

LifeWays North America is devoted to developing healthy childcare, parent-infant and parent-child programs, and training programs for caregivers, parents and parent educators. These activities are inspired by the works of Rudolf Steiner and the experience of Waldorf education and are supported by contemporary early childhood research as well as common sense and wisdom of many generations of parents.

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Keeping in Touch

By Cynthia Aldinger, Director, LifeWays North America

LifeWays is moving into a new phase, and you are helping us to do so. As we are adding trainings and offering more workshops, it has become important to add some support services. As well as keeping our books for us, Rahima Dancy has agreed to be our part-time Membership Services Coordinator. I am so grateful! She has wonderful ideas about keeping us in touch more often, and I hope many of you will participate. It feels like now is a good time for us to reach out to one another in support and interest of our joys and trials.

Can you believe that, although it was only in 2006 that we nationally incorporated as a non-profit corporation, LifeWays has been in existence for over ten years! For me that's a wowie zowie! How are things going with your life and your work with children and families? Please send us your anecdotal stories. It is stories that weave our lives together, lift our spirits and encourage us to keep doing what we are doing.

So, here is my latest grandma story. Our little Benjamin just turned one year old, and we had the blessings of being with him in Chicago on his birthday. He learned to walk several weeks ago, and we took him for a walk to the park. He cut quite a figure as he pushed his stroller around the block, rather than hitching a ride. It is such joy to see a little one, who has been allowed to move freely without interference, develop such strength and stamina. About half-way down the street we encountered a young couple who were standing near a doorway having a little smooch. Benjamin decided this would be a good place to stop his stroller and do a little socializing. Did he recognize the twinkle in their eyes as a connection to a future playmate? Who knows, but the smooching stopped, and after a delightful exchange with our little ambassador, off they rode on their bikes, smiles on their faces.

If you have photographs of you with your children we would love to see them and to hear their stories. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy the articles we have for you in this newsletter. Thank you to Jaimmie for sharing your journey with learning how to help children get to sleep – something many of us have needed help with at one time or another. I was in Jaimmie's suite one time when she was telling her nap story – you can rest assured that I was one of the first to fall asleep!

As autumn deepens toward winter, sleep is what we see the outer world preparing for, and it sometimes feels like we would like to go in the same direction. However, we have an awakening spirit calling us to stand tall and do what needs to be done in the world. The words to one of my favorite autumn songs are:

Keeping in Touch

*Michaelmas, Michaelmas
A time to show both courage and form
Look well around
Inside you must wake
Trees may shake
I shall stand the storm!*

Let us know how we can help you stand strong in the blustering winds and deepening cold. As animals sometimes cluster together for body warmth, let us find one another in soul warmth to support courage for our deeds.

I love it when Daylight Savings Time ends and the days feel truer to cosmic rhythms, at least to me. Enjoy the shortening days and brightening mornings, friends, and please share your festivities with us. We would love to know how you celebrate the sacred in the unfolding seasons. I just received a lovely Autumn Festivals Booklet put together by the California Coast LifeWays students. It is just yummy to read how people lift life to its highest purpose through festive celebration. Please mail or email your stories to me or to Marianne, and we will happily share them.

In gratitude for all you do,
Cynthia



LifeWays boys at the LifeWays Child Care Center in Vancouver B.C.



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LifeWays North America is a 501 c3, non-profit organization.

Our Trainings and Workshops

News from the Maine Training

I am pleased to announce that our LifeWays Northeast training will now take place in Rockport, Maine at Ashwood Waldorf School! We are being warmly welcomed to meet in the Early Childhood Center. I am happy that we will be meeting at the school where I was the founding teacher. And now that we have just completed the new grade school building (it only took us 23 years!) there is a shower on that campus for those of you who would like sleeping bag or tent space. In addition, I look forward to matching students with friends who are able to offer guests ssrooms in their homes.

We will be also be very close to Spindlewood Waldorf Kindergarten and LifeWays Center (and my home) here in Lincolnville for our silk-dyeing and gardening workshops. Perhaps most importantly, John Palumbo, the assistant kindergarten teacher at Spindlewood will be able to set up his kitchen and nourish us with the organic meals that he prepares with such heart and soul, while still being near his young family.

Camden/Rockport, where “the mountains meet the sea” is considered the “jewel of the midcoast” with a harbor full of windjammer schooners, small shops and restaurants, a hiking trail to the top of Mt. Battie and much more! There is even an airport now in nearby Rockland/Owls Head with Cape Air flights to and from Boston that are not much more expensive than the Greyhound bus.

