

waldorf



The Rudolf Steiner School





“Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings, who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.”

—*Rudolf Steiner*

Rudolf Steiner was the visionary philosopher and teacher who conceived Waldorf education, named for the company that in 1919 sponsored the first of the schools he inspired. Now there are some 800 Waldorf schools in 40 countries—more than 180 schools in North America alone—in what has become the fastest-growing independent educational movement in the world.



Contents

Waldorf Education	3
Community	3
Educating the Whole Person	5
Aristry, Imagination & Scientific Inquiry	6
Location	9
The Main Lesson	10
Handwork & Woodwork	13
Eurythmy	14
Electronic Media & Waldorf	17
The Farm	18
The Early Childhood Program	24
<i>Twos Plus</i>	26
Nursery	26
Kindergarten	26
The Elementary School	30
Well-Rounded Days	33
The Class Teacher	34
Grades One & Two	37
Grade Three	39
Grades Four Through Six	41
Grades Seven & Eight	47
The High School	52
Introduction	55
High School Life: Congenial, Challenging, Rewarding	56
Learning at Rudolf Steiner	59
The Curriculum	63
Beyond the Classroom	64
Class Trips	64
Study Overseas	66
Paving the Way to College	69
Our Philosophy	70
Our Mission	70



New York City's Rudolf Steiner School, the first in the United States to bear our founder's name, has offered Waldorf teaching since 1928. Our curriculum extends from Preschool through Twelfth grade. We are a fully accredited college preparatory school, with a unique program that meets and exceeds all mainstream standards of competence and excellence. Elementary students whose course turns elsewhere are readily accepted at the best secondary schools. Our own High School graduates regularly gain admission to—and success in—top ranked colleges and universities of their choice.

Waldorf Education

Community

LEARNERS. Rudolf Steiner limits enrollment in each grade to a comfortably interactive number. Students come from all over the City, the suburbs as well, and some from foreign countries. We take pride in the wide range of ethnicities, creeds, and backgrounds of our young people and foster their respect and friendship for each other. Sociable relationships extend across grade levels, in the hallways as well as in extracurricular activities. Newcomers find acceptance easy.

TEACHERS. The highly trained educators of Steiner's faculty are men and women well versed in academics. Our teachers are equally skilled at drawing students out, helping them find and reach their best potentials. Classes are small and lively. Instructors are patient, available, and understanding as they respond to students' individual personalities and needs. The Waldorf Class Teacher epitomizes this commitment: one expert faculty member leads a class in primary instruction for several grades—in many cases, through all eight elementary grades. The result is an exemplary, time-tested classroom atmosphere of reciprocal trust, assessment, understanding and communication.

PARENTS. Waldorf education extends into home life. Parents are a vital part of the Steiner community, joining with faculty in a circle of motivation and encouragement that boosts students' self-assurance. From regular individual conferences with teachers, to active participation on the evaluative, advisory Parent Council, mothers and fathers are urged to be aware and involved—to support homework, implement Lower School policies on television and computer use, and, always, to offer observations and input. Steiner's partnership with parents is strengthened as we share, listen, and respond.



Educating the Whole Person: Mind, Body, and Heart

Human beings are born into a world they long to know. But future success depends not only on what is learned, but more importantly, how. Nearly nine decades of experience proves there is no better education than through Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf approach. We cultivate the imagination as a learning tool. Our students gain knowledge and insight through multiple channels: the emotions and volition as well as the intellect, handcrafts and physical activity along with the aesthetic senses. Coursework here blends the study of science, arts, and mathematics, literature and history, music and language to instill a broad understanding of the world, its processes and its peoples. The unique spiral curriculum imparts and expands this information through sequential modes of perception, experience, and conceptualization, each building on the others as comprehension grows. Our teaching, attuned to young people's stages of physical, emotional and mental development, strengthens and expands students' individual capacities. We enable pupils to discover knowledge, and to enjoy learning how to learn. Steiner students flourish personally in a supportive, moral, spiritually oriented school community.

Artistry, Imagination, and Scientific Inquiry



Ancient History: Fifth grade Main Lesson

The Steiner School's full scholastic journey through the arts and sciences is enriched by special Waldorf features: handwork, Eurythmic exercise, form drawing, making music. Our hallmark Main Lesson—the long, multi-faceted academic session that begins each class day—spurs invention and discovery to enlighten the links among observation and artistic and intellectual activity. Our best success is when students' learning grows from the interplay of perception, feeling, and the *aha!* of intuition. Our highest satisfaction comes from nourishing a young person's imagination and aesthetic creativity in tune with his or her analytical prowess and personal competence. All pupils learn to draw, play a musical instrument, sing in chorus, and recite before an audience. We celebrate the full-spirited display of talents in athletic events and dramatic and musical performances. High School students perform community service as part of their curriculum. A Steiner education fosters self awareness as well as knowledge of the world, social responsibility as well as self-confidence. Waldorf philosophy instills reverence for nature and the world's common humanity.

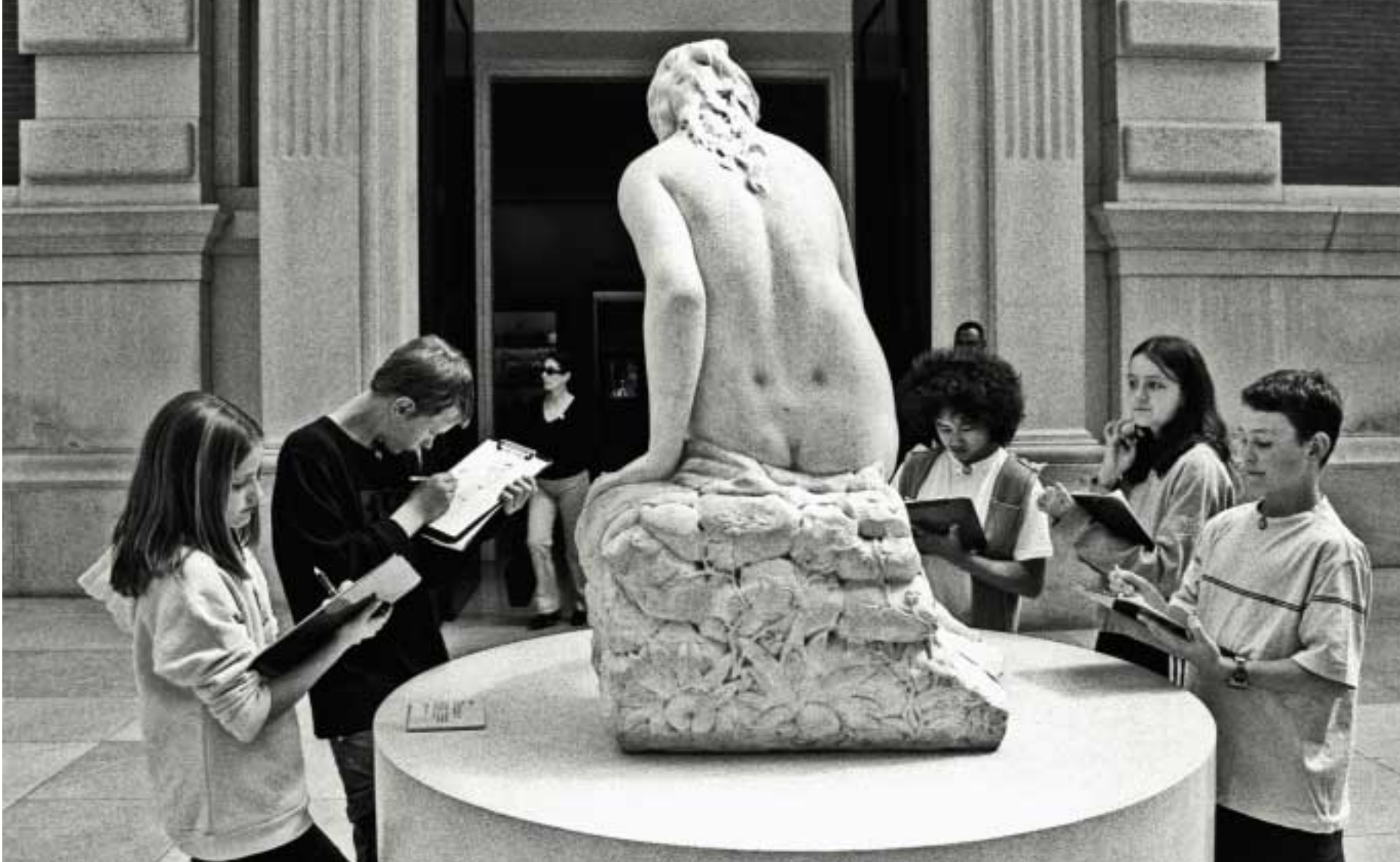
We encourage enrollment from the earliest years right through Twelfth grade. But our program, designed to fit youth's developmental stages rather than prescribed preparation, welcomes transfers at all grade levels.

