

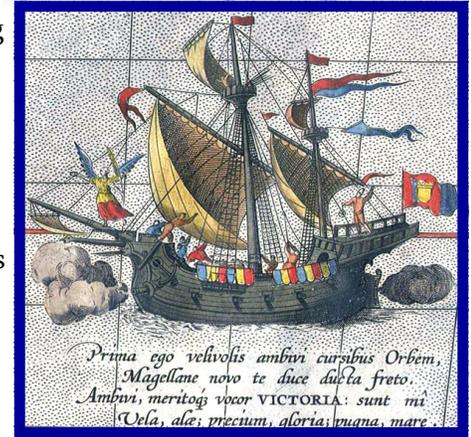
The World is Our Home

The Earth is Round

A funny thing happens when you circumnavigate the globe. You end up exactly where you started. Or do you? Traveling along the arc of a circle long enough will, speaking in strictly geometrical terms, eventually leave you where you started. But life, as we all know, does not bend to the maxims of mathematics. Any voyage is characterized by change. When the traveler returns home he is not the same as when he departed; nor are the lands in which he sojourned, nor the people that he met along the way. Internally we are never the same again. When one goes out into the world there is a dialectical transformation. We adapt, learn, grow to meet the challenges and opportunities of the world around us. At the same time we cannot help but leave our footprint on the roads we travel. We help to shape the world around us from the inside out and the choices we make, either conscious or unintentional, will ripple through space and time, lapping up against a thousand personalities. We touch the world and the world touches us.



Ferdinand Magellan, official mascot of this issue.



What I Did During Summer Vacation

At Home in the Waldorf Universe

Ever since I got involved with the creation of the Youth Initiative High School in 1996 as an 11th grader, I have been a strong supporter of our school's identification as a Waldorf school. Although it has not always been precisely clear what being a "Waldorf high school" entails and although it has sometimes been a controversial subject within our school community, I have always been impressed with the principles embodied in Waldorf education. In my view, the Waldorf model's commitment to educating the whole human being, its enthusiasm for the fine arts, practical manual skills, and foreign languages as integral parts of the curriculum, and its profoundly humanistic respect for the individual spiritual core of every person all make it a solid cornerstone on which to build a vibrant, forward-thinking high school.

Up until this past summer, however, my actual experience of Waldorf education was largely limited to my reading of a few books and lectures and to my time as a student and teacher in Viroqua. I have always had the nagging thought that my experiences at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School and, especially, at YIHS, as wonderful as they have been, may not actually be representative of Waldorf education as a whole. Perhaps the features that I enjoyed and

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Expanded Horizons

Editor's Note: Lauren Frentz is a senior at Youth Initiative High School and has attended classes here since her sophomore year. She is graciously and lovingly boarded by Adrienne Caldwell, YIHS parent of Eva and William Pollard.

My daughter Lauren, goes to Youth Initiative High School, and I live 2,100 miles away in Santa Cruz, California.

It took almost a year for Lauren to convince me that she belonged at YIHS. It had become a second community to her during her regular visits with Eva Pollard, and she was drawn to the teachers, the education and the students in a way that she hadn't encountered in other settings.

The idea of sending my sixteen-year old daughter half way across the country wasn't something that I embraced easily, but it became clear that this school offered something to Lauren that we couldn't find elsewhere, even in other Waldorf Schools. I realized that this was the place for her.

From the moment she entered Youth Initiative High School and the community of Viroqua she has enthusiastically reported her encounters with new ideas and culture. She is engaged with the topics of study from literature to math, to learning Bulgarian and visiting Guatemala. Lauren and I speak multiple times per week (sometimes multiple times per day) and I feel blessed that she wants to keep me close to the everyday events of her life while she is physically distant. She shares her excitement and frustrations with schoolwork, teachers and friends. I sometimes wonder if we would be able to maintain such a pure emotional connection if we were facing the daily challenges of life together in closer proximity.

