

# ISKA News

An Update for Members and Friends

Autumn 2008

## ISKA Annual Conference

We are delighted to invite you to this year's Conference on the theme "Working With the Very Young Child", which will take place on 27th September 2008. The venue is once again the Camphill Community, Dunshane House, Brannockstown, Co. Kildare.

Our Keynote Speaker will be Helle Heckmann from Denmark. The cost is:

Members €40 incl membership renewal  
Non Members €80.

For more information and online booking see [www.steinerireland.org](http://www.steinerireland.org) or contact the ISKA office.

## ISKA AGM

The AGM will take place on 26th September 2008, the evening before the conference, at Dunshane Camphill, starting at 7.30 p.m. Please notify the office if you would like to volunteer as a possible Council Member.

## Quality Assured Kindergartens

A highlight of our conference will be the presentation of "Sensing Quality" awards to the first of the kindergartens to have successfully completed the ISKA Quality Assurance Process, which after last year's pilot scheme was fully rolled out this year.

Kindergartens interested in participating in or learning more about the Sensing Quality process, contact the Advisory Team co-ordinator Ulrike Farnleitner on 051 648909 or [info@steinerireland.org](mailto:info@steinerireland.org).

## Susan Perrow returns

We are delighted that Susan Perrow is returning to Ireland in the summer of 2009. Susan gave a number of very well received workshops in Co. Clare in March of this year on Creative Discipline and Therapeutic Storytelling, and now we can offer the possibility of working with Susan to other parts of the country. Susan will be available for workshops and/or talks in the last week of June and the first and second weeks of July 2009. Possible themes are:

### Workshops:

- + Therapeutic Storytelling
- + The Tapestry of Discipline
- + Storytelling – First steps
- + Story Circles for Children
- + Pedagogical value of Morning Circle/Ring
- + Simple Wool Crafts
- + Creative Games
- + Domestic Activities – World caring begins with Home caring!
- + Play – Most precious gift of childhood

### Talks:

- + Our children our most precious resource
- + The Power of Story
- + Rhythm, Rhyme, Repetition
- + Kindergarten – a foundation for life
- + The Kindergarten as a basis for Morality

Susan also offers a three-day Intensive "Tapestry of Discipline" – discipline as an art form looking at rhythm, planning, consistency, respect, conscious and creative speech, ages and stages, expectations, humour, games, therapeutic story-telling and crafts for simple props for stories.

If you would be interested in hosting a workshop/talk by Susan or attending one, please contact the ISKA office.

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### Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association

Clai House  
Millpool Road  
Mountshannon  
Co. Clare

Tel:  
061 927944

Email:  
[info@steinerireland.org](mailto:info@steinerireland.org)

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## **IASWECE Council Meeting report, Colmar, France, March 29th-31st 2008**

25 of the 30 Council members attended. Unfortunately I was unable to attend due to a death in the family. We heard the following reports:

### **Report from Japan**

The Japanese Association has ratified Full Membership in IASWECE and will reorganise to be able to cover Council travel expenses for Kai and membership dues. Kai has requested that the kindergartens remain Supporting Members of IASWECE, while the Association will remain with Full Membership. This is allowed by our statutes.

There are three kinds of kindergartens in Japan:

- + those that are recognised and receive funding from the government and are supervised by the Ministry of Education
- + nursery homes under the supervision of the Ministries of Health and Welfare, funded by the government and run by directors, and
- + a grass-roots Waldorf movement, unrecognised by the government, and led by trained Waldorf teachers.

The latter are the most active members of the Association and do not wish to draw the attention of the government at this time.

There is also a request that IASWECE give a clearer picture of the nature of our organisation to aid in fundraising in Japan.

### **Report from German Association:**

In 2006, the German Association removed all international activities of the old Association from their statutes and declared their membership in IASWECE.

They are now redefining the ideals and goals and tasks of this new, independent association. Of course, they are still interested in participating in international activities. Their new name is The Association of Waldorf Kindergartens (Vereinigung der Waldorfkindergaerten) and they are called "Die Vereinigung".