“As a professor of political science, I’ve come to value more and more the solid grounding my K-12 years at Steiner gave me. While the research universities I attended provided the specialized concepts and methodologies I use in my scholarship, Steiner provided the most seminal professional skills I have today. Steiner is where I learned the essence of thinking critically, articulating ideas cogently, interpreting the actions and work of others objectively, and engaging constructively in a community with diverse interests.”

*—Alumna, '87, Assistant Professor
of Political Science, Oberlin College*







Location, location . . .

In the great city of New York, Rudolf Steiner's Upper and Lower Schools are perfectly situated. Manhattan's unequaled array of museums, galleries and concert halls surrounds us: our extended urban campus. Central Park, next door, is both playground and biology field trip zone. Indoors, keyed to grade levels, the buildings feature well-equipped libraries, laboratories, computer areas, workshops, and a cafeteria. Other assets add appeal and ease to learning: balcony gardens, meeting hall, rehearsal spaces, student lounges, rooms full of easels—and evidence all around of exuberant creativity. Classrooms and hallways are vibrant with our students' wonderfully skillful artwork. We'd welcome the chance to let you experience the Rudolf Steiner School for yourself. Please call us to arrange a guided visit.

The Main Lesson

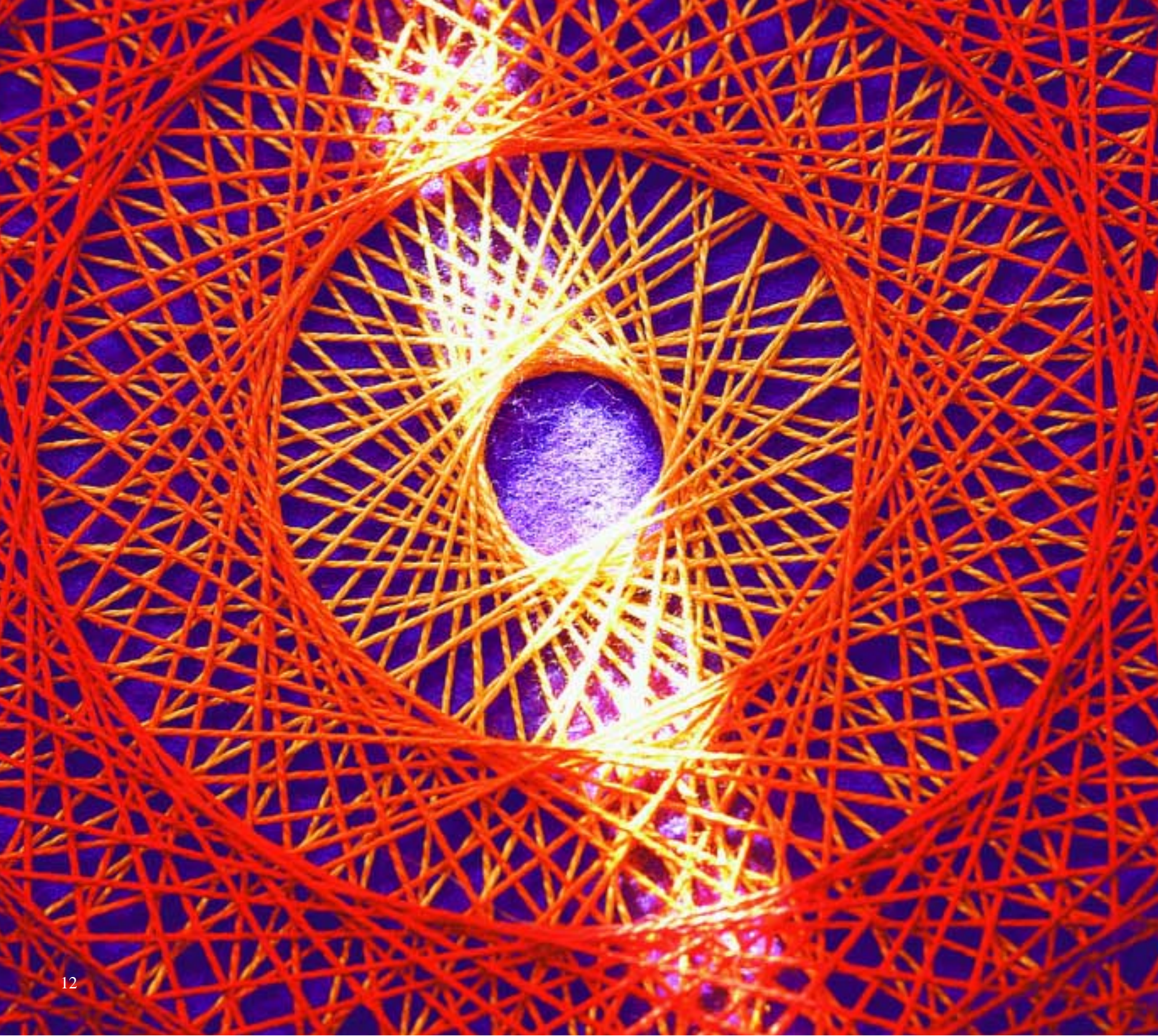
The Main Lesson is a unique—and uniquely effective—factor in Waldorf education. The morning starts for every grade with a 1^{1/2} - 2 hour period focused on one topical area. For a block of three to four weeks, each class examines a subject imaginatively, from many directions, and, depending on age, in various ways of knowing: aesthetic, intellectual, oral, manual, through motion or creation. Each day, students record salient features in Main Lesson notebooks, which become comprehensive, illustrated displays of progress.

All Main Lessons employ a three-fold rhythm of learning, a format adapted to pupils' developmental potentials: encounter (listen, observe); consider (discuss, interpret); conceptualize (write, illustrate or dramatize, bring to a point of conclusion). In First grade Language Arts, for instance, students assimilate syntax through oral recitation and resulting pictorial imagination—stories told and re-told, enacted, expressed in movement, depicted in Main Lesson books. Subsequent lettering adds to these early pictures, creating students' self-made First Readers.

Higher grades' curriculum builds abstract thinking. But learning through artistry, aesthetic appreciation, and conceptual expression keeps pace. Middle School Main Lesson books show accomplished, sophisticated maps and drawings, plus extensive writing: deductions and insights that expand on class readings and discussion, the students teaching themselves as they create their own reference materials.

High Schoolers roam the full range of pre-collegiate subject matter, in Main Lesson blocks that meet or exceed mainstream Advanced Placement standards. History in broad span, for instance, examined through drama, poetry, music, and architecture, as well as events and biographies. Advanced Mathematics, and the Physics of heat, electricity, mechanics, and light. Organic and Inorganic Chemistry. Environmental Science. And daffodils enjoyed in Botany along with Wordsworth's verse.

The Main Lesson progression engages all the learning faculties—head, heart, and hands—in study that is deep, broad, and fulfilling.



Handwork and Woodwork: Comprehension, Precision, Completion

Handwork, taught weekly, is another mode of learning at Rudolf Steiner. Students in the Elementary grades sharpen eye-hand coordination and improve fine motor skills in successive annual projects with textiles: knitting, first with the fingers, then with handmade needles; crocheting next, and on to sewing. Complexity increases until culmination in Eighth graders' machine sewing of garments and pillowcases.



A companion program in Woodwork runs from Fourth through Eighth grades. In our well-equipped shop, students learn about types of wood, the tools and techniques used in fashioning products, and the way to care for and preserve those items when in use. Projects become annually more complex, ranging from Fourth graders' simple mallets, to the Eighth graders' choice among boxes, table lamps, benches and shelves.