Our next session is scheduled for July 12-22, 2010. It will be the first of the next cycle of sessions, to be continued October 8-11, then a long weekend in March and 12 days in July 2011 culminating in a graduation ceremony. There are eight students who may complete their training in this next cycle. One new student is fully enrolled already. And there are many inquiries about enrollment. As far as I know, 20 will be the maximum size of the class. So if you know anyone who would like to join us, please advise them to be in touch!

Susan Silverio, Northeast training director, email: silverio@tidewater.net (207)763-4652



Saturdays at Spindlewood Waldorf Kindergarten and LifeWays Center included a session on cultivating archetypal gestures for Harvest Circle Plays. Above: Adrienne Nagy demonstrates seed sowing as practiced in her native Hungary. Students also harvested vegetables from the garden for lunch, dyed silks for puppet plays with indigo, and visited with Marie LaRosee, a LifeWays Graduate who has founded The Village, a LifeWays child care center in Mount Desert Island, Maine.

Training in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

with Cynthia Aldinger

This group of seventeen students is halfway through their training, having just completed a lovely October weekend with Suzanne Down on Puppetry, Storytelling and the Development of Speech. Their nursery rhyme characters were beautiful, and Suzanne noted how fun it is to discover when someone ends up creating a puppet that closely resembles the person creating it, as happened several times with this group. Coming from a variety of backgrounds, including experienced kindergarten teachers, just-starting-out caregivers, devoted mothers and talented parent-child educators, they have become tight-knit in a short amount of time. Now they are anticipating their spring session with anthroposophical nurse Trish McPhee who wowed the California students in August. She will introduce them to a variety of home health care practices along with helpful ways to care for themselves. I am excited about this because I wish for them to be able to continue the wonderful work they are each doing for many years to come!

As we continue to expand our training sites, we are also considering adding another specialized training for Extended Day Care Providers or what used to be called After Care Providers. Cynthia will be meeting this February with three people to consider what might be possible in this arena. We'll keep you posted!



Susan Silverio and her class having their harvest lunch at Spindlewood Kindergarten and LifeWays Center.

A New LifeWays Representative Site in the Northeast!

by Susan Silverio

We are delighted to announce that the Village Center for Child Care in Northeast Harbor of Mount Desert Island, Maine is now recognized as a LifeWays Representative Site. Marie LaRosee, a graduate of Northeast LifeWays training is the Director and Caregiver of the Center.

I shall never forget the sight that greeted me when I arrived one morning this fall for a visit. Marie was just beginning her walk down the sidewalk of this tiny coastal village center. She pushed a stroller with two children under the age of two years. Alongside, contentedly holding the handle of the stroller were three more children ages two to just three years. It was as though Marie held them all under her warm mantle of mindfulness, gentle guidance and soft melodic speech and song. Along this familiar walk into town, Marie and the children stopped to touch and smell the soft fragrant thyme in the garden they passed and listened for the sounds of crickets and street cleaners. Many friends and neighbors on the sidewalk stopped to smile and Marie greeted each one calmly and warmly.

Marie maneuvered into the Post Office for the daily errand of picking up mail and one of the children put an item into the recycling bin. Then on they went until they returned to the Center that is housed in the parish house of the community church where the children played at the village green until the assistant caregiver called us in for lunch. Inside, the rooms radiate warmth, beauty and comfort. We gathered around a dining table that had belonged to Marie's mother, and shared a family-style meal of grains and vegetables.

Marie has completed Biodynamic Agriculture training as well as her Master's degree in Waldorf Administration at Sunbridge College. She has lived and worked in this community for many years. She has cultivated a Board of Trustees and has worked with fellow LifeWays graduate Debbie Mountford in establishing the Village Center for Child Care in Northeast Harbor where the children are cared for with plenty of opportunity for independent movement and interaction with nature, and nurtured gently in all aspects of bodily care.

The Village Center stands as a wonderful example of Lifeways principles and practices.

First LifeWays Training in Colorado with Rahima Baldwin Dancy

The LifeWays training in Colorado has been meeting for seven days at a time, four times a year, in the beautiful home and Mountain Center of Young-Sook Kim. A dozen women have especially been enjoying the changing seasons and nature walks in this beautiful setting, as well as the wonderful guest teachers, including Dr. Philip Incao and Barbara Cavanagh, RN presenting on health and home care. Making “heavy babies” with Theresa Baker from Shining Mountain Waldorf School was especially fun (see photos).

The next training series will be starting June 26th, 2010 and will meet in June, October, January, and April. New applicants will receive the 500+ page Student Resource Manual when we receive their first payment, so encourage friends to enroll now. For questions or an application form, contact Rahima Baldwin Dancy at 303-546-0070 or Rahima@informedfamilylife.org.

Photos: Students in the Colorado training toss their beanbag meteors, display their heavy babies and make dragon bread!



