

ISKA News

An Update for Members and Friends

Spring 2008

National Co-ordinator

At the beginning of January, Audrey Flynn took up the position of National Co-ordinator for ISKA. Audrey was a student on the inaugural Kindergarten Teacher Training Program in 1990, while working as a Kindergarten Assistant at Raheen Wood School for a number of years. Audrey then spent some years at home raising her family full-time. From 2005, Audrey was the Administrator for the ALFA Project (Active Learning for Adolescents), a Steiner-based education project for 12–16 year olds, which she was involved in setting up (www.alfaproject.org).

Audrey is in the office from 9.30am-3pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and can be contacted on telephone 061 927944 or email info@steinerireland.org.

Many thanks to Róisín Ní Gháirbhith for all the life, energy, enthusiasm and hard work she gave to the post last year.

Steiner School recognition by the Department of Education and Science

The recent recognition by the Minister for Education and Science of two Steiner Schools in Co Clare for September 2008 was a very exciting breakthrough for Steiner Education in Ireland and the result of many years of hard work, initially by Raheen Wood School in East Clare, enthusiastically joined in recent years by Mol an Oige in Ennistymon. Requests for School recognition must be made to the department by a recognised Patron Body whose role is

- + to ensure all national schools under its care are being managed appropriately by their Boards of Management
- + to uphold the ethos and character of the school.

When Co Clare VEC was not accepted by the Minister as a Patron Body, Lifeways Ireland Limited was proposed instead, and accepted by the Minister as the Patron Body for both schools. Lifeways Ireland Ltd, was set up by a group of people interested in setting up Steiner Childcare facility in

Shannon, but was essentially dormant when it was asked to be Patron Body for the two schools. The Chairperson is Pearse O'Shiel, a past teacher and parent and a current grandparent of Raheen Wood school, Secretary is Paul Murray, a past chairperson of the Raheen Wood Council of Management and a parent in Raheen Wood. Directors are George O'Callaghan (CEO of Clare VEC), Alan Dickey (teacher Raheen Wood), Monica Hannaford (teacher Mol an Oige), Terry Twomey (parent Raheen Wood), Una Ní Gháirbhith (parent and teacher Mol an Oige), Peggy Boyle (former teacher and parent, current grandparent Raheen Wood) and Mark Dwan (Co-worker Ballytobin Camphill and Steiner School).

The approval by the Department of Education and Science of a Patron Body for Steiner schools and the granting of recognition to two schools make it more possible for other groups of parents to work towards forming a school or expanding an existing kindergarten into a school. Anyone hoping to do this can contact Lifeways Ireland Limited, Clai House, Millpool Road, Mountshannon, Co Clare.

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Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association

Clai House Tel:
Millpool Road 061 927944
Mountshannon
Co. Clare Email:
 info@steinerireland.org

Sensing quality

The ISKA Sensing Quality Program has now progressed from pilot stage to completion. It is intended that each kindergarten receives a Quality Assurance Visit over the next two years.

The first step in the Sensing Quality process is the completion by the kindergarten teacher of the ISKA Sensing Quality Self Assessment Worksheet, for their own information. The purpose of this is to highlight and to support kindergarten teachers in addressing relevant quality assurance issues in their own kindergartens. Subsequently a Sensing Quality Visit is arranged with the Advisory Service and on successful completion of the process a certificate of Quality Assurance as a Steiner Kindergarten will be presented.

If you have not already received your Self Assessment Worksheet, request one from the ISKA office, info@steinerireland.org. For further information or to book a Sensing Quality Visit, contact Ulrike Farnleitner – see contact details to the right.

Support for the IASWECE

The ISKA Council has decided that we in Ireland will support the vital work of the IASWECE by an annual invoice to kindergartens for an amount of €10 per child. We are aware that finances can be tight for many kindergartens, but see this as an opportunity for us all to look beyond our own situations and place ourselves within our international community. The amount could be specially fundraised for, or requested from parents, or raised as you decide. If you have not yet received your invoice for 2008, it will arrive shortly and your soonest payment of this amount to support IASWECE would be appreciated.

Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association Advisory Services

The Advisory Team of qualified, experienced Steiner early years educators are an invaluable resource available to all kindergartens on request.

Pedagogical Advisory Visits - An experienced and qualified advisor will spend a day in your kindergarten working directly on issues of interest or concern to you the teacher.

Administration Advisory Visits - Individuals and committees can book a visit on issues around employment, policies and procedures and administration matters.

