely,



Johannes Aubrecht
AWS Treasurer



Jane Ried
Interim Administrator



Maria Ebersole
Faculty Chair