Training at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California

by Cynthia Aldinger

A group of nine students completed the training this summer at RSC. They were the first LifeWays training group to have the option of writing a paper or doing a project, and it was a delight to hear their presentations in August. It confirmed that the project option was just as engaging for the students as writing a paper, and the themes were very diverse and compelling. Topics included: how to live on whole foods on a tight budget and basic child-friendly kitchen gadgets that enhance the children’s participation in food preparation, how to prepare slow bread when working with toddlers, creating a new line of cloth diapers, creating a toy, the joy of discovering the



nature table in your own home and when traveling with your child, and the journey of creating a home-based preschool. We also shared some amazing life stories, and I learned what a courageous group of women they are.

New California Coast Training with Marianne Alsop and Heather Lanier

Our California Coast Lifeways training began this September at the Marin Waldorf School in San Rafael on a day that was full of life. It rained for the first time in many months, the sun and the clouds danced in the wind, and there were rainbows. Settling into our rhythm of one Saturday each month, and one long-weekend each season, we have now met four times. Each meeting is rich with offerings for the spirit - singing the day awake, for the soul - the warm exchange of ideas and experience, and for the body - moving new forms as we knit, paint, or learn games.

Our October weekend at Hill of the Hawk Farm in Big Sur was a sensory feast. The warm Indian summer days were filled with delicious and nutritious meals and new recipes. We learned to dye silk and wool in soft beautiful colors and made autumn wreaths. We harvested our food from the farm, and canned the sweet red tomatoes. There were wonderful conversation, laughter, and singing with mornings reintegrating our bodies with the planes of space around us in Spatial Dynamics exercises.



The widths of the Pacific Ocean, the heights of the Ventana mountains, and the space and time together drew us into an expanded sense of well being.

Our theme of the twelve senses certainly came alive!

At our November session we focused on the infant and the development of movement, sang, played our lyres and shared a harvest lunch with the families of the women participating in the Lifeways training. Not only did we enjoy meeting each others partners and children while gathered around the beautifully prepared table, we

also sampled some traditional family recipes which warmed and nourished us.

For information on our next training beginning September 2010 and continuing until June 2011, please contact Marianne Alsop, alsop@sbcglobal.net, and download an application from www.lifewaysnorthamerica.org on the Trainings page.



Photos: Harvesting beans and tomatoes, canning and fermenting vegetables, singing a circle blessing.

Rhythm as a Form of Creative Discipline

by Abbey Weimer

Establishing consistent rhythms at home and in a childcare setting can lessen many unpleasant and unhappy moments with children. A strong daily, weekly, or even monthly rhythmical schedule offers support for an individual child or group of children who are often struggling emotionally as the child's ego and will come forth. Rhythm is a framework for holding children close to the caregiver and allows the adult to always be one step ahead, which can eliminate a lot of stress. Sometimes, children have a rough time adjusting to transitions during the day (beware of this) a simple song that serves as a 'warning, something will be changing soon,' can be helpful. At cleanup time at LifeWays we sing, "cleanup fairies will come soon," and most of the time the two year olds are so keen to this simple warning of transition that they immediately begin telling all their friends, "clean up!"

As a young caregiver, who has no biological children of her own to go home to, I have learned what works for me at LifeWays when working with children who belong to someone else. Also, as a lover of children and families, when I am in the world I find myself observing all sorts of familial interactions. One such observation that I see all the time is the adult, who unfortunately without realizing it, burdens his/her child with too many choices. Of course, in our modern age we as adults have found the world and its millions of choices to be our playground that gets us to where we want to be in life. Complex decision making and even simple decisions belong to adults, not to children. Children most often feel confused and burdened when asked to make a decision for the whole family. Even a simple question like, "Do you want to eat here or go home and eat?" can be too much for a child to decide. Another type of question I hear adults ask is, for example, "Will you put your shoes on?" when the adult means, "Put your shoes on now please." The difference between these two sentences is that the second sentence does not imply a choice between wearing or not wearing shoes. It states, "put your shoes on," which leaves no room for any confusion as far as what the adult expects the child to do at this point in time. Establishing a strong rhythm in the home life will lead, eventually, to the



child putting his/her shoes on without asking, simply because the child will know what to expect; and oh how much more simple life would be (smile!). A child who has too many choices can quickly become exhausted (parents too). A child who has a strong rhythmical life will feel supported by the world in which he/she grows and will not be forced to wake too soon out of the dreamy consciousness of childhood.

Rhythm is the golden thread that weaves through our days, weeks, months, and years at LifeWays. "Outer activity comes to meet whatever wells up within the children as we move through repetitive daily and weekly rhythms" (Beyond the Rainbow bridge, by Barbara J. Patterson). Supportive rhythms/ routines help children connect in a stronger way to the cosmic rhythms of nature that have already been gifted us. In conclusion, while the world is running crazy outside we can offer the children of our world, who will inherit this world, a little bit of healing today, and believe it or not, the answer is as simple as rhythm.

