

## **Bennington Student Completes Successful Internship with AWSNA**

*Ghent, NY* – The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America recently received funding to create a web environment for Waldorf school alums. During deliberations as to how best to research and implement such a site, Patrice Maynard, Leader for Outreach and Development, was contacted by a Waldorf alum who was attending Bennington College in Vermont.

“Henry Lyon happened to be interested in dedicating his College Field Work Term to the exact same project,” according to Maynard. “We were looking for a way to create a space where schools and individuals would find themselves comfortable in the AWSNA alumni networking site. Some of our objectives included creating a platform for social networking, a way for alums to contact each other, a mapping tool which locates individuals and communities, a community events bulletin, and a communications newsletter.”

### **The Bennington College Field Work Term**

After graduating from Summerfield Waldorf School in 2006, Henry Lyon joined the Bennington College class of 2011 and began studying political economy, and training for community dispute resolution through mediation and the arts.

He has spent time learning and working as a social activist for endeavors local and global, and he was deeply inspired by a visit and eventual stay last year with the Youth Section School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Switzerland.

Bennington College gives its students the opportunity, every year, to work in the world and build their education outside of the classroom. The Field Work Term is a time for students to explore their interests, and come to grips with the reality of the working world. Inspired by John Dewey’s pedagogical principle learning through living, Bennington College’s Field Work Term has been an established part of the curriculum since the schools founding in 1932.

For the year 2007/2008 school year, Lyon set himself the goal of getting up to date on current methods of internet based communication.

“As a Waldorf alum myself, it’s in my interest to help create a platform for social networking, and clear and easy communication on the Internet,” explains Lyon. “By helping AWSNA develop this platform I’m offering a service to my friends, family, and the Waldorf community at large. Good work for good people. And not only was my time requirement completed, but I have also attained a sound knowledge in contemporary web communication.”

*(cont.)*

## Alumni Gathering Goals

According to Lyon, some of the qualities a potential Waldorf alum web site might include are:

- A tool which helps the target group contact others within the group in order to exchange goods, and services; a search engine which helps and encourages individuals find others.
- A mapping tool which locates individuals and communities on the network in other cities, across North America.
- A community events bulletin for all network partners/members. Members would be able post their events, and register interested individuals for events.
- A place to sign up to receive the Alumni Newsletter/e-update. Created by alumni and the AWSNA outreach and development staff, the newsletter would serve as a grabnet for the Waldorf constituency.
- The site would be easily navigable, and a recognizable environment for individuals interested in registering.
- The site would have an open source link or tool which would make available to registered members the work of others registered on the site (for example, open source downloads for music, art, and other alum endeavors).

Lyon also feels the visual enjoyment of such a site is vital to its success: “One idea I had was having your browser open up to a typical Waldorf classroom, where users would be able to mouse over the desks of their former classmates and colleagues, exploring their work and lives. Moving parts within the classroom would be nice, for example, using a chalkboard as the bulletin board, and creating nametags on desks.”

“A lot of work still needs to get done before the Alum page can be implemented,” says Maynard, “including finding the right designer, researching and accessing Waldorf schools’ data, a practical marketing strategy, building the user base, and maintaining and upgrading the site. But Henry’s work is a terrific place from which to start.”

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