

# ISKA News

An Update for Members and Friends

Winter 2008

## ISKA Annual Conference 2008

The ISKA annual conference was held in Camphill Community Dunshane on 27th September 2008. The Conference was very well attended with lots of networking and catching-up between events.

We opened with a seasonal verse for Michaelmas from ISKA Council Chairperson, Ulrike Farnleitner. Ulrike then presented Quality Assurance Certificates to Marguerite Devane of Raheen Wood Steiner National School, Co Clare, and Gail Thomas and Marijke McCartney, both from Cork Steiner Kindergarten, accompanied by much warm congratulations from everyone present.

Keynote speaker Helle Heckmann from Denmark started with a very interesting and hands-on exercise highlighting the importance of team work, illustrating how we need to be fully present in every moment of the working day, while still carrying an awareness of what we have done and what we have yet to do. Helle emphasized how crucial it is to the success of caring properly for children that all carers respect and look out for each other as well as the children, and that all carers carry the responsibility for achieving the high standards necessary to provide the quality of care we have undertaken to give the children.

Helle then went on to speak inspiringly of her experiences in working with the very young child, very helpfully illustrating her points with examples from her DVDs. She stressed the importance of rhythm and repetition and the need to allow the time and space for small children to just observe as well as work and play at an appropriate pace. This was all brought to life for us in a talk that was at once serious and funny, thought-provoking and informative.

We are very grateful to Helle Heckmann for her visit and to Dunshane Camphill Community for their excellent hosting of the event.

## Susan Perrow Cancellation

ISKA is very sorry to say that Susan Perrow has cancelled her European trip for 2009 due to other work pressures. We hope we will have the benefit of Susan's expertise some other time in the future.

## Parent and Toddler Groups

The Irish Preschool Play Association (IPPA), has produced practical guidelines to assist Parent and Toddler Groups in the setting up of a service that best meets the needs of families and their community. The guidelines are available through the IPPA website [www.ippa.ie](http://www.ippa.ie), cost €7 plus p&p.

A new scheme, funded under the National Childcare Investment Program (NCIP), assists the promotion and expansion of Parent and Toddler Groups. The scheme was allocated €250,000 in 2008 and a similar amount will be allocated in 2009. Parent and Toddler Groups interested in participating in the scheme should contact their local City or County Childcare Committee for details.

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### Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association

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## Visit by Geseke Lundgren

We hope to have a visit next year from Geseke Lundgren, a very experienced Swedish Steiner Kindergarten teacher with a special interest in the six-year-old in the kindergarten, preparing for school and school readiness.

Geseke also works at the IASWECE office in Stockholm, with responsibility for co-ordinating partnerships, supporting projects, fundraising, and collaboration with other organizations.

If you would be interested in a talk or workshop with Geseke Lundgren, or an advisory visit from her, please contact the ISKA office.

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## "The Special Task of the Assistant" workshop

ISKA will be running this workshop hosted by Springhall Kindergarten in Tallaght in Dublin on Saturday 17 January 2009. It is being offered in recognition of the importance of the role of the assistant in the kindergarten. The facilitators are Ulrike Farnleitner and Karolina Wieczorek.

The workshop is recommended for all assistants currently working in Irish kindergartens, especially those who have never attended this workshop or who have no previous experience of Steiner early years education and childcare. Full details will be circulated and posted on the website shortly.

We will be running this workshop for assistants annually in September/October from now on. If you would like the workshop to be held in your area in September/October 2009, please contact the ISKA office.

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## Practical Guide to Developing Childcare Policies

This book and accompanying CD is designed to help childcare services to develop clear written policies. The book outlines what policies are needed and gives step-by-step guidelines as to how best to develop, implement and review these policies. The accompanying CD includes policy templates that can be amended by the user to suit the needs of their service. It costs €20 plus €3 p&p from [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie), Barnardos, Christchurch Square, Dublin 8.

ISKA also has available sample policy and procedure documents relevant to Steiner Kindergartens. Contact the ISKA office.

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## Community Groups as Employers

Many of the Irish Steiner Kindergartens are set up as voluntary community groups. One of the important responsibilities of the boards or committees governing these kindergartens is their role as employers.

The National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) is an organization set up to ensure that all employers comply with employment rights legislation and that all employees receive their entitlements. NERA is there to help both employers and employees with a free and impartial service primarily by telephone, email and written information guides.

NERA's information services staff can be contacted on 1890 80 80 90 between 9.30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, by email at [info@employmentrights.ie](mailto:info@employmentrights.ie), and their website is [www.employmentrights.ie](http://www.employmentrights.ie).

### 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.



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## Workshop Programme 2009

We are assembling our workshop programme for 2009, when we plan to offer 15 workshops nationally. Workshops are run on a request basis in partnership with a group/ individual. It is not necessary to be an ISKA member to host a workshop. Similarly we offer speakers for talks on a nationwide basis.