Abbey Weimer recently left LifeWays Milwaukee after seven years as a beloved caregiver to pursue her new work as a massage therapist. She continues to teach Music in the LifeWays training in Wisconsin.

Afternoon Rhythm by Brittany Austin

I often wonder, "What will the rhythm be like today?" As a caregiver I make an effort to maintain the same rhythm every afternoon. There are many different ways that I as a caregiver make sure the rhythm is the same every day.

When the afternoon starts, after nap time, we transition to putting our cots away. If there are any of our friends that are still sleeping I take our friends into the suite and we all sing, "Morning has come," and we transition into putting our cots away. While putting our cots away we sing a few different songs. When folding their blankets we sing, "Shake, shake fold." It helps the children wake up and get their body and mind moving. And when the children carry their cots to a different suite we also sing a little song. Once all the cots are put away we transition into getting ready for snack. All the children and I sing a little tune to walk to the bathroom. While washing their hands we sing, "Wash, wash, wash your hands" to the tune of row, row, row your boat. When they are finished washing their hands they sit on the waiting rug and read a book.

Once all our friends are finished washing their hands we tip-toe to the table. The children then collect their own



chairs and place them by their spot at the table. Then all our friends together sing our blessing. Snack is served with two of our friends helping pass out the food and drink. When our friends are done with their snack they scrape what was not finished and wash their plate and cup. After they are done washing their dishes we transition to outside play. During the transition we sing, "Slippers in the basket." They know it is time to go outside. Our friends put their shoes on along with their hats. Once everyone is ready we head outside to the enchanted forest for play.

Rhythm for the children is very important. Some of our friends know right when their mom or dad will be coming by the ringing of the doorbell or knowing how much time they have played outside. Each child is in tune with the rhythm and it makes him or her more comfortable.

As a caregiver, rhythm is important for me along with the children in everyday life from beginning to end.

I always look forward to learning more about the children and growing together.

Brittany is a college student working on her degree in Early Childhood Education, and works at LifeWays Lake Country.

LifeWays to be Featured at Spring Parenting Conference

Cynthia Aldinger will be one of the featured speakers at the annual parenting conference sponsored by Informed Family Life April 24-25, 2010 in Fair Oaks, California. This year's theme will be "**Mothering and Spirituality—Resourcing Feminine Wisdom,**" and Cynthia will be presenting a keynote talk on "How are the Children? How are We?" and workshops on "Life as the Curriculum for Young Children," "Mindfulness Matters" and "The L.O.V.E. Approach to Discipline."

Other keynote speakers include Nancy Poer from Rudolf Steiner College, Carol Flinders, author of

At the Root of This Longing: Reconciling a Spiritual Hunger and a Feminist Thirst and Regina Sara Ryan, author of *The Woman Awake. Feminine Wisdom for Spiritual Life.*

LifeWays Regional Director and conference organizer, Rahima Baldwin Dancy, will be presenting on "Mothering, Spirituality and Feminism: Reweaving the Strands." There will also be more than thirty break-out sessions to encourage participants to drink deeply from the well of their own feminine wisdom.

For a complete conference brochure, see www.waldorfinthehome.com or call 303-546-0070.

Why Rhythm?

by Jill Farrell

Sometimes it is hard to remember that children work differently than adults. The young child thrives in an environment when they know what to expect and then what comes after that. The young child will request the same book to read every night before bed time when they have literally hundreds of books to choose from. The same child will clearly favor one toy over others for days at a time or even weeks at a time. The young child will not tire from dropping the same toy out of their buggy time after time, over and over- She does it because she knows you will pick it up. As adults, we get bored reading the same story or picking up the same toy that has been thrown tens of times. Perhaps that is because we have lost some of the innocence of childhood. At LifeWays, I think that we aim to protect that childhood innocence. I

look for ways to get the children outside and into deep play. In order to do that I establish a daily and weekly rhythm

Each day looks the same and there are very few surprises. Each child knows that they nap after lunch, but before they lie down they scrape and wash their plates. Before lunch we wash our hands, it always that way with very little variation. This rhythm is comforting to the young child. It establishes a sense of security that enables them to get deeply involved in play at the appropriate times. They know that play time is outside or in the suite. They also know the appropriate times not to play, in the bathroom, or at meal times. Of course everyone needs a little reminder every so often, so we say, "You may drum with sticks outside in the forest, your fork and spoon live next to your plate on the table" if a child is getting out a little rhythm of his own at the wrong time. When the rules

are clearly defined for a child and their rhythm is established, there is less need for discipline.