Sensing Quality – The Sensing Quality Process supports a kindergarten achieving Certified Quality Assured Status as a Steiner Kindergarten. (See article on Sensing Quality.)

COSTS

Advisory Services cost:

€50 for the first visit,
€75 for the second visit, and
€100 for the third visit,

in any calendar year.

CONTACT

For Pedagogical Advisory and Sensing Quality Services:

Ulrike Farnleitner
051 648909
workshops@steinerireland.org

For Administration Advisory Services:

Audrey Flynn
061 927944
info@steinerireland.org

Transforming Ireland

The NCIP 2006-2010 is funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2007-2013

The EOCP 2000-2006 is funded by the Irish Government and part financed by the European Union Structural Funds under the National Development Plan 2000-2006.



Welcome spring!

Looking for springtime material provided a great opportunity to look through the archive of content from *The Clearing House Newsletter* on www.waldorflibrary.org. *The Clearing House* was an American newsletter for and by Steiner Waldorf Teachers, published between 1967 and 1988. Some of the material is dated and it includes all age groups, not just kindergarten, but it covers many interesting topics and is a very useful and interesting online resource.

These verses are by Helen St John from 1982.

GOD'S CHILDREN

I'm shining! Laughed the sunshine,
And beamed upon the earth.
I'm blowing! Called the west wind
And rushed for all his worth.
I'm falling! Sighed the snow flake
And floated to the ground.
I'm coming! Cried the rain drop
And pitter-pattered down.

SPRING

I thought the earth was bare, quite bare,
But see! just here, and here, and here,
There's something green a-showing
And something gold a glowing,
It is a DAFFODIL!

I thought the earth was bare, quite bare,
But see! just here, and here, and here,
There's something green a-showing
and something white a-blowing,
It is a SNOWDROP!

I thought the earth was bare, quite bare,
But see! just here, and here, and here,
There's something green a-showing
And something purple growing,
It is a CROCUS!

Website

www.steinerireland.org

The ISKA website is a valuable information point for members and interested parties alike. It is updated on a regular basis and has new sections on Advisory Services, Workshops and Talks and the results of the Conditions Survey carried out in 2006/07.

There is a feedback section on the site and any comments/suggestions are gratefully received.

It is important that information be as up to date as possible, so please regularly check any references to your own kindergarten/childcare facility and inform us promptly of any changes required.

The website also has useful information on recommended reading, articles, frequently asked questions and links to other organisations nationally and internationally, for example the Alliance for Childhood.

2008 International Early Childhood Conference

The theme of this conference is "Meeting the Needs of the Child Today" and will offer opportunities for early childhood educators/carers from around the world to explore the development of the young child and the development of the educator/caregiver. Speakers include Joan Almon, Dr Michaela Gloeckler and Renate Long-Breipohl, among others. It runs from 2nd to 6th August in New Hampshire, USA.

While ISKA is not in a position to fund attendance at the conference, if you are planning on going and could report back to ISKA, we could give a contribution towards your expenses. Please contact the office if you can do this. You can also request a copy/copies of the conference brochure.

NVCC - National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative

ISKA is a member organisation of the National Voluntary Childcare Collaborative set up in 1999 to:

- + promote quality childcare in Ireland, and
- + contribute to the monitoring, development and formulation of national childcare policy.

The NVCC brings together the diverse range of experiences and expertise of eight member organisations: Barnardos, Childminding Ireland, Children in Hospital in Ireland, Forbairt na Naoinrai Teo, IPPA, National Children's Nurseries Assoc., ISKA and St Nicholas Montessori Association.

ISKA sends a representative/s to regular meetings of the NVCC. If you would be interested in becoming a regular ISKA representative to the NVCC, please contact Audrey Flynn/Pearse O'Shiel at the ISKA office. There is a budget amount to cover travel and subsistence costs and fees.

Invitation to nominate Board Members

A very interesting and constructive open meeting was held in the Lakeside Hotel, Ballina, Co Tipperary on Monday 10 March 2008. Jointly hosted by Lifeways Ireland Limited, ISKA and the Early Childhood Education Programme, it was called in order to examine the question of Steiner Waldorf Teacher Training in Ireland, in particular, but not exclusively, arising out of the recent State Recognition. The meeting decided that the first step in addressing this important topic properly was the formation of a group with a Board of Directors to be responsible for the development of Steiner Teacher Training in Ireland.

