

# Aarambh Waldorf School New Delhi

Newsletter for the month of October 2015



*"Waldorf Education is not a pedagogical system but  
an art,- the art of awakening what is actually there  
within the human being"*

## Message from the school-

As our Aarambh Family continues to grow with love and support and blessings of various mentors and the higher world, the 2015 session started with a new beginning, children from KG stepped into Grade 1 and this year we started Grade 3 as well.

Our teachers started their journey by attending a 5 day Anthroposophy and Waldorf Education Seminar organized by Aarambh, followed by a week-long training in Khandala, with Aban, Dilnawaz and other mentors.

After summer break, our teachers received guidance through classroom observations and learning under a mentor from Netherland, who visited the school for a few weeks. It was a wonderful experience for all.

Aarambh also welcomed a family from New Zealand who has three children and each of the children could go to various classes in our school. It was a joyful sharing and learning for our children and their family too.

The Parent Community support brings a learning experience for our children and to us adults too. Working together enables us to achieve things with joy and creates the atmosphere of warmth and love. Aarambh has an active parent community that meets regularly to take up responsibilities of the school and help it grow with each passing year.

At Aarambh we are welcoming children to kindergarten and grades and we are also reaching out to individuals who would like to support the school as teachers at Aarambh.

In the recent months we have been holding parent orientations once every month, when new and interested parents come and meet the teachers, understand a little more about the philosophy and see the school.

These parent orientations have been very interesting, as we understand a variety of questions that parents have and look forward to addressing them together. There is a list of upcoming parent orientations at the end of the newsletter.



*"Joy in living, a love for all existence-such are among the life-long results of a right cultivation of the feeling for beauty and art."*

## Teacher talk

I have been a volunteer and Waldorf teacher for almost a year, there are many things about Waldorf education that are making my journey as a teacher wonderful. I love the fact that children play so closely with nature. In fact, they are encouraged to be outdoors a lot, they play and learn so much by spending a good amount of time in nature.

With Waldorf, I realize we are simply reviving age old wisdom, our grandparents probably nurtured and raised our parents in the simplest of ways, and this is what we are trying to bring to our children at school too. The environment is so simple and close to nature it allows children to be relaxed and stress-free. Although teaching is all about children, through Waldorf I realize that a teacher is able to bring to the class what she experiences in her lesson herself. There is a lot of learning for me as well in this journey.

I have always wanted to be a teacher, I have taught my brother, sisters and cousins, and hence this next step to join Aarambh was the natural course. My father was a teacher. It was often said that if a topic is difficult, I would still be able to explain it and teach it well. This has always encouraged me to continue on the path of teaching.

Being a teacher at Aarambh has brought great joy as it is taking steps closer to my dream. I am a part of a joint family with a lot of responsibilities, I knew well, that taking up teaching, would mean taking additional responsibility. But since this is what I always wanted to do, it seems easy to make time to build my journey here.

Teaching is not always easy and involves a lot of hard work and preparation, but when I hear children talking about the subject that I have taught them, singing songs or enthusiastically participating that gives me a sense of fulfillment. It makes all the hard work worth the while.

The school and school work keeps me at peace, and it helps me forget any stress that I maybe having otherwise.

