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Theme: TRUTH

***"Speak out your truth about early education."
~ Joan Almon (1944-2019)***

Joan Almon (1944-2019) was a founder and former chair of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America, the founding director of the US Alliance for Childhood, an international consultant on early childhood education, former co-chair of the Anthroposophical Society of North America, and lifetime advisor, mentor and friend to many.

(Did you see [THIS TRIBUTE](#) to Joan on the LifeWays Blog?)

Greetings from Cynthia!



Dear Friend,

Welcome Friends to our new newsletter. What's new? It is much shorter as we have taken parts of what always made it so long and distributed it into other venues spread out through the year. The newsletter is now primarily a gathering of inspiring articles, a story about a featured Representative, and a few juicy announcements from the community. With this change, I encourage you to read it cover to cover over the coming days.

With Truth as our theme, we come to the end of our trilogy. Shanah's article on The Mysterious Nature of Goodness, Beauty and Truth wraps the three together in a surprising way and also offers us a picture

of the transformational power of self-examination and of forgiveness, a theme I would like for us to explore further.

After reading all the articles, I wanted to write an enthusiastic endorsement of each one of them. What a unique gathering of ideas we have here! However, since my letter is a bit long, and I want you to read the whole newsletter, let me simply suggest you print it out and put it in your "reading spot" to relish over days or fix yourself a nice warm drink, curl up in your favorite chair and simply power through. Some articles will delight you; some will insight you (I just made that up); and all will invite you to ponder...

[THERE'S MORE!...READ CYNTHIA'S ENTIRE LETTER HERE](#)

"The need for imagination,
a sense of truth and
a feeling of responsibility –
these are the three forces
which are the very
nerve of education."

Rudolf Steiner



Contributions from the LifeWays Community

The Truth in Struggling with Our Children

by Acacia Moore



Several of our children at Rose Rock were rising first graders this year, coming to the age of six and seven and moving through the transition into middle childhood. This transition contains a bit of mystery and can feel like untrodden territory to both child and parent. Speaking to a mother of a six-and-a-half-year-old one evening, she asked me for help with her child whom she has

been struggling with through this change. She wondered what it is that makes this age feel so tumultuous, when five seemed so logical and golden in comparison. And, she wondered how to help her not-so-big, not-so-little-anymore child navigate this challenging time of life....[READ MORE](#)

The Truth in Family Stories

by, Mary O'Connell

We gave my father-in-law, Jerry, a gift this past Christmas that has turned out to be a great blessing. Using a company called [StoryWorth](#), my father-in-law



receives an emailed story prompt each week to help him share his stories with the family. We have an added bonus – because typing isn't his thing, I am privileged to be his transcriber. He painstakingly writes his notes in long hand, comes over to our house, and dictates to me the stories of his memory and his heart. I type them into the

StoryWorth platform and they are shared with the family the moment I hit "Submit". At the end of the year, StoryWorth will make a printed book of his stories.

What a blessing it has been to hear these stories, some of which are legendary in the annals of family history and others never shared with me before. Even the most banal topics contain pearls of delight and wisdom. Today, he stopped by to tell me about...[READ MORE](#)

Truth is So Simple for Me!

by Madrone D'Ardenne



I was an energetic, emotional, creative child. In my parent's eyes, I was a handful!

I was raised in a distinctly "pragmatic" family with repressive rules and unrealistic expectations for children. I was definitely a fish out of water in that materialistic and competitive environment. I wanted a warmer and more generous way of growing up for my own children.

When I discovered Waldorf, I found a potent ally in my determination to have my children reach adulthood with their souls intact. The sheer beauty of the classrooms, the thought and meaning behind everything, the amazing commitment and patient focus of the faculty brought me to tears on many occasions.

I first heard about the ideals of Truth, Beauty and Goodness from my daughter's Waldorf grades teacher, Mary Jane DiPiero, in 1998. They have shone like a beacon for me ever since, giving me hope and encouragement through some very dark times.

Many times over the years I have pondered these three pillars of the "new reality" I began to cultivate since taking on the "Waldorf Way" when I was a young mother. I have sought to understand their individual significance as well as their relationship to each other and the world.

Truth has always seemed...[READ MORE](#)

Celebrating What is True

by Meg Freeling

It's hard to talk about Truth because what is true is actually a living being. When something is really alive, it is both more flexible and more concrete than what we are able to say about it. We are so often trapped in our own abstractions of the truth that we fail to realize until



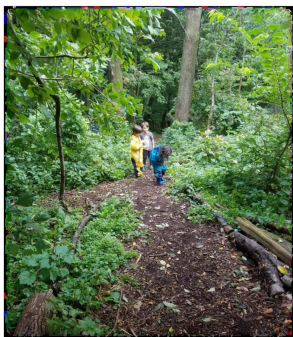
much later that the real truth of the matter slipped away from us in that moment when we were not paying attention. But life is graceful and full of mercy, and we are often able to come back to ourselves and 'see' again what is true. What follows here are some examples that might shed a bit of light on

some of the peculiar ways in which Truth, in its living being-ness, can be recognized.

