



ASSOCIATION OF WALDORF  
SCHOOLS OF NORTH AMERICA™

## **Waldorf Schools Go Green for Earth Day**

*The Green Resources Web Pages of the Waldorf Schools Association will be launched on Earth Day, April 22, 2009.*

April 22, 2009 Ghent, NY – On Earth Day, all Waldorf schools affiliated with the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) will be able to access detailed purchasing information about the best green products to use in schools by going to a newly -launched Green Resources page at [www.whywaldorfworks.org](http://www.whywaldorfworks.org).

Here they will be able to identify green and clean products, green architects, and green building supply companies and products, as well as many other resources. Also, in-depth research about some products will be available so that teachers of chemistry, physics, and ecology in Waldorf high schools will have research to access.

According to Patrice Maynard, Development Director for AWSNA, Waldorf schools “strive to be communities that serve as models of how to co-exist in a deeply felt, right relationship with our planet. They practice environmental sustainability through mindful facilities management, buying choices, and building decisions, modeling a way of conscious living.”

### **“Green Survey”**

The over 200 Waldorf schools in North America (there are over 1,000 worldwide) are already implicitly green because of the naturalistic curriculum they use that integrates academic subjects with the fine and practical arts and outdoor education. In a recent green survey of Waldorf schools in North America conducted by AWSNA it was found that Waldorf schools are already firmly committed to being as green as possible. Student-managed recycling programs are a common practice in most schools and 75% of schools compost their food waste.

The San Francisco Waldorf School is the first LEED-certified high school in the country, and the Denver Waldorf School and the Charlottesville Waldorf School are both working towards LEED certification. Sustainably harvested Virginia hardwood flooring and hard plank siding is used exclusively at the Charlottesville Waldorf School, and straw bales are used at the Nelson Waldorf School and Tara Performing Arts High School. Several schools already have integrated photovoltaic panels, geothermal heating and cooling, and passive solar design into their energy use practices.

## **Garden Projects**

The Prairie Moon Waldorf School in Lawrence, Kansas recently received a grant to establish a market garden on the school grounds. The garden provides a vital focus for the school's Waldorf curriculum, which encourages appreciation and connection to the natural world through active participation in planting, growing, and harvesting. Through gardening, students learn about plant biology, soil science, hydrology, gardening, mathematics, geology, geography, and business through the planting and use of the market garden.

The Sierra Waldorf School, in Jamestown, CA, is part of a schools initiative launched by the Foothill Collaborative for Sustainability. The initiative brings together local farmers, parents, and community members to set up community gardens affiliated with schools. The program, which began last year at the Sierra Waldorf School, will expand to other schools this spring, using the Sierra Waldorf School as a model.

An Ecoteam is being developed by the Shepherd Valley Waldorf School, which offers an elective class on sustainability. Academe of the Oaks, in Atlanta, GA, also offers a green club as part of an after school program.

During heavy rain at the Water's Edge Waldorf School, in Wauconda, IL, runoff from the roof created mini sidewalk flooding that was inconvenient at best and damaging to the foundation of the building at worst. The school received a grant to turn the rain water problem into an asset by planting and maintaining a rain garden.

According to Kathy Paczynski, development director, the goals of the proposal were fourfold: "First, to mitigate the rainwater runoff problem threatening to damage the building foundation; second, to provide an example of the beauty and simplicity of how a properly located rain garden can solve storm water drainage problems for parents, teachers, and community members; third, for students to learn about native plants and where, why, and how about planting a rain garden; and fourth, to improve the quality of wildlife habitat available on our school campus."

In addition to the rain garden proposal, a second grant was awarded to build and erect birdhouses around the school property. The projects will be completed by the students as part of the curriculum, enhancing their lessons in botany, natural science, and mathematics. "

## **The Green Resources Pages**

To this end, AWSNA has created the newly launched web pages to assist other Waldorf schools in their efforts to make their communities as green as possible. The Waldorf curriculum holds that by cultivating a personal relationship with the Earth and her resources, young people can develop into genuine environmentalists. "Waldorf schools work with an awareness of where all things originate as gifts from the Earth: paper from trees; crayons from bees, color from plants, and so on," states Maynard. "The teachers lead students in remembering these gifts with gratitude and in exercising care for how the Earth's resources are used. This builds inner habits that prepare the children for being environmentalists on the deepest levels.