*-Anjali Teacher, Teacher at Aarambh Waldorf School*



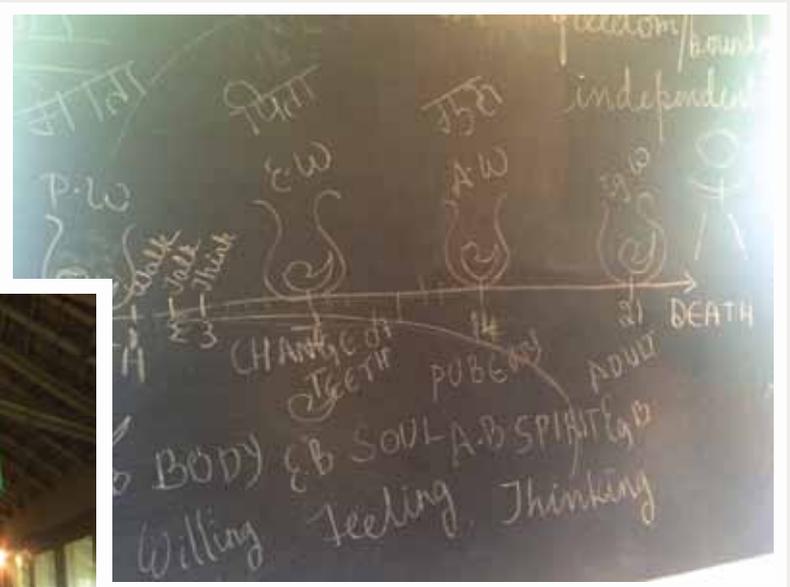
## Workshop/Orientation experience

In today's age of over-information and limited community engagement, finding relevant parenting advice is a huge challenge. In my opinion, availability of multitude of parenting books and websites has mostly increased the confusion, while taking us away from the intuitiveness required for parenting. It was this emphasis on our inherent parenting intuitiveness that was the highlight of Mr. Manivannan's 5 day workshop.

We went into this workshop with a number of parenting related questions. It suffices to say that as the workshop progressed, not only most of our questions were addressed thoroughly, but our understanding of the basic principles of Waldorf education also increased immensely. Manivannan Sir's workshop allowed us to understand and appreciate the intuitiveness required for parenting, which entails slowing down and listening to the child, recognizing the importance of imitation and self improvement, maintaining a daily rhythm, and learning to avoid the urge of intellectually engaging with the child.

Mr. Manivannan is a natural orator, teacher and singer. He uses some very interesting personal anecdotes to compliment the Waldorf theory sessions and has the capacity to spellbind his audience through his wonderful narration of songs and stories. It's been a genuine pleasure to know such a great soul.

*-Gaurav Sharma, parent at Aarambh Waldorf School,  
Daddy to 3 year old Sohum*



*"Waldorf Education places the development of the individual child in the focal point, convinced that the healthy individual is a prerequisite for a healthy society."*

## Parent talk

Last year in April we moved to Delhi from London. My son Zahir was 3 years old and excited about the move. He had been attending a Waldorf school close to where we lived and I was keen for him to carry on in the Waldorf tradition. While doing online research for potential schools in Delhi, I was extremely happy to come across Aarambh. I didn't know a Waldorf school existed in Delhi. I wrote to them and explained our situation. The teacher was very welcoming and a place was reserved for my son.

After arriving, we had the orientation session with other interested parents and then we started the individual settling in sessions. They were going well and Zahir was enjoying the new school space. After a few weeks, due to a small incident at school where my son bumped his head on the floor, I decided to pull him out and instead enroll him in one of Delhi's top pre-schools that follows the Montessori approach. For the next month, I watched my child throw tantrums every day, cry a lot, not listen to anything I said and become a completely different person. As I tried to settle Zahir into his new school, sitting with him for four hours every day, hoping he would stay there by himself I realized what a horrific mistake I had made. My son belonged in a Waldorf school and no other style of education would be right for him. I called his teacher at Aarambh and explained to her what a mistake I had made. She was extremely understanding and once again very welcoming. Zahir started back the next day and was settled at Aarambh within three days. His tantrums stopped and I got my son back.

What struck me the most about Waldorf education was the lack of orders. Instinctively, we think in order to protect children or teach them about the world, we must tell them what to do all the time.

At Aarambh the teachers don't give any orders. Instead they lead by example and by establishing daily rhythms. For example instead of telling the child to go wash their hands before meal time, the teacher will lead all the children to the bathroom, wash her hands first and then simply start washing the children's hands one by one. This action is repeated every day without giving orders. Over time, the teacher doesn't have to accompany them. At each meal time, be it at home or school the children go and wash their hands themselves before sitting down. I have tried to adopt this approach of leading by example at home as well with Zahir and it certainly works better than telling him what to do all the time. The other reason why I chose the Waldorf way is because each child is treated specially for the unique being that he or she is and encouraged to develop into the person that they are. I have seen this in the way teachers at Aarambh communicate with the children and know the habits, likes and dislikes of each child in the school. But, I think the main reason why I chose to send my son to Aarambh is because at some level I had a desire to change my own parenting style, to learn how to be more connected with my son and because the traditional way of parenting wasn't working for me. So this is as much of a learning journey for me as it is for my son.