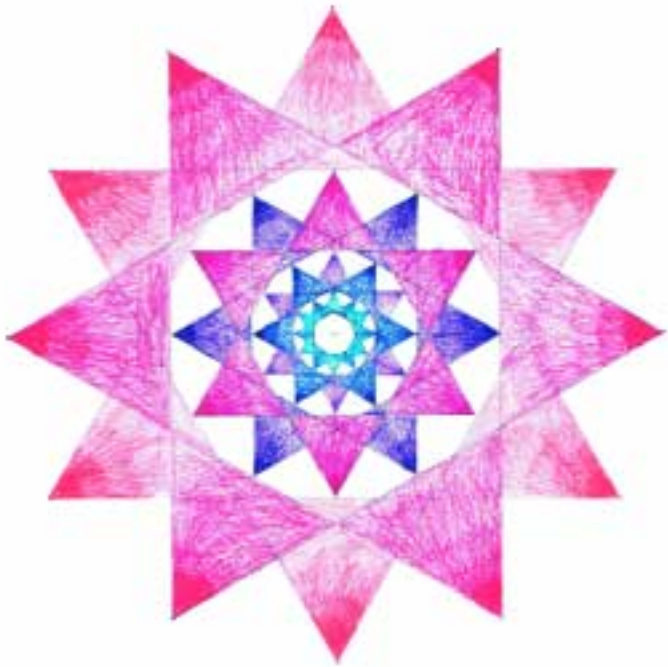
In High School, Handwork shifts to crafts classes, each bringing new challenges to skill and comprehension: uniting form and function in basketry; understanding permutations and possibilities in weaving; and learning precision in bookbinding.

*Left: String Art, Sixth grade
Above: Bookbinding, Twelfth grade*

These endeavors yield understanding and respect for the human competence and effort involved in producing useful goods. Handwork and Woodwork lessons also tie in with classwork: geometric concepts are expressed in basketry, for instance, and laws of acoustics merge with Sixth grade woodworkers' bamboo flutes. Study of Physics manifests itself in the understanding of electricity that operates Eighth graders' sewing machines, and in the mechanical principles of lever, wheel, and inclined plane, which guide Seventh graders' construction of moveable toys and folding stools. Knitting reinforces counting skills, and more: as one graduate noted, "It wasn't just doing the knitting. It was also finding out where the wool came from, spinning the wool, finding out how the spinning wheel works, how the sheep live. Knitting is also about completing something. That's part of the Waldorf curriculum, to start something that you yourself make, and then finish it."

Eurythmy:

Learning Through the Experience of Motion



Education at Rudolf Steiner is broadened by our program of directed movement, Eurythmy—sometimes called “speech made visible.” All grades participate weekly in class periods of these expressive physical exercises, performed to accompanying music or poetry. Patterns and rhythms link to or preview Main Lesson topics. Geometry, for instance, is not introduced as formal study until the Sixth grade. But students initially experience geometric concepts in First grade Eurythmy, walking the shapes of circles, squares and triangles. As academic studies become more complex, Eurythmic work grows in parallel sophistication. By Twelfth grade, students are experimenting with their own forms of movement. Sensory experience contributes greatly to knowledge, and schooled movement offers unique pathways for seating the emotional aspects of learning in bodily memory.

In addition to its enhancement of intellectual content, Eurythmy teaches dexterity, grace, poise, balance, and concentration.

Geometry: Sixth grade Main Lesson

“The spirituality was subtle and secular. I never felt overtly confronted with a specific religion, but there was an attention to all parts of one’s being. Eurythmy helped tie it all together—rhythms, music, poetry, everything blending.”

—Alumna, '02





Electronic Media and Waldorf

Our curriculum develops students' internal strengths—the ability to form and test perceptions, to examine and invent, to imagine and explore. To learn by the experience of thought, expression, and movement.

So it is that we strongly discourage exposure to television, play station and computer games for students in the early grades. Television is a medium that replaces, even suppresses imagination. It mesmerizes, requiring passive receivers for its prepackaged information rather than participants in understanding what is seen and heard. Young viewers cannot help but become consumers.

Growth in intellectual self-confidence and emotional maturity enables older students more easily to evaluate and discredit commercial electronic attractions. Nonetheless, we discourage even High School Juniors and Seniors from investing any significant time in front of the various video media.

Steiner's policy regarding educational use of computers is somewhat related. Our first educational priority is development of an inner emotional and intellectual framework within which a student can confidently form his or her own individual understanding of proffered information, rather than simply layering on what comes with seeming authority from an electronic source. At Rudolf Steiner, access to computers does not begin until Fourth grade, and then is limited to catalog searches during library visits. Not until Seventh grade is computer usage for homework accepted, and then only on an occasional basis.

But at that point in our curriculum, we begin providing students with an understanding of how to put computers to use as their aides, rather than their teachers. Seventh and Eighth graders learn keyboarding and software applications. In High School, students both create rudimentary computers and learn the ins and outs of more sophisticated models by disassembling them. There are classes in the creation of computer graphics, programming, and desktop publishing. Along the way, pupils study the history of technology, computer-related health problems, and the socioeconomic impact of the digital revolution.

Steiner graduates are highly computer literate, in the most comprehensive sense of that term.



The Farm

It is important for young people to understand the crucial equation between viable agriculture and human survival. The best way to gain that knowledge is literally from the ground up. Just so, Rudolf Steiner students in grades Three, Four, Five, Six, and Ten spend a week each year at the Hawthorne Valley Farm School, in Columbia County, NY. The biodynamic farm, a working dairy, markets milk, yogurt, and cheeses. Its barns and bakery are surrounded by acres of woodland, fields, and organic gardens. Visiting classes are accommodated in the farmhouse and cheerful dining hall.

Adding the enrichment of hands-on experience to their classroom studies, our students dig, plant and weed, feed and care for horses, cows, and chickens. They learn how natural fertilizers keep the soil bountiful. Vegetables are harvested for daily meals, grain for the baking of bread. Eggs are gathered, the cows' fresh milk is drunk, the cream churned into butter.

Beyond the lesson of where food comes from, and the labor required to create it, participation in the farm's production makes history come alive. Farm work connects Steiner learners viscerally with the timeless ancestral effort to harness the bounties of nature and develop a responsible stewardship of the land.

Depending on grade level, students also take field trips from the Farm to explore caves, to search for fossils in a limestone quarry, and to study the geology, ecology and history of the Hudson Valley. Evenings feature songs around the campfire and other companionable activities.

The Farm experience is a memorable, invaluable part of the Steiner curriculum.



The Hawthorne Valley Farm, where Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Tenth grades spend one week each year for hands-on learning.



From early childhood to elementary . . .





From elementary to high school . . .



The Early Childhood Program



“There were three major studies done recently that dealt with the disappearance of childhood in America. If there is any one thing that the Waldorf system does, it nurtures, protects and develops beautifully the intelligence of the true child.”

*—Joseph Chilton Pearce,
author of *Magical Child* and
*The Crack in the Cosmic Egg**





Twos Plus, Nursery and Kindergarten

We bring our youngest students into a warm, nurturing program that eases the transition from home to school and gradually builds readiness for First grade and beyond. At this pre-intellectual age, when children's will moves them to encounter and know the world through tactile, aural, and visual experience, Rudolf Steiner's Preschool provides an environment of beauty, security, and delight within which expanding minds flourish.

For the very young and their parents, we offer the ten-week *Twos Plus* program. Mothers, fathers and two-year-olds gather weekly in a nursery setting, where two of our teachers help the children learn to play while the adults discuss parenting issues with an experienced Waldorf educator.

Daily Preschool sessions begin with free play in rooms alight with fresh flowers, and walls of warm colors. Toys are simple, the better to liberate imagination and fantasy. Sheets of wet paper invite paint, and artistic energies flow also into arranging shells and rocks, building with wooden blocks, and using thick, bright-hued wax crayons for unfettered experiments in color.





Circle activities continue the daily rhythm—songs and stories that ignite pictorial imagination and tutor the memory, rhymes and games that prefigure language arts and arithmetic. Later, there will be constructive work, such as cooking, that enables the children to learn through imitation.

After nap and snacks, weather permitting, the children go to Central Park for free-spirited romping, and exploring nature through each season. Back at school, the morning ends with the telling of a nature story, or folk or fairy tale.

The reassurance of the day's predictable rhythm is magnified in the week's pattern of repetition: a particular day for baking, another for painting, another for the beeswax modeling that enhances concentration and coordination. And there is cleanup every day.

We believe that Preschool is too soon to emphasize the forming of the intellect through linear or abstract thinking. Hence, there are no structured lessons in reading and writing.