Lauren's calls are complemented by the weekly reports that give me a glimpse into Lauren's studies and class work. They provide me with a framework for discussing the events of the week as relates to Lauren's academic opportunities and responsibilities. Sometimes it takes awhile to work through the information to reach a common interpretation, but then we are able to discuss her successes and challenges and plot a course of action to enhance the former. The teachers and others at the school have always been open and available for consultation.

All of my children have attended Waldorf Schools and I am used to being an active participant in their school lives. This has posed a challenge during Lauren's time at Youth Initiative High School. I miss attending parent meetings and social gatherings and getting to know the other families as intimately as those I have known through the years in our community in Santa Cruz. I have been able however, to appreciate the love and support provided by Adrienne Caldwell and Eva and Willy and the extended family of students, parents and alumni that forms Lauren's family away from home.

This experience has been (and continues to be) a significant structure for growth for Lauren, for me and for our relationship. Her decision to attend Youth Initiative High School and then making the case successfully to reach that goal was an education in the rewards of commitment and tenacity. She has developed independence and confidence in the knowledge that she can venture into new environments and hold her own. She has also been given a new perspective on community and friendship and how important each individual can be in the fabric that supports us.

I will be happy to see Lauren when she arrives home today for an extended Thanksgiving visit. She will bring her stories of school and friends and we will be able to sit together without technology between us. I will relish this time, and appreciate the girl that sits before me. Youth Initiative High School and Viroqua will forever be part of our lives, and for this I am grateful.



Lauren, trying to get out of bed for school in the morning

"SHE HAS DEVELOPED INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENCE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT SHE CAN VENTURE INTO NEW ENVIRONMENTS AND HOLD HER OWN."

-Kim Frentz; Mother of Lauren Frentz, YIHS senior



Back and Forth: Reflections on a Foreign Exchange

Recently the staff of the Kaleidoscope caught up with the four members of this year's foreign exchange to and from France. Two students from Lyon, France are staying with two students from YIHS. After six weeks in the States, the Frenchmen will return the favor by hosting our two YIHS students in Lyon for another six weeks.

Q: Is what you have seen of the US what you expected?

Noe: It is like I have hoped.

Romain: I didn't think that the cities and the towns were like this, a long street with a lot of fast food and in the side little houses in plastic. But the landscape looks like the French landscape.

Q: Do you like the United States so far?

N: I like the USA a lot.

R: Yes I like the USA, people are nice all the time and it is a little like holidays for us.

Q: What are some of the differences between life in the United States and life in France.

N: In the USA the people are like adults at 16 because they have a car and a job. It is very cold in the US, and they have a good president (Obama, not Bush).

R: In USA the young people are mature earlier than in France, they want to go to the school and learn (most of the time). Everybody drives a car at 16, and they can go where they want when they want. Except at Leo's, we eat at the restaurant and the fast food, and at home we don't eat together around a table all the time like in France. And here people can let their cars or their houses open, and in the town too, there aren't robbers

Q: Do you like Viroqua?

N: Yes, I like Viroqua because everyone is friendly. I hoped that it would be bigger, but it is fine.

R: Yes, Viroqua is good, bigger than I thought, and it's funny to see the houses in plastic, each with his little garden with short grass.

Q: How is school different?

N: The school is very much better than France because there is a good relationship between the teacher and the children

R: The school is very different, students and teachers are like friends, and students want to learn and they help teachers and administrators for the life of the school. The teachers are very less strict than in our school, because they don't need to be. And the rhythm is slower, but there's more homework.

Then we asked the American students some questions.

Q: Are you excited to go to France?

Leo: Beyond a doubt.

Eamon: Absolutely. Honestly I've felt the urge to get out for quite a long time, I have waiting for this.



Members of this year's French Exchange: From left to right: Eamon Heberlein (USA), Noe Millot (France), Romain Thareau (France), Leo Cox (USA)

“I DIDN'T THINK THAT THE CITIES AND THE TOWNS WERE LIKE THIS, A LONG STREET WITH A LOT OF FAST FOOD AND IN THE SIDE LITTLE HOUSES IN PLASTIC.”