Through the parent teacher meetings held once a month and regular interactions with the teacher over the past eighteen months, I have developed better ways of communicating with my child, understanding his needs better and reflecting upon my own reactions. The most surprising change I have observed has been in my husband, who was a sceptic at first, but is now a true believer. So much so that on most days he is the one telling me, "we can't do that, that won't be very Waldorf now will it!"

*-Seema Siddiqui, parent at Aarambh Waldorf School, mama of 4.5 year old Zahir*



## Other Events

Handwork and craft activities not only serve to educate children or adults about nature and processes involved with the different materials, the use of tools and equipment, etc., but there is also inherent the therapeutic aspect from which the pupils benefit.

Aarambh welcomes children and adults for various craft workshops throughout the year at school. We usually send all of our interested parents and friends an update of our upcoming workshop, drop us an email on [trainings.aarambhdelhiwaldorf@gmail.com](mailto:trainings.aarambhdelhiwaldorf@gmail.com) to get regular updates about events at the school

## Understanding Waldorf

The three forms of imitation

This morning I saw kindergarten children watching two workmen building a fence. I just know that for days after this those children will play carpenters and be hammering and pretending to build fences and working just like those workmen did. The children were just sitting there all watching every movement, every gesture of the workmen. The best stimulus for children's play is being around to watch adults do real work.

Simple material is one thing, and another quality that is needed for children to play well is an orderliness and a focus in the life around them, or else their play becomes something very wild. The child lives strongly in the limbs. Early childhood is really an education of the limbs, how to not just be playing about, but how to be focused and directed in their lives, in their limbs. What nurtures children's play the most is when adults are doing real work in front of the child, cooking, sewing, making things out of wood, -focused, purposeful work. If we had all been sitting here sewing dolls, the little children who were running around before would have settled down immediately and play. When little children hear grown-ups talking grown up talk – they tend to start running around. Then one has a more problem, the more they run around, the more they run around.

In a Waldorf kindergarten, we work very much on this principle of imitation and I would like to give you a few examples that might help to explain it. When children are able to watch people cooking, washing, cleaning, building, they take these gestures right into themselves and it is a wonderful stimulus for their play. They imitate the adult who is at work on three different levels. On the one hand, some of them want to come and do the work with you when possible. Very often in my kindergarten when the children were playing I might be sewing a marionette for a little play or making dolls. Some children will come to me and say, "What are you doing?" Let me do it too". And they want to be right by my side doing exactly what I do. So in the kindergarten we always make sure we have enough materials on hand that if I'm sewing and the children want to sew, there's plenty of cloth in the sewing basket around.

Another form of imitation is that they would go into their playhouses and take care of their dolls, or perhaps I am baking and in their playhouses, you suddenly see them baking bread. The work of the adult is a very important complement to the play of the child.

Now these are obvious levels of imitation, but there's also a much subtler level. It's the most invisible and probably the most important level of imitation. When adults are doing real work, children not only imitate that work, they also imitate the inner mood of concentration in that work as well as the love we bring to our work, and they translate into play. That is if I am nervous or upset while doing my work, the children will become nervous or upset too. If I am calm and peaceful you can imagine how calm and peaceful the children will be. They will be able to settle down deeply into their play. That is imitation. When cars are rushing about and people are going, there's a lot of excitement in the air for children, children will feel easily agitated. The distraction reflects in their behavior in negative ways.

In my own kindergarten I saw over and over that if I am busy but in a superficial way, I would do a little bit here and then do a little bit there, then I would go and do a little bit here and then a little bit there, my children were more or less all right but they never settled deeply in their play. They would play a little bit here and a little bit there and a little bit there and a little bit there, never deep in their play. But when I was taking up my work, the cooking, the cleaning, the washing, the artistic work also of the kindergarten in a concentrated way through always with my ears wide open to the sounds of the kindergarten, then the children will settle deep into their play.

One of the things we see in America and in Europe is that the children see less and less real work going on in their home. More and more is done by machines, or for instance, for dinner something that comes out of the freezer goes into the microwave. The children never see any cooking, any washing, any work and it affects their play. It's much harder for them to play if they don't see real work going on around them.