Steiner elementary students need not have attended Preschool in order to do well, but it's an excellent way to start.



The Elementary School







Well-Rounded Days

For grades One through Six, classes begin at 8:30 a.m., so by 8:15, the cheerful lobby at 15 East 79th Street bustles with students who have arrived—by subway, hired bus, carpool, or on foot—from all over the city. Students in all grades eagerly head for designated personal desks in their Main Lesson classrooms.

On Mondays, grades One through Four go first to assembly for stories or music. Otherwise, the Main Lesson starts the day for all grades—a two-period session of creative study that opens with greetings, recitation, and music. The elementary grades break at 10:15 for a snack. Then comes recess, outside, until subject classes begin at 11:00.

Lunch, from home or from our cafeteria (offering enticing, organic meals, vegetarian and otherwise), is from 12:20 until classes resume at 1:00. Twice a week then, grades Four and up are bussed to gyms at the 92nd street Y for Physical Education. Third graders, meanwhile, have an afternoon period of exercise in Central Park. First and Second graders spend two periods of play there before their 3:00 dismissal. The day balances quiet and energetic time.

On scheduled days, orchestra, band, and athletic teams practice, and clubs meet. Music lessons, craft work, and study areas are available for late-staying students. There are convivial evenings—Fifth grade folk dancing, Seventh and Eighth grade parties, the Halloween and Valentine’s Day dances. Our chorus and musical groups perform at various venues.

Festivals punctuate the year. At convocation, Seniors bring roses to First graders and escort them to assembly. First graders return the floral salute at graduation. In between, the school community celebrates Michaelmas, Thanksgiving, music of all faiths in December, and the arrival of spring. Another festival of orchestral music marks the year’s end.

The Class Teacher

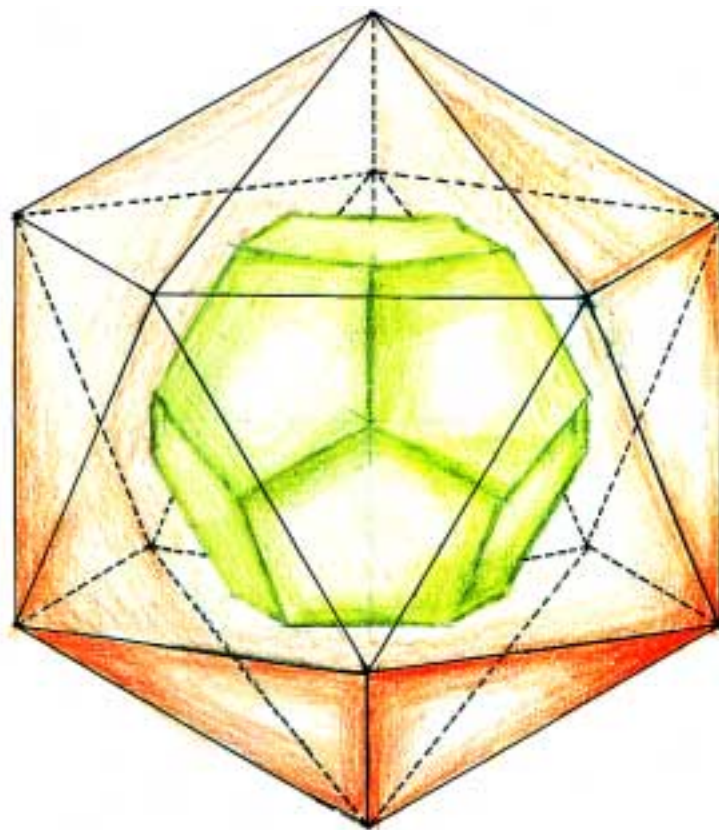
The Class Teacher is a distinctive facet of Waldorf education. For several grades, and, in many cases, through all eight elementary grades, a class group is led and taught primarily by just one of our specially trained, multi-disciplinary instructors. This Class Teacher provides the Main Lesson and coordinates additional input from special subject instructors.

The Class Teacher's continuity of leadership, understanding, and interaction creates an exceptionally inviting classroom context: dependability, authority, personal relationship, and trust. It is an intellectually and emotionally healthy environment, matching challenge with reassurance.

As time progresses, students' respect for their teacher's guidance, and confidence in that teacher's reciprocal respect for their intelligence, create open channels of communication that greatly aid the process of education. Particularly in our small classes, the resulting atmosphere nourishes the fullest development of students' mental, emotional and physical capacities.

Benefits of this approach show themselves strongly in the spiral progress of the Rudolf Steiner curriculum. The Class Teacher, having participated in all major aspects of students' learning—tactile, aural, aesthetic, manual, intellectual—is uniquely able to keep connections active among past and present studies related to subjects at hand. The Teacher's thorough understanding of each student's capabilities and interests also makes the home-school connection productive.

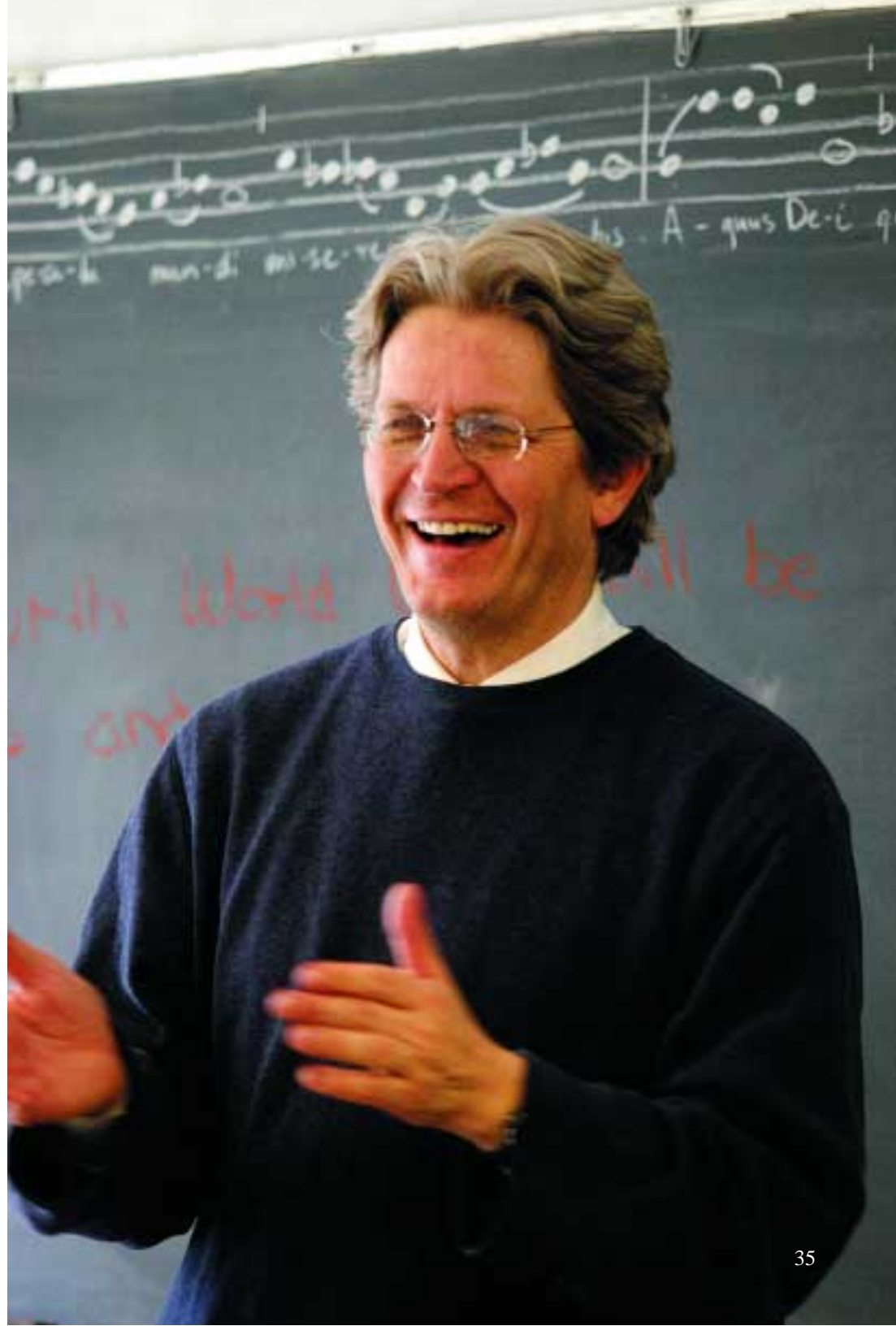
In our High School, the main instructional load is carried by specialist teachers. The functions of individual guidance and evaluation for home-school communications become the responsibility of the Class Advisor.