We are therefore requesting nominations of Board Members. Nominees can be put forward either to represent an interested group or as an individual with valuable skills or expertise. It is essential that all nominees have skills and interests that will enhance the work of the Board. These might be, for example, knowledge of the sector, experience in the provision of training courses, a background in Steiner education, and an interest in supporting in a voluntary capacity the development of Steiner education in Ireland at an exciting and pivotal time. The nominations will be brought to an open meeting at Raheen Wood School on Saturday 5 April at 10 a.m., when it is intended that the Board will be formed.

While not anticipating how the Board will organise itself, it is likely that it will meet monthly initially, with a move towards quarterly meetings; it does not have to have a fixed locale and may rotate meetings round the country. While there is no money available to this body as yet, it is hoped it will be possible to contribute towards long distance travel costs.

ISKA will collect the nominations (see below) and will nominate a representative to the Board. In addition, kindergartens that plan to grow into State Recognised National Schools may wish to nominate a representative. Please ensure in advance of nomination that your nominee is willing to be put forward.

Please send nominations to Audrey Flynn at the ISKA office, Clai House, Millpool Road, Mountshannon, Co Clare, or email info@steinerireland.org.

Representation on County Childcare Committees

Part of the work of the NVCC is the nomination of members to participate as voluntary members of County Childcare Committees. VCCs were set up with a view to supporting quality improvement of childcare services and the development of locally based support networks for providers, parents and others. The following chart outlines the places available around the country on City/County Childcare Committees. If you would like to volunteer to be an NVCC representative on any of these committees, please contact Audrey Flynn at the ISKA office. There is a budget amount for travel costs to support this.

CCC with NVCC Rep places available	No. of places	Meetings
CAVAN	1	Daytime
CORK COUNTY	1	Noon
CLARE	1	4 p.m. every second month, in CCC office Ennis
DUBLIN – FINGAL	1	2 p.m.
DUBLIN CITY	1	9.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m. in Civic Offices every second month approx
DUN LAOGHAIRE /RATHDOWN	1	Morning
KERRY	2	10 a.m.
LEITRIM	1	5 p.m.
LIMERICK COUNTY	1	6-7.30 p.m.
NORTH TIPPERARY	1	2.15-4.45 p.m. every two months
OFFALY	1	3.30 p.m., Tullamore
SLIGO	1	11.30 a.m.
TIPPERARY SOUTH	2	Afternoon
WATERFORD COUNTY	1	Morning
WEXFORD	1	Morning
WICKLOW	1	10 a.m. and 3 p.m. bimonthly, on fourth Thursday of the month

Childcare Networks

It is highly recommended that every kindergarten/childcare facility join their local Childcare Network. If not the teacher, maybe an assistant or a well-informed parent. This is a valuable opportunity not only to inform yourselves about childcare issues in your area, but to feed into and influence responses. It is also an opportunity to raise your profile in your area and to get to know other childcare providers. This is also a place where you can advertise open days, workshops and talks you are providing. The networks are organised by your local City or County Childcare Committee; contact them for further details.

Report from IASWECE Council Meeting in Tampere, Finland 10-14 Oct 2007

by Marguerite Devane, your International Representative

Twenty-six members attended including Kai Iruma, our new Japanese member, and Ulrike Inch, the Office Administrator from Sweden. We met in the Almin Institute, Tampere, a centre that hosts small conferences, next door to where our host Eija Sarasin has her kindergarten. Tampere is the largest inland town in Scandinavia. Finland itself has a population of 4 million people mostly concentrated in the south, is covered in lakes and forests with the multitudes of white barked beech trees a most striking feature.

As usual, we worked through a very full agenda, starting each day at 8.30 a.m. and finishing at 9 p.m., from Wednesday to Sunday. Our study, "Self Education in the Light of Spiritual Science", was facilitated by Renate Long-Breipohl from Australia, continues our study of the education of the Will and connects with the theme of our International Conference in the USA from August 2-6 2008, "Care and Education of the Child from Birth to School Entrance Age". We chose Practical Training of Thought by Rudolf Steiner as the next step in deepening our study.

The budget was presented and clarified. At least €200 was requested from each Country Association in order to meet this year's budget. We are also asked to fund-raise within our countries urgently as money is needed to support our new initiatives as outlined in our E-newsletter

and website www.iaswece.org. (Any ideas and helping hands for fund-raising for IASWECE in Ireland, beyond the €10 per kindergarten child please contact Marguerite on smsnjb@gmail.com.)