A copy of the YIHS by-laws was part of the cargo of the most recent Mars Rover expedition pictured here. This is in keeping with our stated goal of educating the head, heart, and hands of all Martians

(Continued from page 1)

admired about these schools said more about Viroqua and about this community than they did about the ideas of Rudolf Steiner and about Waldorf schools more generally. In short, I, and perhaps others in the YIHS community, have had little sense of Waldorf education as a broader movement extending to other parts of North America and the world.

During the summer of 2008, I had the pleasure of participating in the first of three summer sessions of the Waldorf High School Teacher Training Program organized by the Center for Anthroposophy. The program takes place on the beautiful campus of the High Mowing School, a Waldorf boarding high school located in Wilton, New Hampshire. My participation in this program, which leads to accreditation as a Waldorf high school teacher, was generously supported by YIHS, by my family, and by AWSNA, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America. During my four weeks in New Hampshire, I participated in workshops in teaching English and history, in adolescent development and the

basic ideas of Anthroposophy, and in fine arts such as singing, eurythmy, drama, clay modeling, speech, and painting. My instructors included some of the leaders of Anthroposophy and Waldorf education in North America and beyond, including Georg Locher, Dennis Klocek, Meg Gorman, David Sloan, Michael D'Aleo, and the Director of the Center for Anthroposophy, Douglas Gerwin. I also had the chance to live and study with my fellow program participants, most of whom were active Waldorf high school teachers at schools from throughout the United States, as well as Canada, Mexico, and even as far away as Santiago, Chile.

The sense I came away with from speaking, studying, and rubbing shoulders with all of these people was one of instant recognition. These were Waldorf high school teachers and, as a group, they were people whose ideals, attitudes, and aesthetics I felt very much at home with. They seemed to be very excited by and supportive of the more unique and even radical aspects of what we are doing at YIHS, including serious student participation in school governance, student service, and our commitment to nutrition and sustainable agriculture within the curriculum. From everyone involved, including the teachers and organizers of the program, there was strong support for innovation and local diversity in approaches to Waldorf education at the high school level. Several of the people I spoke with expressed the hope that innovations of the kind occurring at YIHS would become more widespread in the Waldorf movement as a whole.

Indeed, one of my strongest impressions from the summer was that of the unique position of YIHS within the broader movement. There are about 40 AWSNA-affiliated high schools in North America. Most of these are located in the biggest cities on both coasts and serve highly affluent communities. Viroqua is a uniquely rural and low-income area for a Waldorf high school and the cost of education at YIHS is radically lower than at any other school represented at this summer's program. And yet, YIHS is already older than over half of the 40 high schools and has a roughly average enrollment size. Taken together, these facts mean that, as Douglas Gerwin said in one of our class sessions this summer, "Youth Initiative High School defies the expectations" when it comes to Waldorf high schools. The feeling I am left with is that YIHS has a lot to offer the Waldorf movement as a whole, as well as a lot to gain in terms of deepening our own curriculum and teaching. I look forward to the next summer and to more exchanges of insight and support with other Waldorf schools.

“...ONE OF MY STRONGEST IMPRESSIONS FROM THE SUMMER WAS THAT OF THE UNIQUE POSITION OF YIHS WITHIN THE BROADER MOVEMENT.”

-Jacob Hundt, YIHS Program Director and Alumnus



Learning Stillness in the Eye of the Storm

Anyone who knew me when I first started at Youth Initiative High School knew that I was extremely shy, especially when put into new situations. I distinctly remember that whenever I would try to speak at a student meeting, I would begin to shake and blush and could barely raise my voice above a whisper as a result. Then people would tell me to speak up--in an encouraging way--but it would further embarrass me and I would try my best to finish quickly or mumble, "never mind" and hope they'd move on without my point being made.