Geometry: Eighth grade Main Lesson

“At the end of Kindergarten, we were introduced to the woman who would be our teacher for First grade. She had us each plant a sunflower seed and put our name on the pot. When we came back in the fall and found our big golden sunflowers that had sprouted over the summer from such small seeds...wow! It was a vivid way to start an educational journey. She was my Class Teacher on through Eighth grade—my mentor, my second mother, a dedicated teacher. A tremendous educator.”

—Alumna, '02





Math: First grade Main Lesson



Language Arts: First grade Main Lesson

Grades One and Two: The Enchantment of Learning



Children begin to be ready for formal schooling at age six to seven. Baby teeth are coming out, hands are ready for pencils, minds are opening to sequenced thought, and an upwelling of feelings and interests is under way. It's time to start the purposeful development of skills.

So the Rudolf Steiner community welcomes its First graders with symbolic ceremony: our High School's Seniors escort the novices to their first assembly. The beginners are entering a curricular program with approach, dynamics, and structural components that apply adaptively in all twelve grades.

In these earliest years, teaching reaches the students through their pictorial imagination and their innate aesthetic consciousness. It is an enchanting experience. Preschool's day-opening free play is replaced by a Main Lesson, the format for all grades, and it turns out to be just as engaging. There are fairy tales and nature stories, told and retold, discussed, and dramatized, honing language and memory skills. Eurythmy exercises interpret the stories in movement. As in all Waldorf learning, a three-fold rhythm of repetition enables the students first to encounter information, next to explore it aesthetically, then, finally, to integrate the new knowledge as concepts.

Freehand drawing of forms, which gain in complexity as the grades advance, begins in First grade with simple lines. Drawing also introduces the study of

letters, expanding to simple sentences copied into each student's Main Lesson Book. That becomes the child's first reader. Songs in Spanish and German, learned by ear, introduce familiarity with those languages. The pupils engage in music making, playing their recorders. Knitting—after students make their needles from dowels—begins the handwork that forms part of the curriculum for all grades, connecting practical activity to conceptual learning. Manual dexterity, counting skills, and perception of patterns increase as First graders work to complete a scarf of their own design. In Second grade, the literary focus in Main Lesson is on legends and fables, again told, retold, and dramatized. But students also verbalize the stories to the class in their own words, strengthening self-assurance in oral presentation, an important part of Steiner's curriculum. Playful introduction of nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives brings grammar to the fore. Handwork progresses into crocheting.

Math is introduced in counting games, songs, and imaginative pictures that explore the four processes of arithmetic. In Eurythmy, students begin the understanding of geometric shapes by tracing them in movement. Days offer plentiful physical activity: morning recess and the two afternoon play periods take place in Central Park. Second graders go weekly to the library, and choose books to read before their next visit.



Third Grade: A Step Up

The heart of Third grade studies is the human effort to produce needed food, clothing, and shelter—to make a home here on earth. All elements of the year’s Main Lessons relate to that curriculum focus. Stories from Native American lore and from the Old Testament comprise the class’s literature. As always, these tales are illustrated—in drawings or watercolors—or dramatized. Study of the stories also introduces grammar’s parts of speech, and the four types of sentences. With

punctuation as a focus, too, students write compositions in class. Form drawing concentrates on sinuously running lines that prefigure cursive writing.

English disappears, however, in the songs, poetry, skits and word games that advance learning of spoken Spanish and German. By the end of the year, students have a basic working vocabulary in those languages. Recorder lessons expand into music reading. And handwork proceeds to the more dexterously demanding skill of sewing.

Third grade Math encounters the practicalities of daily life in measurement: length, weight, volume, time, temperature, money. Mental games are paired with work in long division and the multiplication tables.

New on the scene this year is homework, that hallmark of every schoolchild's education outside of school. There is also a real adventure in learning beyond the classroom:

a week-long spring trip to the Hawthorne Valley Farm (described on page 18) where Third graders dig, weed, mulch, care for animals, churn butter, bake bread, and plant crops, some of which they'll harvest in a fall trip as Fourth graders. This hands-on study adds vital reality to the Main Lesson focus on human survival and gives the class a social experience that proves the value of cooperation.



*Handwork:
Fourth grade*



Grades Four through Six: Encountering the World

Following from the Third grade's introduction to varieties of human habitation, we launch the formal study of geography in Fourth grade—bringing it alive, making it personally relevant at every turn. Students begin by describing—and mapping—their classroom, then their own residences.

Next come school-area neighborhoods, and then the City. The final map is of New York State, and, like all the others, it includes designation of important features. In Fifth grade, the focus widens to the United States, then North America, examining ties among physical geography, climate, and human activity. Onward then to Central and South America. Sixth graders learn latitude, longitude, and the climatic zones while studying Aztec, Maya, and Inca civilizations and the impact of European conquest.

Student mapping is far more accomplished than typical for this age range, a competence bolstered by the freehand skills of Form Drawing. In that discipline, these grades sequentially take on the beautiful complexities of Celtic knots, Greek friezes, and calligraphy—to which the Sixth grade adds the constructed figures of Geometry, experiencing the close relationship of aesthetics and scientific precision. By now, Math has progressed through fractions, decimals, percentages, simple equations, charts and graphs, and the rudiments of business calculations. Meanwhile, in music, students continue concentrated study of orchestral instruments selected in the Fourth year, and may choose to sing in Junior Chorus. By Sixth grade, they join the band or orchestra.



Hansel and Gretel: Sixth grade operetta

New York City's past is highlighted in Fourth grade History. Then the focus shifts to ancient cultures of the Middle East and Europe. Fifth graders study the anthropology, mythology, literature, and geography of India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. Main Lesson subjects for the Sixth grade include the rise and fall of Rome, the birth of Islam, and the Middle Ages.

In keeping with these Main Lesson subjects, writing—and reading—grow ever richer as skill in Language Arts progresses through the years. Fourth graders add book reports, letters, and journal

entries to their spelling quizzes and grammar work. They write stories in their Main Lesson books drawn from their study of Norse mythology. Fifth year students, whose literature includes Greek mythology, write expository essays and narratives as well as book reports. They learn to diagram sentences. The Sixth grade creates grammar workbooks for their exercises in sentence types, verb phrases, objects, and punctuation. They read Roman and medieval history, chivalric tales and ballads, and develop or strengthen summarizing skills—and understanding of character, plot, and theme—in book reports.

Coursework now also enters the formal realm of Science. For the Fourth grade, that means Zoology: examination of simple and complex species, the relationships between animals and their environment and between those creatures and humankind. The week-long class trip to The Farm brings close perspective to the study of domestic animals, which students feed and groom. Study also covers wild creatures in the area—deer, opossum, raccoons, foxes, and others. Capping this experience, students write their first research paper on the animal of their choice.

Fifth grade science blooms into Botany, and drawings are of the plants' life cycle—seed, leaf, flower, fruit, back to seed. Illustrations during their class week at The Farm include vegetables as well as budding trees. They also investigate the lower orders: lichens, mushrooms, mosses, ferns, and learn the role of honeybees and other insects in plant life. For the Sixth grade, one of the highlights of Science study is Geology—from rock types, crystals and metal ores, to volcanoes, earthquakes and plate tectonics. During their stay at the Farm, after chores, there's rock hunting, cave exploration, and a search for fossils in a limestone quarry.

Study of Science advances in other channels, too. Physics is introduced in Sixth grade, focusing on acoustics, optics, heat, static electricity, and magnetism. Learning by discovery in this and other laboratory courses also follows the Waldorf pattern: encounter, experience, conceptualize. For each topic, teachers provide a demonstration of effects. Students monitor closely, then write up their observations. The following day's discussion works out a principle to explain what was seen. Also new in grades Four through Six is formal physical education. Classes are bussed to the gyms at the 92nd Street Y for twice-weekly sessions in activities ranging from dance and step aerobics, tumbling and gymnastics, to volleyball, basketball, floor hockey, and badminton. After school, sports teams practice and play. There are no try-outs: all students are encouraged to participate, regardless of skill level, and their contributions are applauded.



