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LifeWays North America Continuation Program

The Continuation Program, together with the LifeWays Certification Training, comprises a full early childhood teacher preparation program, including 450 hours of in-class instruction, personal mentoring and supervised classroom experience with an experienced teacher. It has been developed for anyone who is inspired by the LifeWays approach to caring for young children and by the insights and practices of Waldorf education. This is your opportunity to deepen your understanding of young children by studying the comprehensive view of human development offered by Rudolf Steiner and to strengthen your skills for teaching in a school setting; for example, public Waldorf school, charter school, private school, or homeschool environment.

FAQ:

Why would I want to enroll in a professional development program through LifeWays?

LifeWays has been offering inspiring programs since 2001. Our students continually tell us that their experience has been profound and life changing. It is not only a preparation for working with and caring for young children. Due to our deep commitment to nurturing the nurturer, our students feel refreshed and more insightful about self-care and sustainable practices. LifeWays professional development programs use early childhood as the matrix throughout both years, focusing on meeting the needs of children in kindergarten, preschool, nursery and mixed-age childcare environments, as well as how to support and work with parents.

Where is this program offered?

The first part, called the Early Childhood Certificate Training, is offered in various locations across North America, and the second part, the Continuation Program, is offered at one of the loveliest and oldest Waldorf Schools in the U.S., Kimberton Waldorf School in Pennsylvania. The Co-Directors of the Continuation Program, Cynthia Aldinger and Rena Osmer, are both long-time Waldorf Early Childhood Teachers, founders of schools, former board members of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America, and good friends who enjoy bringing levity and joy to the students. Teachers in the Certificate Training and the Continuation Program are also experienced early childhood professionals and Waldorf teachers highly respected in their fields. We have been blessed to attract the best of the best.

What do you mean by the LifeWays approach?

Devoted to Rudolf Steiner's profound insight that daily life experience is truly the curriculum of early childhood, we have developed a home-away-from-home approach based on the four Living Arts: practical life activities, nurturing care, artistic exploration and social artistry. Through this life-based approach, children also learn their fundamental pre-academic skills. These foundational practices are infused with a strong social component that invites children,

parents and teachers to experience community akin to a close-knit neighborhood. This village concept can be created in home programs, centers and schools and serves to strengthen the joie de vivre of adults as well as the children. In recent years, schools have begun consulting LifeWays about developing this lively approach in their early childhood programs.

What is the LifeWays approach to training?

The Certificate Training (which is a prerequisite to enrolling in the Continuation Program) stands on its own and offers both parents and professionals a solid introduction to Rudolf Steiner's insight and research regarding the child from birth to seven while also providing a strong foundation of practical and artistic experience. The Certificate Training provides hands-on learning while at the same time offering tools for personal introspection and development.

The Continuation Program dives more deeply into Rudolf Steiner's evolutionary world concepts by studying his basic books. This second level program prepares students to teach in a school setting and includes further introductions to the whole of Waldorf education and other cultural works developed through Rudolf Steiner. It builds on what was introduced in the first level Certificate Training and encourages the possibility of experiencing one's career as part of an integrated whole, striving to keep joy at the center. The curriculum of the Waldorf kindergarten is brought to life again through the Living Arts, with a focus on activities that are expected in a school's early childhood program. This includes the arts and crafts, storytelling and puppetry, circle time and music, food preparation, outdoor play and other components typically experienced in a Waldorf kindergarten. Students also learn how to do faculty-led child studies, how to recognize and work with children who need learning support, and how to perceive when a child is ready to move into first grade.

Note: One unique aspect of the LifeWays program is that any LifeWays graduate is welcomed to return to any training location and take refresher courses for only the cost of supplies and food, as long as space is available. **CEU's** are available for all LifeWays courses. We also offer on-line classes for professional development that are both refreshing and inspiring.

Does this program meet the criteria required by WECAN?

The course content is based on the guidelines issued by WECAN and IASWECE (the International Association of Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education). The LifeWays Early Childhood Training and the Continuation Program together exceed the minimum number of class hours required by WECAN and were developed in accordance with their curriculum outline. Currently we are not in a membership process with WECAN.

Are LifeWays graduates ever hired by Waldorf schools?

Yes. Graduates of our Certificate Training are already employed in Waldorf schools as assistant teachers, aftercare teachers, and parent-child teachers. We are happy to provide any school a full syllabus of our program.