If you would like a talk or workshop in your area in 2009, please contact the ISKA office.

Possible topics include:

- + Speaking with the young child, creative discipline
- + Celebrating the seasons and festivals
- + Play and its importance
- + Making toys for young children
- + Felting for children and adults
- + Table puppets and plays
- + Working with wool
- + Doll making
- + Craftwork with children
- + Steiner Waldorf Approach to the care and education of the young child
- + Designing spaces for young children
- + Storytelling with children
- + Biodynamic/organic gardening and outdoor activities with children
- + Rhymes, songs, verses – how to write your own verses
- + Imitation as the basis for deepest learning
- + Reflective practice for teachers
- + Strategies to balance invasive technologies and media
- + Setting up a Steiner kindergarten
- + Eurythmy, music and the mood of the fifth in a Steiner Kindergarten
- + Creative music making with the young child
- + The importance of sleep
- + Benefit to children of delayed formal learning
- + Preparing for school – when is a child ready for formal learning?

**Go mbeannaí Dia atá faoin spéir,  
Mise, túsa, is an rang go léir!**

Translates roughly as:

*God Bless everything under the sky  
Me, you and the whole class.*

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## The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath can be a very simple and beautiful preparation throughout the four weeks before Christmas.

The wreath can be a very simple one of greenery and four candles. The first week, light one candle; the second week, two, and so on, every day at an appropriate time. A verse to accompany the lighting of the candles is below. Echoing the verse, the wreath can be decorated over the four weeks, starting with the first week, precious crystals, shells; the second week, moss, small plants or flowers; the third week, carved animal shapes, etc.

### Verse for Lighting the Advent Wreath

The first light of Advent is the light of the stones.  
That lives in the crystals, seashells, and bones.

The second light of Advent is the light of plants.  
That reach up to the sun and in the breezes dance.

The third light of Advent is the light of the beasts.  
Swimming, flying, leaping, running ... the greatest to the least.

The fourth light of Advent is the light of humankind.

The light of hope that we may learn to love and understand.

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## Kindling Journal

The Journal for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Care and Education is a UK publication, printed in spring and autumn.

Subscription (two issues): €19, inc p&p (or €21 including voluntary donation of €2.00 towards the International fund to support our work in underprivileged countries).

Subscribe by:

emailing your request, name and address to **info@steinerireland.org**

(you will be invoiced with your first copy), or

posting your request, including your name, address and email, together with a cheque, made out to ISKA, to the ISKA office.

**KINDLING**



The Journal for Steiner  
Waldorf Early Childhood  
Education, UK

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## Lifeways Ireland Ltd

Lifeways Ireland Limited is a Charity recognized by the Department of Education and Science as the Patron Body for Steiner National Schools in Ireland.

The board includes representatives from each of the State recognized schools, of which there are currently two, Mol an Oige in Ennistymon, Co. Clare and Raheen Wood Steiner National School, Tuamgraney, Co. Clare. Kildare Steiner School are considering making an application to the Department of Education and Science for recognition. The Chair of Lifeways is Pearse O'Shiel. Lifeways can be contacted on 061 927944.

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## Quality Assured Kindergartens

Three kindergartens have now achieved Quality Assured status under the ISKA "Sensing Quality", Quality Assurance programme. The quality assurance is connected both to the teacher and the place, therefore it is reviewed if a teacher leaves a kindergarten or a kindergarten changes premises. In situations where there are no changes, there is a review of the quality

assured status every three to five years. We would like to offer our warm congratulations to the three kindergartens:

- + Marguerite Devane, An Grianan Kindergarten at Raheen Wood Steiner National School, Co. Clare
- + Lucy Cox, Cois Coille Kindergarten at Raheen Wood Steiner National School, Co. Clare
- + Gail Thomas and Marijke McCartney, Cork Steiner Kindergarten, Cork city.

The updated Quality Assurance Self-evaluation workbook was distributed at this year's Conference. Use of the workbook can be the first step you take with the ISKA Quality Assurance Service in the quality assurance process, or a task you undertake yourself for your own information and development of your kindergarten. For a copy of the workbook, please contact the ISKA office. The workbooks are free to members and cost €5 including p&p to non-members.

For further details on the Quality Assurance Process or to book a Quality Assurance visit, contact the ISKA office, or Ulrike Farnleitner on 087 1247317.

# An Siopa Beag

**Environmentally friendly and ethically sourced products for the discerning shopper**



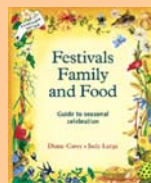
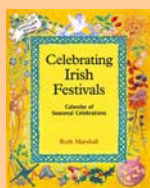
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## Report from IASWECE

The Council of the International Association of Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Educators met in October in Copenhagen, Denmark. Helle Heckmann was our host on behalf of the Danish Association. We met in the Forest Kindergarten in the city, on the coastline next to the North Sea.