In addition to the daily rhythm, we incorporate a weekly rhythm. In all of our favorite songs there is the bass drum that keeps time. The 1-2-3-4-1 etc. keeps us stomping our feet or nodding our head. That is our daily rhythm. It chugs along keeping us all in line. Our weekly rhythm gives that same song a little variety. It changes pace, goes up or down in intensity, but it is still static every time we hear the song played. Our weekly rhythm is set in our morning suite activities and in our meal plan. All of the children know that on Mondays we have breakfast for lunch. They have started referring to this day as brunch, which is very cute. Thursday mornings Miss Kathy makes baked oatmeal with the early morning children. Other morning activities are painting, drawing, play

dough and cleaning. Believe it our not, on Fridays, the children LOVE getting out their squirt bottles and rags and wiping down the furniture and toys! They like rolling up the rugs and putting them away. These subtle changes to the day really add to the whole scope of our time at LifeWays. We move through our days and weeks with a plan.

The rhythm even helps me as a caregiver get in tune with each child each day because I don't have to worry about what is going to come next. I may get a little bit tired of reading the same book every day before nap time, but I have to remember that the young child works differently than I do. The rhythm that we establish at LifeWays works to ensure confident and creative individuals with a strong sense of security which opens them up for deep creative play.

Jill Farrell is a caregiver at LifeWays Lake Country.



Sleep Rhythm

by Kathy Miller



If we happen to have little people in our lives, our daily lives sometimes seem chaotic, so we must strive for little slices of rhythm. Rhythm is so much more than just a framework of steps we do with little children. Not only does it keep life consistent, but it helps the young child become secure in his or her envi-

ronment, confident, and most importantly, it can eventually build within them an inner working clock.

Sleep rhythms, I believe, help children develop good sleep habits. It was recently that I had two parents (outside of our LifeWays Center) with different concerns approach me in regard to the topic of sleep. The first parent asked how to help a nine-month-old baby grasp the fact that nighttime is a time to sleep and not play. Their baby was up for 2-3 hours each night wanting to play. After much discussion it became evident that the baby had not developed consistent sleeping patterns through out the day and night. She slept anywhere and at whatever times she wanted to sleep. Mother firmly believed that baby was in charge of when she should nap. Yes, to some extent this is true, however baby will lead the way to consistent nap periods if we cue into the times the baby usually gets sleepy and help develop a rhythm by putting baby down to nap and for bed at these times each day.

The second concern was from a parent who was at a loss with her four-year-old little girl. Both parents in the home had given up the fight to get their child to bed. It was a battle they no longer had the energy to fight. The little one falls asleep on the couch sometimes at 8pm, 9pm, or 10pm and, once asleep, she is moved into her bed. In this case, a sleep framework needs to be created. I will call it a sleepy time rhythm. To have a well-rested night's sleep children need to be in bed between 7 and 8pm. Some experts firmly believe bedtime should be no later than 7pm for the young child, which is often difficult for modern families

to achieve. The framework of the sleepy time rhythm should begin 2 hours prior to bedtime.

In my home, our rhythm begins as soon as we arrive home from work. The children play until dinnertime, either outside or inside. We eat dinner around 5:30pm together as a family at the table. Bath time is after dinner. Depending on the mood of the girls they may spend 10 minutes to 1/2 hour in the bath tub playing. Once dressed for bed, a couple of books are chosen to read. While books are read they may have a little sleepy time tea to drink and enjoy. Then it's time to brush teeth, choose clothes for tomorrow, use the potty and jump into bed, lights out for the night. They are typically in bed by 7:30pm, give or take a little.

I, too, have struggled to get my children to bed at times. When this occurs I have to ask myself what I am doing differently with the rhythm. As a caregiver and parent, it has been a blessing to have encountered the LifeWays training, where the importance of rhythms were discussed and understood to be a necessity for the young child. Once the sleepy time rhythm is in place the benefits will be huge, not only for the young child, but the parent and caregiver. The inner clock begins to tick.

Inda Schaenen, states in her article, *Lights Out*, that parents who insist on an early bedtime discover it benefits the health of their children. Schaenen says that studies at Stanford University have linked sleep deprivation with children's behavioral and learning problems. "Chronically tired kids are not only cranky and irritable but also easily frustrated. They even become depressed". In the article, Dr. Marc Weissbluth, a Chicago pediatrician and sleep researcher suspects, "chronically tired children become chronically tired adults who suffer in ways we can't measure: less resiliency, less ability to cope with life's stress, less curiosity, less empathy, less playfulness."