“From the earliest moment I felt the itch to be a writer, my interest was immediately noticed by my Main Lesson teacher. She suggested books I should read, things I could try. The small class made that close relationship possible. The passion of the Rudolf Steiner teachers was inspirational. They didn’t just come to teach by rote. They were completely dedicated to their craft. Waldorf education is a grand design. Every lesson you learn in school is not just an academic event: it’s a life lesson as well.”

—Alumnus, '86, Screenwriter





“We were taught to see girls as sisters and boys as brothers. A respect for each other’s individuality was encouraged as well. There was a strong sense of belonging to a community—it was like a home.”

*—Alumnus, '87,
Portfolio Manager*

Grades Seven and Eight:

Turning the Corner

Heading toward High School, the curriculum broadens and deepens the progressive flow of knowledge, skills, and creativity begun in the earlier grades. As the learners mature, so does the nature of their work. Coursework in Seventh and Eighth grades builds self-confidence and competence through independent projects. Physical education classes become single-sex. Gym instruction still accentuates fitness and technique, but competitive games are introduced as well. There is interscholastic competition with other independent schools in soccer, volleyball, basketball, softball, and track.

These final elementary grades emphasize knowledge of the modern world, its physical and social aspects. Eighth graders are introduced to a broader perspective on urban life in a course component that may include work in soup kitchens. In wider focus, the study of global climate and weather patterns in Meteorology connects with physical geography and environmental issues. Aiming higher in the sky, students learn about Astronomy, a subject particularly attractive to Seventh graders. A mid-winter class trip to the Hulbert Outdoor Center in Vermont allows them to experience sparkling views of the heavens with a new-found awareness.

By now, students are adept at playing their individual musical instruments. Orchestra, band, and chorus undertake more complex compositions and perform both at school and in other City venues. In their artwork, painting includes both watercolors and other media. Clay sculpture ties in with Main Lesson subjects. Skill in foreign language has advanced apace: conversational accomplishment in Spanish and German expands to include reading and writing.

As always in Steiner's curriculum, linkages among study areas are prominent. A Main Lesson on the Renaissance connects Seventh grade Astronomy to that era's science. This coursework also discusses the importance of human physiology in Renaissance art, while similar study of the body engages the Science class. Related Eurythmy improves awareness of bodily presence and extension in social space. Discussion of the physiological systems and functions, including sexuality, encompasses understanding

of addictions and eating disorders. Information on hygiene and health correlates with the nutritional component of organic chemistry, an Eighth grade course in our well-equipped laboratory that builds on the Seventh grade's study of inorganic compounds. Main Lesson Social Studies examines the expansion of the Atlantic hemisphere. Concentration on Europe's past ends with a research paper on the transoceanic explorers, opening the way for Eighth graders to take up the history of North America. Expository essays and extensive notes flow from reading and discussion about the colonial period and evolution of the United States: independence and westward expansion, Civil War, the Industrial Revolution with its waves of immigrants, forward through the 20th Century to the Civil Rights Movement.



Formal study of Algebra begins in Eighth grade. But there are prior encounters with this discipline in the application of geometric measurement to problem solving. Seventh graders also learn to apply algebraic equations to the laws of solid mechanics, introduced in Physics. Eighth grade Physics takes up the mechanics of fluids and gases—aerodynamics and hydrodynamics. Study of electricity expands, with students demonstrating their knowledge by each building an electric motor. Physics' principles of levers, wheels, and inclined planes also apply handily in woodwork, guiding production of movable toys and folding stools. In Technology, keyboarding, internet research and word processing of reports and papers begins the expanding use of digital equipment that continues through Twelfth grade.

The demands of future study are in focus. Stepping up from Eighth grade, Steiner students are more than ready to take on the challenges of High School.

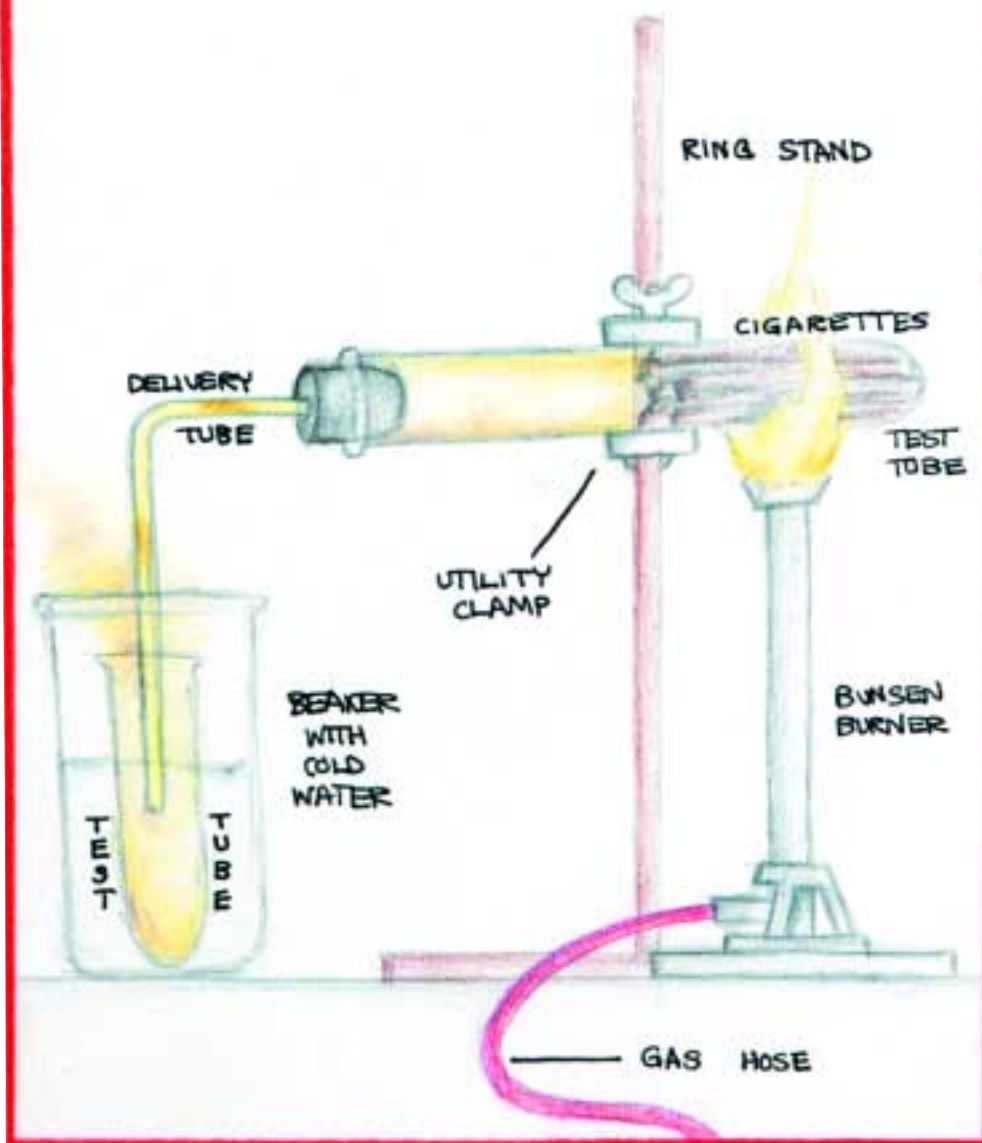
Black and white drawing: Eighth grade

“The constant thread of storytelling in the Steiner curriculum gave me building blocks and an understanding of how to integrate and communicate ideas and information. That was vital to my development as a writer.”

—Alumnus, '86



THE DESTRUCTIVE DISTILLATION OF TOBACCO



*Organic Chemistry:
Eighth grade Main Lesson*

“Science careers are also writing careers, and the excellent teaching in English and Biology at Steiner has served me extremely well in entering a career as a research scientist and university professor. The infusion of art into all of the Steiner curricula created an intuitive aesthetic sense for the connections of art and music with the physical and the life sciences.”

*—Alumnus, '84, Assistant Professor
of Oceanography, University
of California at San Diego*



The High School





“I almost always recognize students who have attended the Steiner School or one of the other Waldorf schools: Steiner students expect to be interested, independent, and active when they learn, and they won’t settle for less. They ask searching questions, their minds are at home with paradox, and when they encounter really hard material, they call on their creativity to help them.”

