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A Newsletter for Waldorf School Communities
from the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America

Help for Haiti... There have been many wonderful outpourings of ideas for raising funds for our brothers and sisters suffering in Haiti. Students from the Waldorf School of Garden City, the Brooklyn Waldorf School, the Rudolf Steiner School in Manhattan, and the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, New York, organized a coin drive in response: empty water jugs will be placed throughout the schools so that teachers, parents, students, and community members can donate whatever coins they have. We are sending out a letter asking for all Waldorf schools to do the same and send their money to their favorite charity to help Haiti. GMWS and Brooklyn will send to Partners for Health, WSGC will send to Yéle Haiti, and RSSNYC will give to Oxfam America for Haiti. On February 6, the teachers at the Nelson Waldorf School in British Columbia have called all Waldorf communities around the world to gather sponsors to contribute to a **knit-a-thon for Haiti**. We ask schools to commit to help for the long haul, because healing and repair will take years.

The Hague Circle... Twice a year colleagues gather from every continent for Hague Circle meetings, which are convened by the head of the international pedagogical section of the Anthroposophical Society, and attended by U.S. representatives James Pewtherer (chair of the Pedagogical Section in the U.S.), Dorit Winter (Director of the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training), and Frances Kane (AWSNA Leader of Administration). The meetings are much like a college of teachers' circle in our schools, supporting Waldorf Education through study, learning from the experiences in each country, and working with current and future-bearing questions. Some areas of work include: creating a description of main characteristics of Waldorf Education that can be used in any country, and hearing what are successes and challenges in each country and what common themes arise from these reports. A few things stand out from November: educational pressure from governments continues to push children into schooling at younger ages, and challenges the independence of Waldorf Education, making the work of many Waldorf teachers difficult and, in some countries, heroic.

Leadership Council Meetings were graciously hosted by colleagues at the Hartsbrook School in Amherst, MA. Part of the agenda, which spanned three-days, included special discussion sessions on the topics of governance in our schools, regional activity and collaborative work, and effects of the current economics in our schools and training institutes. Fear and concern surrounding economic conditions in our schools has been met by some program reductions, even though the reality proved less dire than expected, and some schools were even able to maintain or increase enrollment and fundraising. Some schools were stretched to where special subject programs, salaries and benefits were cut or reduced. But a positive result has been a revitalized community life as parents and coworkers joined together to find creative and more conscious resource management. Governance structures have been challenged to be responsive to new solutions and community needs. Entrepreneurship has created innovative solutions. The essential value of classroom community has been acknowledged and experienced as the core of our schools.

Update from Council of American Private Education...CAPE is working on a new strategy to protect independence in education with an ad hoc committee on which Patrice Maynard (AWSNA Leader of Outreach & Development) has been invited to participate. This committee is in response to the ignoring of the independent school movement that the U.S. government has adopted as policy. For example, the DC voucher program which has been successful in helping over 1300 young people to succeed in DC independent schools would cost a mere \$1.8 million dollars to continue, but is being ended. At the same time \$48.6 million has been allocated to public school districts as discretionary funds – and little reporting required.