We received reports from South America, South Africa, Japan, Australia and our host Finland. We are also in the process of reviewing the board, the council group that mirrors the co-ordinating group, oversees the general working of council and takes legal responsibility for it. We asked again: How do we see our tasks and goals as an association? We generally feel that things are unfolding well and we want to ensure they continue to do so. Our main focus is the children of the world and the protection of their childhood. We are seeking a format to enable us to take up burning issues and actively work and carry them forward for the good of all.

Once you join the council of the international group as a country representative you remain for a seven-year term (as we know well from all the fairy tales!). As a result of this many connections and relationships are formed and developed. There is always very high quality participation, respect for others and communal awareness. One feels very much "at home" with this group of individuals – an amazing achievement really for a world-wide organisation.

No visit to Finland would be complete without a sauna and a lake swim followed by a Finnish meal including salmon and reindeer, which is what we did.

Our next council meeting is in Colmar on the French/Swiss border 27th-31st March 2008 just after the Works Teachers Conference in Dornach/Swiss 24th-29th March 2008.

Education today creates the culture of tomorrow

Message from the International Association for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education.

Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,

One hundred and forty million children are born into the world every day. Each one is unique, yet their needs are the same: protection, security, healthy nourishment, and loving human beings to nurture and care for them so that they may grow and flourish.

Working with the pedagogical ideas of Rudolf Steiner, educators around the world are devoted to this task. Together they have founded a world association for Waldorf education in the first seven years of life – the International Association for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education – IASWECE - with the goal of offering research, education and training, exchange of experience, and financial and human support to training centres, kindergartens and child care centres which work on the basis of these educational ideals.

In 2008, IASWECE intends to support the following projects:

- + the development of kindergartens and training programmes in the People's Republic of China and in Ethiopia
- + training and professional development in Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Ukraine
- + a colloquium in Russia for 200 kindergarten teachers
- + collaboration with colleagues in the ministry of education in Chile on behalf of the education and care of very young children
- + lectures and training courses for educators in Kyrgyzstan, Estonia, and Lithuania
- + publication of collaborative research in France
- + training courses and mentoring for child care providers in the townships of South Africa
- + a world summer conference in Wilton, New Hampshire, USA on the theme of the Care and Education of the Child from Birth to School Entrance
- + participation in the early childhood debate for the working group on the quality of childhood within the European Parliament.

Our association's financial means are not sufficient to fully cover the costs of these projects, however. Thus we turn to you to please help us help Steiner/Waldorf educators, caregivers and teachers around the world so that through their work today, the culture of tomorrow can be created.

You can find more detailed information on our projects and activities as well as contact information for our 24 member country associations on our website at www.iaswece.org. For the children, we thank you on behalf of the council members of the IASWECE!

Susan Howard, USA; Peter Lang, Germany; Philipp Reupke, France.

Easter Teachers' Conference

The theme of this year's conference for the SW Schools Fellowship in the UK is "The 12 Senses and the Modern Child".

Children have to contend with a rapidly moving and exciting but often contradictory world that impacts aggressively on the delicate unfolding and weaving of their senses. This in turn impacts adversely on their relationship to the world and to themselves. It is a subject of major interest to all those connected with the care and education of children, and goes to the very root of our work across the ages.

The conference will be held 4–8 April 2008 at Ringwood Waldorf School in Hampshire, England. This is a wonderful opportunity not only to look closely at this topic but to meet and share experiences, support and learning within a large group of colleagues. Phone 00 44 1425 472664 for more information, or email mail@ringwood-waldorf-school.fsnet.co.uk

Keynote Speakers:

Torin Finser, a Waldorf Teacher, author and Director of the Antioch Teacher Training Course, USA, will look at sense perception and how the twelve senses can help us become better educators. Special emphasis will be placed on listening and seeing as a path of inner development. An introduction to the wisdom of the human body in regard to organisations will also be presented.

Jill Taplin, a kindergarten teacher for 20 years, will talk about her experience of working particularly with the four lower senses in the kindergarten, and how this is transformed and developed in older children - How can I help you to live with yourself, the world and me?

Ashley Ramsden is the founding director of the School of Storytelling at Emerson College and **Nancy Mellon** is a renowned storyteller and author.

ISKA Annual Conference

This will be held on the weekend of 27th September 2008 and it is yet to be decided whether it will be just Saturday, or Friday evening and Saturday. We are hoping to have it again in Dunshane Camphill Community – it was such a good venue last year. We are very lucky to have the possibility of Helle Heckman speaking at it. Further detail closer to the time, but in the meantime, put the date in your diaries.