Over the years I slowly gained more confidence, if not volume, and I could at least present my speech or make a point in such a way that the quiet words pierced the air and only those who were hard of hearing due to their lack of an attention span could not hear me. In the loud and boisterous surroundings of Youth Initiative High School I found my inner strength to speak up. Although I still get nervous when speaking in public to a silent audience, I handle myself much better when I recall the comfort and safety I felt squished between 10 of my peers on a love seat couch that had been picked up off the side of the road that day, with everyone yelling out their opinion.

Since I frequently traveled during my high school career, I gained confidence which was a big help for me. My junior year I went overseas to Germany for three months with a fellow classmate of mine. There in the lovely city of Prien near the dazzling Chiemsee lake, I learned to string words together into a coherent sentence. Before then, I was decent in German. I could kind of translate some easy things from German into English...the other way around was a bit harder because my grammar was

poor. However,

after spending three months in Germany I was to a point where I could easily hold a long and fairly detailed conversation. Youth Initiative High School gave me this chance, the chance to go overseas while still in high school and get some experience out on my own for a bit, fending for myself in a language I was unfamiliar with. I loved being in Germany so much that during my senior year I figured out a way to go to Germany again. I worked things out with my Care Group so that I could work toward graduating from YIHS while away in Germany. And today, as I am living in Germany, I am very thankful for the opportunity Youth Initiative High School has given me.

My time at Youth Initiative High School has taught me to never give up and to take advantage of the many opportunities that are out there; it has taught me to believe in myself no matter where I am.

- Ita Rehbach, YIHS Class of 2008



Ita, at her graduation, in 2008

"I HANDLE MYSELF MUCH BETTER WHEN I RECALL THE COMFORT AND SAFETY I FELT SQUISHED BETWEEN 10 OF MY PEERS ON A LOVE SEAT COUCH THAT HAD BEEN PICKED UP OFF THE SIDE OF THE ROAD THAT DAY, WITH EVERYONE YELLING OUT THEIR OPINION."



(Continued from page 3)

Q: How do you feel about being away for three months?

L: Especially at this point in my life, I think it will be great and a wonderful experience. I look forward to spending these three months in a completely different place far away from here (no offense), experiencing new things and new ways of life.

E: At the moment I can only say I wish it was longer. How will I feel four in a half months from now?... that's another question.

Q: Do you expect the French people will be nice to you?

L: After what I've heard, not all of them by any means, but I expect a good amount of them to be nice to me, at least after they get used to how unusually nice I am to them all the time.

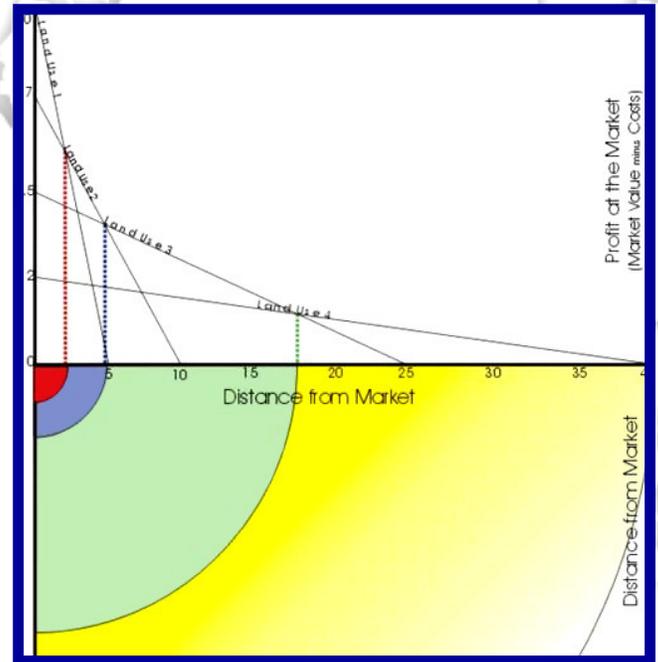
“I LOOK FORWARD TO SPENDING THESE THREE MONTHS IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PLACE FAR AWAY FROM HERE (NO OFFENSE)...”