It's evident that the importance of sleep is fundamental for our little people. An early bedtime and a sleepy time rhythm can help young children build the foundation to healthy sleep habits. It feels wonderful, as a parent and caregiver, to know that we can begin to help our children become strong and resilient young adults just by promoting good sleep habits.

Kathy Miller is the Lead Caregiver at LifeWays Lake Country, and the mother of two girls, Gaby, age 6, and Jordan, age 3.

Creating an Enriched Environment for your Child

by Rahima Baldwin Dancy

“The brain tends to seek out what it needs at each stage of development. Why not trust the child’s brain to seek out the stimulation it needs from a naturally enriched environment?” —Jane Healy *Your Child’s Growing Mind. A Practical Guide to Brain Development and Learning from Birth to Adolescence*

Some ways to provide a naturally enriched environment for your young child:

- Have play and activity times fit rhythmically into a regular structure (e.g., meals, activities, rest, play, bedtime, occur at expected times every day; activities occur regularly, on a certain day each week).

- Allow *time* for free play—home life can be fully as valuable as taking lessons! When your child is playing, observe more, interrupt less.

- Provide areas for activities, with things arranged in a way that invites the child’s involvement (such as child-sized furniture for a kitchen area, a workbench, art area, etc.).

- Provide simple toys that require the child to complete them with his or her imagination (items from nature, cloths, costumes, simple dolls and “archetypal” toys).

- Provide examples of real work for imitation. As children see and help adults transform things through work, this will become transformed in their play. (Quality time is time when you’re present, aware of your child and doing something—you can be folding the laundry or baking instead of doing puzzles).

- Provide plenty of contact with the world of nature and opportunities for play with sand, soil, water, air

- Provide artistic activities that allow your child to express freely what lives within him or her (coloring, painting, beeswax modeling).

- Value “orality,” with the young child. Have good communication cycles, but don’t explain intellectually or reason so much with him/her.

For the very young child: lots of nursery rhymes, finger plays, movement games, simple stories (The Gingerbread Boy, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, etc.). For the older child (4+), provide nourishing images from stories the child hears. Sing often, to and with your child (much more valuable than tapes!).

- Limit “screen time” (television, video games, computers, VCR) both because of the effects of the media on the child’s brain/senses and the

effect of the content/images coming to your child.

“In addition to altering society, new technologies also have a disconcerting habit of changing the mental skills and even the brain organization of people using them....Fast-paced, nonlinguistic, and visually distracting television [and video games] may literally have changed children’s minds, making sustained attention to verbal input, such as reading or listening, far less appealing than faster-paced visual stimuli.” —Jane Healy, *Failure to Connect. How Computers Affect Our Children’s Minds—for Better and Worse*



LifeWays: Home Away From Home

Hurray! We are nearing completion of our book and hope to have it available to you this winter, or at least by spring. The copy editing is complete. Next it is off to the book designer, then to the printer and then it will be available through our website!

Our copy editor is a parent at the Milwaukee LifeWays Early Childhood Center, and after reading it she said she was happier than ever that her child is in a LifeWays setting.

Here is an excerpt from the chapter on ***The Many Faces of LifeWays:***

From Midwife to Mother to Childcare Provider

contributed by Marcy Andrews, Caregiver and LifeWays training graduate

In the middle of lunch I am struck by how utterly delightful my two-year-old son Antonio is. I wink at him secretly across the table. "Why are you taking a picture of me with your eyes?" he asks with an impish grin on his face. These moments are so fleeting, that I am constantly trying to take pictures with my eyes. Knowing how precious and temporary they are is exactly what brought me to this work.

When I adopted my first son, Rafael, three-and-a-half years ago as a single mother, it was a challenge to let go of what, to that point, had been my lifeline and passion: midwifery. My calling to be a midwife had come to me as a flash of clarity and vision. For nearly ten years I had lived and breathed pregnancy and birth. It had fed my mind and heart and soul in a way I thought nothing else could. Just as it had called me, it was now asking me to let go. The new message was my little boy looking up to the angels and saying, "Ga, Ba, Da," and I could not yet understand the message. For years, I had had long talks with one of my dearest friends, who is a Waldorf kindergarten teacher, and I had watched her raise two exceptional girls. Theoretically, I knew the importance

of consistency and rhythm in a young child's life, but Rafa was an easygoing baby who willingly rode on chicken buses across Guatemala with me, lived in an extra room in a maternity clinic in a rural Mayan village, and went to births in the middle of the night riding in a backpack without complaining.

Then I adopted Antonio, and he called out the message loud and clear! When I first held Antonio at five months, he had already suffered severe illness, had been shifted from foster family to foster family and seemed unaccustomed to being held. He had an inconsolable, bloodcurdling scream and refused to sleep for more than an hour at a time. Rafael was 20 months and toddled around with his fingers in his ears. I was completely consumed with being a mother and overcome with an enigmatic and unconditional love

unlike anything I had ever experienced. I was delirious with exhaustion and suddenly rhythm and routine were stabilizing, grounding and completely essential.