Consider these three examples...[READ MORE](#)

The Language at LifeWays

by Destiny Skubis ("Miss D")



I've recently noticed how steeped the caregivers are in the language of gentle and productive words and phrases. There's a finesse that we each uniquely hold, yet a collective message that we share. This to me, truly makes our words mean something.

In Rudolf Steiner's daily soul exercise there is a day of "Right Words". This excerpt continues to dwell in my mind as I'm with the children and my peers because it supports our intentional work of what and how we speak to the children.

From the Daily Soul Exercise: Speaking: *Only that which has sense and meaning should come from the lips of the person who strives for ...*[READ MORE](#)

The Mysterious Nature of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth

by Shanah Ahmadi



Last year, at the end of October, I went on a camping trip with my husband of 11 years, my 10-year-old daughter, and my 4 year-old-son. My husband and I reveled in the preparations for our weekend adventure—from updating our camping list to setting up camp by the light of our headlamps. Even as we scurried about in semi-darkness, working to pitch the tent and unpack our gear, we were so happy to be completely enveloped in the outdoors—just the four of us.

When we awoke the first morning, we built our fire and made a delicious breakfast. After tidying camp, we checked some maps for hiking trails. Then, we happily hit the trail of our choice. We walked together for miles and miles, enjoying each other's company, but often walking in the bliss of quiet. Once we arrived back at camp, I napped with my son, while my husband and daughter went in search of dry firewood. After napping and gathering wood, we all worked together to prepare dinner and make skewers for roasting marshmallows.

As we were cooperating in our little camp, I experienced a strong image of an alternate reality where this camping trip was my family's final outing together.



Are you enjoying this newsletter? If so, please share it with a friend or your school community!

Featured LifeWays Representative

Hearthstone Forest Preschool

Sedgwick, Maine



*“Be true to yourself.”
“The truth will set you free.”
“Beauty is truth, truth beauty.”*



Living one's truth and the peace obtained from doing so is highly valued in our culture, yet accessing that inner peace in this complicated world can feel like an intangible mystery, possibly solved through following one's intuition through an array of experiences, relationships and lessons that ultimately might lead us toward where and who we are meant to be.

I graduated from college with my teaching degree 28 years ago. Over the following 13 years I taught and directed an outdoor education school in Southern Maine, tutored all ages of children, got my Master's degree in Environmental Education, worked at a Raptor Rehabilitation Center teaching with and rehabilitating hawks and owls, served as a naturalist at a Vermont state park and finally moved to Blue Hill, Maine where I got my Special Education degree to teach high school and elementary Special Education. None of those jobs left me feeling like I was "living my truth," although elements of some resounded joyfully within me and felt exactly right. At the environmental school I realized that working outdoors with children and teaching experientially about the natural world left me energized and connected to the earth. My lifelong love and affinity for animals continued at the Raptor Rehabilitation and Education Center, where I witnessed for the first time the magical way in which children respond to and commune with animals. As a Special Education teacher I was a stable adult for many children who had little nurturing in their lives.

After my son Jack was born, I quickly realized that I didn't want to be spending days away from him while working. We bought a house on six acres that was perfect for an early childhood program -- forests all around the school house site, big lawns to play on, a river running alongside the road I live on, farm animals across the street and on our property and the ocean less than a ten minute walk away. I prepared to open Hearthstone Forest Preschool in 2005.

All of the money I had to use went into renovating an outdoor shed into a rustic little school house for children. Plywood floors, a composting toilet and recycled furniture outfitted the space initially and, over the past 15 years, our school has grown. Thanks to my partner, who the children call "Worker Man Dave" we have added an outdoor classroom/sunroom, a flushing toilet (yay), a renovated kitchen, many garden beds and play structures, a goat pen, a beautiful stone path leading to the school and soon a frog pond will be part of our Hearthstone home.

My approaches to working, playing and learning with children have also transformed over the years, most dramatically after...[READ MORE](#)

Want to know more? Visit [Hearthstone Forest Preschool](#) online!