### **IASWECE co-ordinating group**

The IASWECE co-ordinating group is working with the following questions:

- + How do mandate groups nurture and nourish the Council and the mission of the IASWECE?
- + How do we all carry more actively the work of the Council while maintaining demanding jobs at home?
- + How can we make individual initiatives visible in the Council?
- + How do we get an overall picture of the work we "inherited" from the original International Association and the work which has come towards us since the founding of IASWECE?
- + How do we establish ourselves as a central resource for kindergartens around the world?
- + How do we achieve and expand on our original intention of mutual partnerships among countries?

Since the efficiency of the office operation in Sweden is still under question, it has been decided to hire a full time admin assistant for the coming year. This will be reviewed in June 2009.

The viability of a 2-yearly conference rhythm was questioned, and new proposals have been asked for in the coming meeting in Copenhagen October 2009.

The study focused on self-education in the light of spiritual science, and will continue next time with 'The Child's changing Consciousness' Lecture 6.

### ***Marguerite Devane***

*Kindergarten Teacher and Principal Raheen Wood Steiner National School and Irish Representative to IASWECE*

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## **Membership**

Membership of ISKA is open to everyone who supports the aims of the association.

**Full Membership** is available for people who are currently working professionally, or who have within the past three years been working with young children.

Cost: €30 p.a.

**Associate Membership** is for people not working directly with children but who wish to support the work of the association.

Cost: €15 p.a.

Membership forms are available from the ISKA office. If you leave a message or send an email, please give a postal address.

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## Photos for website

We will be updating the website and would love to include more photos of any and all aspects of kindergarten activity. Festivals, play spaces, nature tables, open days, daily life, parents' evenings...

If you have photos you would be happy for us to consider for the website, please email them, confirming you have the permission of any identifiable people, or of their parents if children, to:  
info@steinerireland.org.

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## PR Guide for Members

A PR Guide for Members is currently being put together to assist with PR for kindergartens themselves and/or events being run by kindergartens.

Before finalising the guide it would be very helpful if members would let the ISKA office know what questions they have with regard to PR, what they hope the PR Guide would help them with. Questions, suggestions etc can be sent by email, phone or post to the ISKA Office.

Also, if any kindergartens that have promotional materials would be willing for them to be used as samples/templates for initiatives developing their PR, please email them to info@steinerireland.org.

Thanks in advance for your assistance with supporting this important aspect of the work of the kindergarten.

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## Legislation Handbook for Childcare Providers (2nd edn)

Published jointly by Barnardos and Border Counties Childcare Network

ISBN978-1-906004-07-1

€10 + €1.50 p&p

The handbook has been updated to bring it in line with developments up to 2008. It is intended to act as a guide to the many areas of legislation that impact upon childcare providers in Ireland. Whether in a very small setting or in a large establishment, legislation plays an important role in shaping activities and the way in which the setting is run. The primary purpose of legislation is to ensure safe, ethical practices, whether in connection with protecting children, with work practices or with financial matters.

For childcare providers, it is crucial that knowledge of relevant legislation is up to date and comprehensive. This will ensure that the service operates effectively and in accordance with the law, thereby providing a safe and productive setting that can focus on offering quality services. It can seem a daunting task to wade through the many relevant Acts, and even identifying which Acts apply to each service can be a challenge, so this handbook will serve as a useful reference to point people in the appropriate direction.

The handbook is available from:

Barnardos' Training and Resource Service  
Christchurch Square  
Dublin 8.  
Tel: 01 454 9699.  
Email: resources@barnardos.ie.

Or buy it online at [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie).

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## Kindling Journal

ISKA provides a subscription service to *Kindling*, the Journal for Steiner Waldorf Early Years Education (UK). It is printed twice a year (Spring and Autumn) and contains:

- + Articles arising from work experience, research or observations
- + Reports on lectures, Conferences, Workshops, Regional meetings, Parent & Toddler news
- + Anthroposophical impulses, reports and developments around the world
- + Government updates and information, Current debate
- + Coming events, Conferences, Reviews
- + Practical ideas and resources, Natural health
- + Special features from kindergartens in the UK and around the world
- + Seasonal songs, Stories and Activities
- + Information sharing, advertising, letters.

### Annual subscription

The annual subscription (two issues) is €19.

Contribute a further €2 (making your payment €21) and donate to the Kindling International fund, which supports early years work in underprivileged countries).

You can subscribe to Kindling online at [www.steinerireland.org](http://www.steinerireland.org), or by sending your name, address, contact details and a cheque made out to ISKA, to the ISKA office.