What kind of work does a teacher do in a Waldorf Kindergarten? Each season of the year, each month of the year, gives us different opportunities for work. In the kindergarten in the Philippines for instance, the teachers had just harvested the rice and the children were about to do many activities with the rice, threshing the rice, cooking the rice and hearing stories and songs about rice. So that which lives in nature around the child enters the kindergarten in many forms. But one of the forms is through the work that goes on in the kindergarten.

I would like to give you an example from my kindergarten, where we did not have rice growing near us, but we had wheat. So at the beginning of our school year, the wheat was ready and we had a big basket of wheat growing in our stalks. The children would help me take the head of the wheat out and put them on the table. Then we would use little pieces of wood from branches, from trees and on table and go like this to the wheat and all the little wheat kernels would pop out of the head of the wheat.

Now you have the wheat on the table and you have the chaff, the soft part that you don't want to eat that was around the wheat. Every child is different, and so at this point you see that some children like to sit there and pick out the wheat from the chaff one kernel by kernel and put it in a little dish for you. Other children want to get rid of the chaff by blowing, but that makes too much of dust in the air. So we gather up the chaff and the wheat and put it in a big basket that we take outside and then you winnow it, you hold the basket and throw the wheat and the chaff up in the air and the wind blows the soft chaff away.

We have this big basket of wheat in the beginning and now we perhaps have a bowl of wheat like this and then we begin to grind the wheat. We can use stone grinder or little coffee mill to grind the wheat into flour. Then we take our flour and we bake. We have to add some extra flour for its not very much and then we can bake a big loaf of bread and invite the parents to come and join us for a harvest festival. To make the festival more special we can churn butter and make butter to go with that bread. Then we can take apples or grapes, which are in the season to press them to make our own juice.

By the time we have our festival the children have a strong relationship to the harvest and to the foods and a real love and gratitude for them and that's important for the children that they feel this heartfelt connection to all that lives around them and not just take it for granted.

During the morning after play time we have what we call the circle time when we do lots of songs and verses and movement. So this harvest can also take place in our circle time. All through the year we have work like that with nature, and songs and verses to accompany the work.

*-Taken from 'Toward Creativity and Humanity' by Joan Almon*

## Orientation Information and other important dates

We usually hold parent orientations once every month where interested parents can come for an hour and meet the teachers at Aarambh, understand more about the philosophy and see the school on these dates. The orientation is usually on a Saturday, from 10-11 am. Following are the tentative dates for the next parent orientations at Aarambh:

- 21st November, 2015
  - 19 December, 2015
  - 23 January, 2016
  - 20 February, 2016
  - 19 March, 2016
- Winter Fair – 1st November, 2015
  - Mandala Weaving with Julia – 1st November, 2015
  - Eurythmy Performance - 28th January, 2016
  - Talk by mentors on Anthroposophy on 30th January, 2016

**AARAMBH WALDORF SCHOOL BRINGS**

# Aarambh WINTER FAIR

FUNDRAISER

SUNDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2015  
11AM - 7.30PM

ENTRY FEE INR 50 PER PERSON  
CHILDREN BELOW 12 YRS FREE

DAY LONG  
FUN - GAMES - WALDORF CRAFTS -  
ORGANIC HANDMADE ECO FRIENDLY PRODUCTS -  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS - GOURMET FOOD - LIVE MUSIC

VENUE: AARAMBH WALDORF SCHOOL,  
2 A/9, A BLOCK, SHANTI KUNJ, CHURCH ROAD,  
BEHIND D3 BLOCK, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI  
PARKING SPACE WITH ATTENDANTS  
CONTACT: MEGHA 09810241270, NIRUPAMA 09811414429

**List of Activities**

RECYCLED CRAFTS  
FINGER KNITTING  
PUPPET SHOW  
MANDALA WEAVING  
QUILLING  
STORY TELLING ..and more

West African Drum Jam | Live Music

Sunbird organic and handcrafted | Sunbird Clothing | Natural Art n craft supply | Mandala Weaving with JULIA

Ekalavya Publication | Handmade Toys | Quillkaari paper love

The Happy Cook | Juice Bar | Holy Cow Foundation

Raw Rasoi | Naani ki Chaat | Daddy's Pizza

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