Compared with the exhilarating life of a midwife, each day seemed somewhat the same. Time was moving like water flowing, steadily in a mountain stream. There were times when the rhythm seemed maddeningly repetitive and mundane.

But then there were times when I was blessed with the consciousness that each moment the stream was carrying new water that had been collected from a million different sources. Not only that, but it was feeding life downstream with unlimited potential and creativity! The monotony was carrying with it a vastness beyond my wildest imaginings. I was being called into a meditative trance that was calling me into the present like never before. In that state, I could recognize the nuances of every cry. I could understand the jokes that my boys told each other in single syllables and could laugh with them. I could follow my exploring toddler up the stairs 13 times without getting impatient or bored. I could lie on the ground



with them and feel the beating of their hearts in rhythm with my own. Here we were building the foundation for the rest of our lives, and all this was happening while we patiently, steadily watched the days roll by like water feeding life.

I had had ideals about staying at home with my children when they were young for as long as I had dreamed about having children. Providing childcare in my home would allow me the opportunity to do that, but I deeply questioned my ability to have the patience, the discipline, the inner strength, or the creativity. My LifeWays training fed my soul and expanded my thinking enough to see how each moment and each day with the children could be approached as a spiritual practice, taken one step at a time. I did not have to be perfect. In fact, the children would learn most from me when they saw me striving.

For the past year, my life has been spent almost entirely in the quiet New Mexico canyon I call home, with my phone quiet, my car parked in the driveway for days on end, and my work coming to me down our long bumpy dirt road in the form of children eager to learn and play. I still have my moments where I question it all. But in my lucid moments, I know I am on the right path. It is not a calling that has come in a flash of vision, but rather one that has crept into my bones through day after day of consistent rhythm - a rhythm that has cultivated my patience, nurtured my creativity, expanded my discipline, and gifted me love greater than I ever could have imagined.

Upcoming LifeWays Trainings

Western Region: March 6-13, 2010 at Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, CA. Contact Lauren Hickman, (916) 961-8727.

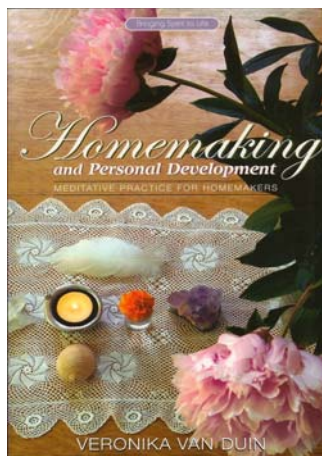
Rocky Mountain Region: June 2010 in Boulder, CO. Contact Rahima Baldwin Dancy, (303)546-0070.

Midwest Region: Fall 2010 in Milwaukee, WI. Contact Cynthia Aldinger, (405)579-0999.

Northeast Region: July, 2010 in Lincolnville, ME. Contact Susan Silverio, (207)763-4652.

California Coast: September 2010 to June 2011 in Marin County and Big Sur. Contact Marianne Alsop alsop@sbcglobal.net

Good Reading



Homemaking and Personal Development
Meditative Practice for Homemakers
By Veronika van Duin

Published by Sophia Books, a division of Rudolf Steiner Press, UK 2008

Available in North America through Steiner Books
www.steinerbooks.org

"What decides why things go well one day and badly another? The events are the same, the homemaker is the same, yet on one occasion nothing works out for her and on another everything seems miraculously to fall into place. Is there a special ingredient within us that we can tap into and cultivate to generate the longed-for equilibrium?"

Veronika van Duin began her career as a homemaker forty years ago. Setting out with love, enthusiasm and idealism, she soon discovered that she had no idea of the magnitude of the task, feeling herself to be 'very, very wanting'. As she writes: "...I felt guilty, pressurised and inadequate much of the time. I became increasingly conscious of my personal shortcomings. I also felt very alone, and sometimes lonely too..."

It is from such humbling feelings that van Duin writes, offering support and hope for fellow homemakers. She reveals the discoveries that have provided her, and many others she has taught in workshops and courses, with the basic life tools for overcoming personal hindrances. In this wonderfully uplifting book, van Duin gives exercises for restoring balance, maintaining equilibrium, discovering understanding, creating joy, validating feeling, maintaining vitality and drive, developing insight, finding freedom, and much more.