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## Autumn verses

The following Elf Song comes from the website [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com/or/cmquoid/VersesandSongs.htm) (full url: <http://www.angelfire.com/or/cmquoid/VersesandSongs.htm>). This website gives a number of verses/songs. You can also request the music for Elf Song.

### Elf Song

Tippety-toes, the smallest elf  
Sat on a mushroom by himself  
Playing a little tinkling tune  
Under the big round harvest moon  
And this is the song that Tippety made  
To sing to the little tune he played:  
"Red are the hips  
red are the haws,  
red and gold are the leaves that fall  
red are the poppies in the corn  
red berries on the rowan tall  
red is the big round harvest moon,  
and red are my new little dancing shoon."



This verse comes from Marguerite Devane, Kindergarten Teacher at Raheen Wood Steiner National School:

The gentle lady twilight is coming, let her pass,  
she scatters from her basket the dewdrops on the grass.  
She closes up the lilies and sends the bees to bed  
and puts a veil of silver upon the rowan red.

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## IASWECE USA conference report

From the 2-6 of August 2008 the International Association for Steiner Waldorf Childhood Education in partnership with the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America held a conference in New Hampshire USA entitled "Meeting the Needs of the Child Today".

There were 300 participants from 35 countries, including Russia, Thailand, Congo, Kenya, Philippines, Hungary and many other European countries. The work of Brigit's Garden represented Ireland as I was the only participant from Ireland who attended the Conference.

The main speakers were: Dr Michaela Gloeckler, Dr Johanna Steegmans and Renate Long-Breipohl, PhD. Workshop leaders included: Louis de Forest ("Meeting the Other: Parents and Teachers/Educators and Partners"), Michael Howard ("Developing a Creative Spirit Worthy of Imitation"), Helle Heckman ("Working with Mixed Ages in Early Childhood Education") and of course the eminent Michaela Gloeckler, whose workshop on "The Mystery of Age-Specific Learning and Development" attracted many participants.

Out of 15 workshops we had to choose one for the entire conference and they were all so interesting that it was difficult to decide. I attended the one given by Bernadette Raichel with the theme "The Anthroposophical Day Nursery: Surrounding the Child with Health Giving Sheaths, Nurturing the Life of the Family".

There were also mini-sessions given by some of the participants about their particular aspects of our work. I held one in which I spoke of our vision in Brigit's Garden to bring the work with the young children close to the elderly, creating a space for the children and the "grandparents" to exchange their "gifts".

After the daily lecture there were discussion groups held by different workshop leaders in which we could discuss the day's lecture theme in smaller groups. Any questions were then passed to the lecturer and brought back to the next morning talk.

Guided by the lectures we looked at the wholeness of the first seven-year period, the child's need for continuity of care based on human relationships and our roles as both educators and caregivers in working with young children, their parents and each other. I found very interesting the concept of self-education as the only way to achieve the task of providing the children with the appropriate environment where they can also achieve their own self-education. Another important concept for me was the understanding that we need to accept whatever "problem" the child brings to us, neither as a family or society problem but: *our problem*.

We were also delighted with two beautiful performances of puppetry and an amazing singing performance by three students from High Mowing secondary school.

The venue was between Pine Hill Waldorf School (Grades 1-8) and the High Mowing School, a boarding school (Grades 9-12).

The 20-minute walk between them gave us plenty of opportunities for “digestion of wisdom”.

I very much enjoyed the intense summer experience of New England countryside at New Hampshire: the dark starry nights with the loud sound of the crickets singing; the high fields of ripened hay; the wild flowers never seen before; the huge and majestic old maples and oaks surrounding the timber buildings, some of them dating from the eighteenth century. Mowing means “hay fields”. There were lots of chip-monks (like little squirrels), so friendly one could hand feed them! There were also wild geese and big, big, colourful butterflies. The school swimming pool was great for jumping in when the “academics” got too intense.

One evening we had the opportunity to socialise wonderfully at a New England Country Dance (folk dance) finishing at midnight with a feast of watermelon and lemonade.

Another day we had pictures and reports from different countries. Remarkable were the ones from a project in North Dakota catering for Lakota (Sioux) children and the report from the Chinese representatives with pictures of their invaluable work during the recent earthquakes.