—Alumna, '54, professor of Comparative Literature and Women’s Studies, Wesleyan University



“What I’ve appreciated most about Steiner is the diversity of the study—artistic expression and rational thinking, multi-disciplinary integration of subjects that connected hand, mind, and eye. The biggest thing I learned was how you bring these strands together in creative problem solving.”

—Alumnus, '83, Architect and Designer

Introduction

Albert Einstein said that of all his faculties, he valued imagination the most. At Rudolf Steiner High School, we agree with Einstein's sentiment. We believe that superior knowledge is gained from intellectual challenge, met through imaginative interaction of students' artistic sensibilities, emotions, creativity, and personal volition. Our coursework illuminates the connections among music, art, and literature; between aesthetics and scientific precision. We examine history through drama, song, poetry, and painting as well as in the record of once-current events. Natural sciences and mathematics are studied here in correlation with the social sciences. Steiner students, thriving and maturing in the friendly, stimulating environment of this small school, learn self confidence and poise as well as the values of cooperation. We cultivate reverence for the earth and all its forms of life.

At Rudolf Steiner, the combination of curriculum and community yields interwoven paths of progress, personal and academic, leading to the level of excellence needed for success in top ranked colleges and universities—which is where our graduates routinely enroll.

In preparing for college, Steiner students also ready themselves for civic life in the world. Our graduates speak, read, and write at least one foreign language and have the option of spending part of their Sophomore year in study abroad. They are computer literate. They perform community service in New York City as part of the curriculum. Seniors undertake a three-week internship at occupational worksites akin to their interests. Friendships, established readily in the classroom, clubs, athletics and performing arts, carry home to neighborhoods and flourish in the social calendar of festivals, dances, parties, and literary gatherings.

Individual participation is encouraged in our small classes, where learners and teachers come to know and trust each other. Modestly-sized classes also enable instructors to assess and connect with each student's individual capacity and potential. The resulting, well informed evaluation gives parents a clear picture of their sons' and daughters' progress.

There is creative and convivial participation as well. We believe that young people's developing intellects and talents should flow into aesthetic self-expression, both to bolster self assurance and for the sheer joy of it. At Steiner, students learn to play musical instruments, performing with our orchestra, jazz band, and drumming group in various

locales. They sing in the *A Cappella* group and the Chorus, sometimes even in Carnegie Hall. They paint, draw, and sculpt for public display. They write fiction and poetry for our renowned literary journal, *The Key*, and journalism for *Fifteen East*, the school newspaper. They produce *The Spectrum* yearbook. Drama Club members put on a variety of productions each year, some written by the students themselves.

We also foster self-expression, as well as cooperation, in athletics. Weekly two-period sessions in Physical Education at the 92nd Street Y enable students to dedicate a quarter or half year to an activity of their choice—swimming, fencing, yoga, kickboxing, dance, rock climbing, or weight training. Team sports also are an option: our squads in soccer, volleyball, basketball, softball and track are open to all, regardless of initial ability. We compete exuberantly and successfully in the Independent Schools Athletic League.

High School Life: Congenial, Challenging, and Rewarding

Not only are our graduates routinely admitted to colleges of their choice, but their testimonials show that they enjoyed the challenge and uniqueness of the Rudolf Steiner program that launched their success.

Our High School day begins at 8:00 in the morning with the Main Lesson, a double period of focused, interdisciplinary study in which class participation is vital and expected. Steiner's innovative curriculum—with its interweaving of aesthetics and sciences, social studies and math—makes learning exhilarating. A break after Main Lesson lets students gather and relax in the lounge, or go outside, or visit the library. Language courses (Tenth graders can study overseas) and academic subjects follow. Lunch—from home or from our cafeteria—comes between 11:30 – 2:00, depending on individuals' schedules.

School ends between 3:00 and 4:00, depending on rehearsal schedules for the musical groups. After class time, clubs meet and sports teams practice. Then there's a lively evening calendar. The Student Council, which plays an active role in School government, also sponsors dances, some of them costume events. Students organize Coffee House Evenings of readings and performance. Responsive audiences enjoy the Drama Club's productions, and concerts by our musical groups. The Junior class has a soiree, and in May they also put on an elegant Prom for the Seniors.

In the spring of Twelfth grade, Seniors are introduced to the possibilities of life after college through a vocational internship. For three weeks, students spend their days at worksites related to their emerging occupational interests: an architect's office, for instance, or companies in the publishing, communications, and fashion industries. Museums, schools, and political organizations are among other possibilities.

Altogether, Rudolf Steiner High School offers four engaging, enlightening years of personal enrichment and progress.





Learning at Rudolf Steiner

“My Rudolf Steiner education was out of synch with all of the worst elements of the culture—commercialism, commodification, materialism, militarism, cynicism, the idea that the arts are soft and don’t matter. I wouldn’t have missed it and think I’m the better for it.”

—Alumnus, ’47, Publisher

School days begin with Waldorf’s unique Main Lesson format—a two-period, wide-ranging, multi-disciplinary inquiry into all aspects of a major subject area (see page 10 for more about the Main Lesson). Main Lesson topics—Modern History, for instance, in Ninth grade—are examined from many perspectives and through all modes of study for up to four weeks. In keeping with Waldorf practice, learning is a three-stage process: students first encounter information by listening, reading, or viewing; then they experience it through questioning and discussion; and finally, they conceptualize it by speaking, writing, or drawing. As they do, their Main Lesson Books fill with notes, essays, poems, charts, maps, and illustrations, which become basic course materials—and are reviewed and graded. Teaching methods are challenging but patient, and the broad, multi-faceted approach to subject matter sparks both student interest and expanding comprehension. Courses assign readings and may additionally require oral reports, papers, documented laboratory work, and weekly quizzes. Final examinations can take the form of research papers. Independent art, research, music, and writing projects may be arranged for extra credit.

In addition to the multi-week Main Lesson subject blocks, there are year-long courses in English, Foreign Language, Math, Social Studies, and an elective choice. These meet four or five times per week. Among other benefits, these classes, along with Main Lesson work, provide excellent preparation for rigorous college study.

Eurythmy lessons—expressive movement exercises unique to Waldorf education—transform Main Lesson studies into evocative physical expression. Handwork, a key element in Waldorf’s simultaneous education of head, hand, and heart, takes place in crafts classes: basketry, weaving, and bookbinding, each offering new understanding of form and function, permutations and possibilities, skill and precision. Required courses in Art, Foreign Language, and Mathematics are regulars on the weekly calendar, as is participation twice weekly in the Chorus—a joyful part of the day. Every week also, as noted in the Introduction, students develop their athletic preferences in our multi-faceted program of Physical Education and team sports. Courses in High School are taught by subject specialists. Language teachers are native speakers.



Each grade's Class Advisors, mentors and advocates for all students, communicate regularly with parents. Once a week, class meetings are held to discuss students' and teachers' concerns.

In Freshman through Junior years, students are required to perform twenty hours per year of voluntary assistance at social service institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes, welfare agencies, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens.

“The Main Lesson was great. You’d learn a lot, really delve into the subject because of all the time available. And all the aspects—history within art, music, drama, science, and literature. And when your head was getting full of one subject, there’d be another. Tremendous variety. And very intensive. You’d get drawn in, and all of a sudden it’s recess.”

—Recent alumna





The Curriculum

As the course catalog demonstrates, academics at Steiner are both challenging and rewarding. Coursework builds on prior study, leading toward expanded competence in each major discipline: social and natural sciences, languages, mathematics, fine arts, and English in literature, speaking and writing. The Waldorf method employs a Spiral Curriculum in which subject matter previously encountered in, say, a more pictorial manner, appears later in expository written form, integrating aesthetic perception with intellectual absorption.

By the end of Senior year, students have traversed literary works, music and poetry from ancient to modern, and can try their own wings in a Creative Writing elective. Study of the past has moved into the present, exploring politics and cultures along the way, with final year courses in U.S. and World History. French has joined Spanish and German as an additional language choice. By graduation, students are fluent enough in reading, writing, and speaking to make their way in countries where those tongues are native. Some may have previously experienced such an immersion in our Tenth grade foreign exchange program. Mathematics expands from Algebra and Geometry to Projective Geometry and Senior courses in Chaos Theory and Calculus. Science has covered Botany, Zoology, Chemistry, and Ecology, with advanced electives in Biology and Chemistry. Physics has progressed from Thermodynamics to the workings of light.