Also available by the same author, ***Homemaking as a Social Art, Creating a Home for Body, Soul and Spirit.***

Creando un Ambiente Saludable y Bello

por Rosario Villasana-Ruiz,
Directora del programa LifeWays en Español, San Francisco, CA

El Medio Ambiente es el Tercer Maestro: un ambiente de alta calidad para el cuidado de niños engancha el interés del niño en juego y actividad saludable. Las tareas primordiales de esta etapa son el desarrollo sano del: tacto, vitalidad, movimiento y balance. Esto les brinda una base sólida y fuerte para todo futuro aprendizaje y desarrollo. También provee oportunidades para el desarrollo físico, socio-emocional y cognoscitivo que apoya el creciente sentido de orden y auto-disciplina. Tanto las prácticas del proveedor como el orden del medio ambiente ayudan al niño entender lo que se puede hacer y lo que no se debe hacer. Las reglas y disciplina son claras, constantes, justas y apropiadas...y viven en el comportamiento del proveedor.

Niños necesitan que el lugar en que se cuidan provea:

Espacio para explorar, moverse, gatear, saltar, correr, descubrir, hablar, donde pueden reírse, saber que ellos son importantes y que nos interesamos por ellos

Materiales interesantes para tocar, textiles distintos de cuales pueden aprender mucho, contacto con la naturaleza y los elementos, oportunidades para cocinar y construir

Un cuidado hogareño u centro que parece hogar que tiene los mejores elementos de un hogar saludable: NO parece hospital, cárcel, escuela, oficina—un lugar NO INSTITUCIONAL tiene sitios acogedores donde se pueden retirar de tanta estimulación y recuperar el equilibrio



New Services for Members

Monthly Conference Call

If you are a Trained Affiliate or Representative Member of LifeWays, we encourage you to participate in the new monthly conference call hosted by Cynthia Aldinger. This is an opportunity to hear from LifeWays training directors and other LifeWays members who share your similar work and concerns. We will have plenty of time for your questions and exchange of ideas, either around what's pressing or a topic we suggest. If you have not yet received information about connecting with this new service for members, please contact us at info@lifewaysnorthamerica.org

LifeWays Chat Room

Trained Affiliates and Representative Members are also invited to join the LifeWays chat room on Facebook. If you're already on Facebook, you can request to join and then contribute to the discussions relating to childcare, parent education, and so forth. If you haven't taken the plunge yet, this may be the excuse you need to join Facebook!

Links to your Program's Website

Let others know about your program! Representative Sites and Self-Affiliate or Trained-Affiliate Members are listed on our website, www.lifewaysnorthamerica.org, where we also include a link to your website or PDF pages. In addition to connecting parents with LifeWays programs, these links give people an opportunity to see different ways LifeWays principles are put into practice. It can help generate interest and enrollment for your programs—and it lets people know we have affiliated programs throughout the US and in Canada.

Receive this Newsletter Twice a Year

All members receive this newsletter twice a year, as well as occasional email updates about the work of LifeWays North America. Your membership will keep you connected and will help support the effort to change the face of childcare in North America!

www.lifewaysnorthamerica.org



Membership Form Application/Renewal 2010-11

Friend of LifeWays \$35.

Thank you for your interest and concern for furthering healthy child care and parent support through LifeWays. Your annual contribution will help us to continue with our training courses, workshops, and public outreach. We will send you our bi-annual newsletter to keep you abreast of our work. Please tell your friends, colleagues and acquaintances about our organization and encourage them to contact us so that they may become a Friend of LifeWays or an organizational member.

LifeWays Trained Affiliate \$100.

For affiliate members who have completed the LifeWays training and support and align their work with the LifeWays organization. You have the opportunity to be featured on the LifeWays website via a link to your website or contact information. You will receive the bi-annual newsletter and we welcome your attendance at LifeWays sponsored workshops and conferences at a fifty-percent reduced fee.

LifeWays Self-Affiliate \$100.

For individuals or organizations who consider their work or parenting to be in close alignment with LifeWays principles and practices, we welcome your affiliation and support. Your name and contact information will be listed on the LifeWays website as a self-affiliating member. You will also receive the bi-annual newsletter and we encourage your attendance at LifeWays gatherings.

I have included a check for the following level of membership, new _____ renewal _____
Friend at \$35. _____ Trained-Affiliate at \$100. _____ Self-Affiliate at \$100. _____

Affiliate members, please enclose a copy of your brochure or flyer.

Please contact us directly if you are interested in becoming a LifeWays Representative.

Please fill in all applicable information:

Your Name: _____
Your Address: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Name of Early Childhood Home or Center: _____
Address of Center or Home: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____ Website: _____
Where training was completed: _____ Graduation date: _____

LifeWays North America is a 501 (c) 3 non profit organization, your donation is tax-deductible, if you would like to make a donation, thank-you for indicating the amount enclosed:

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