As you can imagine it is impossible to report on the countless heart encounters between all of us there. The inspiring stories, the exchange of experiences in our work with young children, the many opportunities for private conversations with the lecturers and other experienced teachers, etc. If anybody would like to hear more please contact me, details below.

To finish I will say: it has been an honour and a pleasure to participate in this event. The effort to get there has been thoroughly rewarded. I feel I have collected a lot of “winter fuel” as well as courage and inspiration in the face of our exciting times with the coming task of building of Brigit’s Garden permanent “home”. It great to feel we are not alone in the effort of Meeting the Need of the Child Today. And it is good to remember that we always count on the help of our Friends in Bigger Places.

### ***Lina Pelaez***

*Manager for Brigit’s Garden Community Childcare Project, Tuamgraney, Co. Clare, for babies to school age children. A place where childhood is revered, nurtured and gently guided to unfold.*

## **Request for Support**

Brigit’s Garden (Holding Company: Brigit’s Mantle Initiatives Ltd. Reg No.458814 Charity No.18130), was awarded a capital grant from the Department of Children in 2007 and has since acquired land and received planning permission adjacent to our local Community Hospital and Daycare Centre for the elderly. In order to complete the building in line with our principles of protecting the environment and using energy efficient methods we are in need of additional support of €100,000. This quality of building will offer the children and families of our community a healthy space to be in for generations to come.

We hope that with donations from our local community and beyond we can reach this goal easily. With money above this goal we would be able to begin work on our heritage gardens, where we envisage the elderly and the children enjoying time together. We are under tight time pressure as we need to show that we have these additional funds as soon as possible and we would gratefully accept your donation.

Cheques should be made payable to: Brigit’s Mantle Initiatives Ltd. and sent to Veronica Crombie, Chairperson, 5, School House Lane, Mountshannon, Co. Clare.

Many thanks,  
*Lina Pelaez & Veronica Crombie,*  
on behalf of the Committee.  
linapelaez@msn.com  
vcrombie@gmail.com

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## **Garda vetting**

The Child Care (Pre-school Services) (No.2) Regulations stipulate that all childcare providers notify the HSE and are obliged to be Garda vetted.

If you have questions regarding this process you can contact:

Suzanne Tompkin  
Barnardos Vetting Service,  
The Bowling Green  
White Street  
Cork

Tel 021 4547060 –

Email: [vetting@barnardos.ie](mailto:vetting@barnardos.ie)

*Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns.*

– George Eliot

## Working with the NVCC

ISKA is a member of the National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative, a group of eight national non-governmental organisations in Ireland that work with children, each with a special interest and expertise in childcare and early learning for children. The NVCC works towards the development of excellence in childcare services in Ireland. This gives ISKA a very important voice and role on a national level, contributing to the development of early years care and education in Ireland. ISKA is looking for someone to take over the role of ISKA Representative on the Steering Committee of the NVCC.

The right person will be:

- + enthusiastic about the development of quality early years childcare and education in Ireland
- + good at working within a group that has a diversity of backgrounds and philosophies
- + available to attend monthly / bi-monthly meetings, reporting back to ISKA and the ISKA NVCC Reps on County Childcare Committees.

There is a budget to support this interesting and important work. For further details please contact the ISKA office.

## Workshops and talks

As well as offering opportunities to work with International Facilitators such as Susan Perrow, ISKA has a pool of home-grown experts available to give workshops, talks or be a keynote speaker at your conference or event, covering a wide range of topics, such as

- + The importance of sleep
- + The importance of play
- + Benefit to children of delayed formal learning
- + Imitation as the basis for deepest learning
- + Education of the will – the importance of doing
- + Reflective practice for teachers
- + Celebrating the seasons and festivals
- + Strategies to balance invasive technologies and media
- + Preparing for school – when is a child ready for formal learning?
- + Setting up a Steiner Kindergarten
- + Gardening with children
- + Outdoor play
- + Puppet plays and puppet making
- + Craft activities for children
- + Story telling
- + Wool craft and felting for children and adults

If you are interested in availing of our expertise in these or other areas, please contact the ISKA office.

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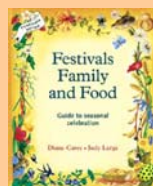
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