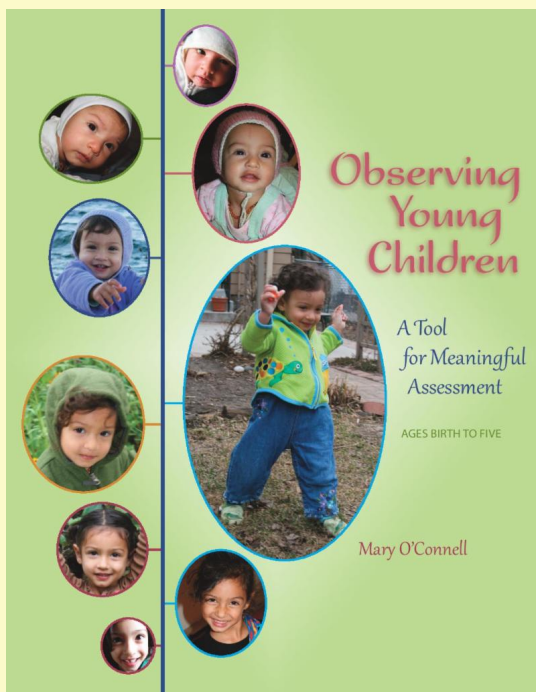


Meet Jennifer McCall ***Hearthstone Forest Preschool***

LifeWays philosophy lends itself powerfully to the healthy development of young children and their families. My LifeWays training and experiences have unified my head, heart and hands within the context of my life's work as a teacher and person blessed with the task of nurturing young children. I know I am in the right place doing what I am meant to do, and for that I am truly grateful.

News from the LifeWays Community

State of Minnesota joins Wisconsin and APPROVES Observing Young Children for Accreditation!



LifeWays owes a big THANK YOU to Veronica Oliva-Clour who helped get ***Observing Young Children*** by Mary O'Connell approved by the state of Minnesota.

Veronica wrote to us to share the good news, and said, '*I am so very pleased and excited that Waldorf methods can be part our MN state Parent Aware accreditation system. Having the choices we need, as educators, to follow our philosophy and curricula based on genuine child directed play and open ended activities filled with heart, patience and wisdom is so necessary in this ever increasing hardened world for little ones.*'

Do you work in an early childhood program in Minnesota? Using *Observing Young Children* as a tool for observation and assessment meets the criteria for Parent Aware Accreditation!

Do you work in an early childhood program in Wisconsin? *Observing Young Children* has been approved by YoungStar accreditation for use at LifeWays Milwaukee, and you can petition for your program to use it as well!

Do you work in an early childhood program elsewhere in the U.S.? **Submit *Observing Young Children* to your state's rating system for approval!** Be sure to let them know it has already been approved in two states. Let us know how we can support you in getting it approved in your state.

Do you want to know more about how to use this tool effectively? Join us for "[Learning to Observe Children](#)" online course -- the course begins October 30th.



Sensory Impressions and the Young Child: Parent Evening Reflections by Jaimmie Stugard

Last March, (Milwaukee) LifeWays' faculty was honored to host an evening for our parents. We were grateful for the opportunity to connect and collaborate with parents

who we typically see only in passing at pick up and drop off times. We sought to offer a rich sensory experience for the adults to actively explore, discuss and ponder an aspect of child development that would be interesting and applicable to all parents and caregivers of young children – Sensory Impressions and the Young Child.

Our evening began with delicious snacks and warm tea. Parents sampled their children's favorite treats and mingled with each other and their children's caregivers. For many, an evening away with other adults was a rare treat. As we savored the wonderful food and company, we were able to move throughout the space and enjoy beautiful displays arranged with simple, handmade puppets and toys, treasures from nature and beloved picture books.

After some time, the gentle chiming of the glockenspiel called us to our seats for a special presentation by our early childhood colleagues from [Tamarack Waldorf School](#). The teachers collaborated to present a puppet play of the traditional fairy tale...[READ MORE](#)

Friend of LifeWays, [Lee Sturgeon Day](#), offers workbooks with distilled insights and approaches of Rudolf Steiner and offer many practical and imaginative exercises that can be taken up individually or in groups.

Lee's books are available as immediate downloads on her site [HERE](#), or for sale on Amazon [HERE](#).

A Loving Tribute to Rena Osmer



*Upward to you strive the love of
my soul
Upward to you flow the stream of
my love!
May they sustain you
May they enfold you
In heights of hope
In spheres of love*

[Read Cynthia's Loving Tribute HERE](#)



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CALL IT IN - make your donation over the phone by simply calling Michael at (405) 343-7211 ~*Thank you!*

Welcome: NEW LifeWays Representative Program

WELCOME! [Hummingbird Hill Playgarden](#), located in
Lyndeborough, NH



Looking for details on upcoming LifeWays trainings,
workshops and courses?

THEY'VE MOVED!

Now you can plan your education and enrichment
opportunities with the new **LIFEWAYS PLANNER**,
published every two months. Catch up on the latest issue,
November/December, [HERE](#).

Questions? Ideas? Comments?

Share them with your editor:

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Transform your life with young children!

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