Our Association is growing rapidly and we currently have 35 representatives, each committing to a 7-year term. Turkey, Israel and Brazil are our most recent members, joining us for the first time at this meeting.

Over our four-day conference we achieved quite a lot. Christopher Clouder spoke to us about the recent Educational Curriculum developments in Europe. He urges us to become actively involved in the European Council of Education and make heard our intentions for quality care of the young child. The world realizes that early education needs a qualitative difference from what has generally been on offer and Steiner principles are being sought and respected. Much emphasis is being placed on social and emotional curricula. Europe is looking to formulate what might be best for the modern child and we are delighted to enter this field more actively by participating directly with the European Council of Education.

Our study was facilitated by the highly respected Dr Renate Long-Breipohl from the Australian Association. We focused on lecture 6 from *The Child's Changing Consciousness* by Rudolf Steiner: how to cultivate gratitude in the child and ourselves as the foundation of the will to love and at a later stage the will to do one's duty, fulfil one's responsibilities. We took this issue in connection with teacher trainers and training curriculum areas. We are also working on a document, "What is Steiner Waldorf Education?", which will soon be available on our website [www.iaswece.org](http://www.iaswece.org).

Our next meeting will be in Norway in May 2009.

*Marguerite Devane – Kindergarten Teacher and Principal of Raheen Wood Steiner National School, Co Clare and Irish Representative to IASWECE*

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## New Initiatives

There are currently four new Steiner Kindergarten initiative groups nationally, at varying stages of development. There are two groups in Dublin, both at the stage of formalizing their legal status, constituting a Board of Management, etc.

Soupstone Kindergarten initiative is currently interviewing for a teacher with a view to opening a Steiner Kindergarten in Dublin in January 2009. Contact: [soupstone\\_kindergarten@yahoo.com](mailto:soupstone_kindergarten@yahoo.com).

Liberties Kindergarten initiative is working towards a kindergarten and after-school club in a new building in the Liberties area of Dublin. Contact: [steiner@dublin.ie](mailto:steiner@dublin.ie).

A group in Galway City is looking at the possibility of establishing a Kindergarten there. Contact: [musicalanne@gmail.com](mailto:musicalanne@gmail.com).

A small group in Co. Meath is looking at the level of interest in the area in a Steiner Kindergarten and possible school. Contact: [marinajude@gmail.com](mailto:marinajude@gmail.com).

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## The Wind

*Christina Rossetti*

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither I nor you;  
But when the leaves hang trembling  
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither you nor I;  
But when the trees bow down their heads  
The wind is passing by.

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## Tá an Nollaig ag teacht

Tá an Nollaig ag teacht  
Is gach gé ag éirí ramhar,  
I hata an tseanóra  
Cuir pingin mar cabhair.

Muna bhfuil agat pingin  
Tabhair leathphingin fiú  
Is má tá tú gan leathphingin  
Go mbeannaí Dia thú!

Go mbeannaí Dia atá faoin spéir,  
Mise, túsa, is an rang go léir!

## The Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association

ISKA is the representative body of Steiner Early Childhood Carers & Educators in Ireland. It was founded in 1992. The Association was formed out of a common wish to support and learn from each other and will continue to develop in that spirit.

### Aims:

- + To promote and support the development of Steiner Early Childhood Care & Education in Ireland.
- + To act as an effective representative body for professionals working in Steiner Early Childhood Care and Education.
- + To support and promote the provision of sessional, full daycare and other childcare and family support services of the highest quality as an integral part of a continuum of community care for children.
- + To establish and develop a range of training programmes for professional early years practitioners
- + To provide professional in-service training programmes for members
- + To work in collaboration with other organizations and agencies to promote high quality, affordable childcare services in the community.

**Membership of ISKA** is open to all those who subscribe to the aims of the Association and who are currently or have within the last three years been working professionally with young children.

**Associate Membership** is available for people who wish to identify themselves with the work of the Association and the development of Steiner early childhood care and education in Ireland. Associate Members will be invited to participate in workshops and conferences and will be kept informed of the work of the Association.

As a Member you will:

- + be a member of a recognized professional body
- + be represented at national and international level.
- + benefit from support of the ISKA office and staff

- + have discounted access to workshops and events
- + be supported in establishing local and regional networks
- + have access to specifically Irish PR material.

### Joining and Membership Renewal

If you would like to join ISKA or if you did not renew your membership at the Conference in October 2008, please complete the form below and return with your payment to the ISKA office, cheques payable to ISKA. Membership runs from September to September each year and falls due for renewal at the conference each year.

I would like to join/renew

**Full Membership** (€30)

**Associate Membership** (€15)

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Phone.....

Email.....

Occupation.....

Kindergarten/Childcare Facility

.....

Phone.....

email.....

I understand that membership of ISKA indicates my adherence to the statutory Pre-Schools Services Regulations, my support of the Aims of the Association and my acceptance of the Association's Quality Assurance Process.

Signed.....