

# The Making of an Environmentalist in Waldorf Schools

## Waldorf educators know ...

**by cultivating a personal relationship with the Earth and her resources,  
young people can develop into genuine environmentalists.**

Waldorf students are engaged in experiential learning that fosters their potential to be thoughtful, caring, and active stewards of the Earth. Waldorf schools work with an awareness of where all things originate as gifts from the Earth: paper from trees; crayons from bees, color from plants, and so on. The teachers lead students in daily practice of remembering these gifts with gratitude and in exercising care for how the Earth's resources are used. This builds inner habits that prepare the children for being environmentalists on the deepest levels.

- Waldorf students have direct experiences with the many resources of the Earth: minerals for painting, wool for knitting, clay for sculpting, metal for blacksmithing, silk for puppetry and artwork, wood for play and crafts and building.
- Waldorf students work with what Nature provides: baking bread, dipping beeswax candles, dying with flowers, drying laundry in the sun and wind, building projects with straw bale or lumber; planting trees as a community service.
- Waldorf students are challenged to work with Earth's forces: fire building in chemistry and outdoor education, gardening in her many climates, boating in her waters, hiking her hills and trails.
- Waldorf students study Nature in simple stories and complex experiments: its rocks and chemicals, its puddles and plant forms, its animals and peoples, its clouds and stars.

When they have experienced all of this and formed personal relationships with the Earth, the Waldorf students learn about the ways in which the Earth is threatened and how they can take action to help: recycle trash; tread lightly when in the wild; bring awareness to their energy use and purchases; educate others; identify problems and imagine solutions. To this imagination they bring a deep feeling for the Earth that has been cultivated during their Waldorf years.

## ***Inspired Learning***

Waldorf schools strive to co-exist in a deeply felt, right relationship with the Earth. By practicing environmental sustainability, they model a way of living that enhances the students' inner practice.