E: I have heard too many stereotypes to prepare myself for all-around friendliness. However from what I hear Europe and the rest of the world have rethought how they view Americans, so, who knows, maybe that will help.

Q: Do you think there will ever be at time when you get home-sick?

L: No. Although maybe a little in the second or third week.

E: Yeah... this is the other question.... I have a fear that yes, I will. Not because I don't want to be home sick or anything, but simply because I want to get used to the idea of a world other than Viroqua. Obviously there is another level to the question. Family. No matter what I will always miss my family, but I really do feel mature enough and ready to lead my own life. In fact I think I really can't wait for that. Which is one reason I think I'm so excited for this trip. It will give me a chance to prove to myself that I can go out into the world and function in tricky situations.



According to 19th century economist Johann Heinrich Von Thunen, distance from the center is not profitable. We at YIHS respectfully disagree.

The World is Our Home: Service Learning Experiment

SERVICE IS VOLUNTARY WORK THAT ADDRESSES A COMMUNITY NEED AND THAT IS DONE WITH A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMUNITY.

—SERVICE LEARNING CLASS DEFINITION

This Fall I've been offering a new kind of class at Youth Initiative: Service Learning. YIHS has a vibrant practice of service—the student service requirement of 18 hours a trimester and the annual service week—and a history of responding to natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the Gays Mills flood. However, we've never had a class which considers why we serve and how we can best serve.



In this course, students begin by identifying what motivates them, what they like to do, while also looking out to the community of which they are a part to identify needs and problems. We discussed the community of Viroqua, and had several presenters come to class to discuss local social issues: Anne O'Connor from the Kickapoo Free Press, Ingrid Mahan from Viroqua Partners, and Dale Klemme, a candidate for State Assembly. Coupling community concerns with individual desires, students move forward into the community and the community comes to them; the result, hopefully, is meaningful service.

Each student was charged to create a service project comprising at least 10 hours of work and, based on their experience, to write a reflection and research paper. The research paper develops from a central question that arose for the student while serving.

Below are some examples of the student service projects:

- * One student organized a dinner for the residents of the Fortney Hotel, a low-income apartment building in Viroqua. Gathering donations, planning the menu, and organizing the cook crews, the student produced a fulfilling meal of lasagna, garlic bread, salad, and brownies. The residents ate heartily and were very appreciative.
- * One student worked for the library and helped with odd tasks that the overworked staff couldn't cover. Watching kids come into the library and interact with their parents, the student began to question the methods for teaching literacy and decided to write a research paper on different approaches to literacy.
- * In my current group of students, one student is preparing to work for the Valley Stewardship Network, one is planning a project with a local veterinarian, and another is creating a comic book about global warming for kids.

SERVICE WORK
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PRESENCE—BODY,
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AND CHALLENGES
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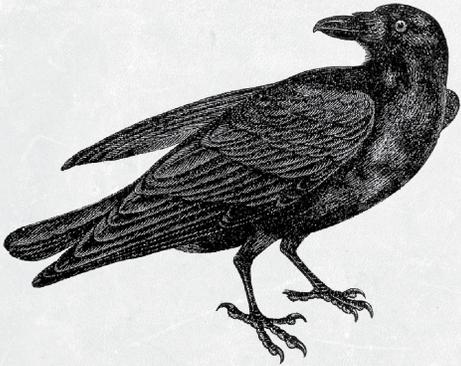


Students on their way to a service project

Service work requires our full presence—body, soul, and spirit—and challenges us to engage with the world that exists beyond our comfort zones. For high schoolers and many of us, insularity and solipsism are the norms, and opening our awareness and care to a broader community seems frightening and foreign. My hope and the vision of YIHS is to foster the students' "sociological imagination" with which they can think creatively about society and mold and shape it in the future.

-Shawn Lavoie,
Teacher / Development Coordinator

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