In Fine Arts, students have learned black-and-white drawing, with charcoal and pastel chalk, plus watercolors and mixed media and, as Seniors, oil painting. There are classes also in Sculpture, both clay and stone. Freshmen and Sophomores can choose an elective in Graphic Art and Illustration. Senior electives include Advanced Oil Painting and Film Studies. Chorus is the only required element of music education, but students are encouraged to learn or increase their proficiency in playing instruments. Our musical groups—Orchestra, Jazz Band, A Cappella singing, West African Drumming—are electives in the curriculum along with Music Theory. In Drama, the basic Ninth grade workshop is succeeded by introductions to Classical and Shakespearean work, the program culminating in the production of the Senior Play. The Drama Club carries this study on in other productions.

In its levels of challenge, stimulation, and excellence of outcome, Rudolf Steiner's curriculum solidly and creatively exceeds mainstream standards. Our graduates are recognized by college admissions personnel as among those students best prepared, personally and academically, for success in higher education.

Beyond the Classroom: Class Trips

All High School classes make group expeditions, the students bonding as they experience time together away from both home and school.

NINTH GRADE: Freshmen travel to Overlook Farm in Massachusetts, where they intensify their study of Environmental Science in a global context. Overlook is a 270-acre working farm that introduces visitors to the care of livestock, fowl, and organic crops. Students also learn first hand the exigencies of life among the many peoples who do not benefit from current world distributions of wealth. Lessons are especially compelling at the farm's associated Heifer Ranch, an educational center which promotes sustainable solutions to the world's widespread problems of hunger, poverty, illness, and environmental degradation. The Ranch's five-acre Global Village installation, a renowned work-study site, replicates the housing, agricultural techniques, and husbandry of small scale farming in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and North America. Discussions in this evocative setting challenge students to examine their own habits, consumption patterns, and beliefs about becoming more responsible global citizens.

The **TENTH GRADE'S** week-long stay at the Hawthorne Valley Farm, where students intensify their Main Lesson study of Ecology, is described on page 18.

ELEVENTH GRADE: Juniors travel together twice. One outing, described in *Paving The Way To College*, on page 69, teaches how best to evaluate colleges during on-site visits. The second Junior class venture is a week-long trip to Camphill Village in Pennsylvania. This agriculturally-oriented residential community is one of many Camphill establishments, all of which bring together developmentally disabled persons, caregivers and volunteers in supportive, life-sharing situations. Camphill's website notes that the organization's programs are inspired by Rudolf Steiner's philosophy concerning human beings and the cosmos, which recognizes the spiritual nature and wholeness of individuals, regardless of disability. At Camphill, students contribute their skills and talents to support the community. Their school experience in handwork and practical arts applies helpfully in the Village's craft production: weaving, pottery, stained glass,

carpentry, candle making, and bookbinding, among others. Students also share work in the kitchen, preparing meals, and in the fields, garden and bakery. Social activities close each day.

The Camphill visit provides a unique opportunity for encountering and absorbing the empathy of human understanding, the worth of common humanity, and the values of openness and compassion in assessing the world.

TWELFTH GRADE: The Senior class trip is a realization of transition—a celebration of accomplishment, a discussion of the future, in a setting that invites both observation and recreation. In late spring, after completing their three-week internships, Twelfth graders spend seven days in an appealing destination they have collectively chosen. Educated eyes interpret realities there even as students enjoy venues of relaxation. The trip consolidates friendships, memories, and further recognition of how life at Steiner has changed and prepared the soon-to-be graduates. Past classes have savored time in Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, among other alluring locales.



Study Overseas

Tenth graders at Rudolf Steiner High School can live what they learn by studying overseas. Immersion in a foreign society adds invaluable stimulation and perspective to the understanding of language and culture. It is an unforgettably enjoyable and broadening experience.

In our Exchange Program, Steiner students in good standing, with proficiency in a foreign language, can spend part of a year at a Waldorf school in Austria, France, Switzerland, Germany, or Spain. In return, a student from the cooperating European school enrolls with us during the academic year. On both ends of the exchange, the visiting learners live in the homes of host families associated with their schools.

Because Waldorf education the world over uses the same teaching methods and a similar curriculum, exchange students continue their established course of study—but with the exciting difference of a new social and physical environment around them, and the inspiring challenge of using their alternative language for daily communication. Improved competence in that native tongue, and the accompanying enrichment of new encounters and perceptions, yield insights into the host country and its people unobtainable in any other way. The experience plants itself as an indelible memory and an illuminating future resource.

Interested students apply for the program in Ninth grade and need recommendation from their Foreign Language teacher, plus approval of the High School faculty.





Paving the Way to College

Rudolf Steiner students receive intensive, comprehensive, personally-tailored assistance in selecting and applying to their future colleges and universities. Our guidance program builds on the well-informed assessment of individual strengths and inclinations that emerges from close, small-class acquaintance. In Eleventh grade, the Director of College Counseling begins weekly one-on-one discussion meetings with all students. As these sessions progress—with parental input solicited—the Director develops a list that best matches students' attributes to specific colleges and universities. The Alumni Career Day lends insight to the process of selection. As many as forty colleges send recruiters during the year to meet with interested students. And Juniors take a full-class trip to geographical clusters of these institutions, a dry run lesson on how to evaluate pluses and minuses when subsequently visiting preferred potential *alma maters*.

Specialist teachers give preparatory classes for the SAT exams. We also provide a course in understanding and handling the stress associated with these standardized tests, and with the college admissions process in general. In the summer between Eleventh and Twelfth grades, student and parent homework assignments help to prepare for actual college applications. Weekly student-counselor meetings continue in the Senior year, with discussion of ideas for essays, role-playing for interviews, and other practical approaches to readiness.

The Director advocates for students as they secure recommendations from teachers. When the time comes, the Director personally assembles final application packets—ensuring inclusion of all needed components—and follows up the mailings as appropriate with phone calls endorsing applicants' character and competence.

We take pride in the fact that every Steiner Senior continues on to a preferred institution of higher learning. Our exceptional preparatory guidance facilitates one of the major advantages enjoyed by Steiner students: they are actively sought by top-ranked schools. Steiner graduates move ahead in the best educational channels the country has to offer.

Our Philosophy

The Rudolf Steiner School actively welcomes students, faculty, and staff of all ethnicities and gender preferences, and of all faiths and creeds. We respect and support individuals' spiritual beliefs and practices.

We strive to develop the mind, body, and spirit of the child, encouraging, in the process, the child's spiritual freedom and growth. As in every Waldorf school, our teaching works toward this aim by drawing on the insights into human development pioneered by Rudolf Steiner.

The Waldorf curriculum is diverse in nature and rich in the teachings of many great religious traditions. Students develop an understanding and respect for the various cultures of the world through their experience in the classroom and in the celebration of seasonal festivals of the year. Drawing primarily, but not exclusively, on Christian traditions, we celebrate our common humanity, not our separateness in belief or practice.

Our Mission

The Rudolf Steiner School embraces Waldorf education, a pedagogy derived from the insights of Austrian-born scientist, philosopher, artist, and educator Rudolf Steiner. The program addresses the physical, emotional, and intellectual capacities of the developing child through an age-appropriate curriculum that integrates the disciplines of movement, fine arts, and practical arts into the study of humanities, science, math, and technology. Through the development of these capacities, we strive to educate the whole human being in a healthy and balanced manner.

DELEIVINGNE & ASSOCIATES © 2005

www.delevingne.com

Principal photography and
creative direction: Lionel Delevingne

Text: Steve Turner

Design: E.R. Hardy

Additional images courtesy of the Rudolf Steiner
School: pp. 6, 11, 13, 14, 19, 34, 36, 40, 48, 50, 57

Lower School:

Twos Plus – Grade Six

15 East 79th Street

New York, NY 10021

Tel. 212-535-2130

Fax 212-744-4497

Admissions: Tel. 212-327-1457

E-mail: lowerschooladmissions@steiner.edu

Upper School:

Grades Seven – Twelve

15 East 78th Street

New York, NY 10021

Tel. 212-879-1101

Fax 212-794-1554

Admissions: Tel. 212-879-1101

E-mail: upperschooladmissions@steiner.edu

waldorf

The Rudolf Steiner School

