

Detroit Waldorf School

Strategic Plan Update 2010-2013

In the spring and summer of 2007 the Detroit Waldorf School community worked to create a detailed strategic plan that would serve the school for the next three years, from 2007 – 2010. This strategic plan has served as a guide for many changes and developments across the school, especially in the administrative area, for the past three years. However, the impact of the economic downturn was not anticipated in the creation of the strategic plan and the resulting financial challenges that the school faced meant that some areas, particularly development, were only partially implemented during the time.

Therefore, the Board and College of the Detroit Waldorf School decided in spring of 2010, that rather than carry out a full community process to complete a new three year strategic plan a more limited process of board and college review would be used to create a two-year extension that would be designed to provide a guide for the school for the coming two years to help ensure that the goals of the original 2007-10 strategic plan could be completed.

This document focuses on the areas of the original plan that still need to be completed. Some areas of the original plan have been superseded by events – such as the implementation of the Sustainable Tuition Program which means that financial aid decisions are made differently than originally called for in the 2007 plan. It is anticipated that a full community strategic planning process will take place in the 12-13 school year to create a new five year plan for the school.

Next Steps in finalizing this plan:

- A. the document will be shared with the College and Board for comments at the October 14th meeting
- B. The document will be shared with the full school community for comment and input from October 16th – October 30th.
- C. The document will return to the Board for approval at the November Board meeting (with changes based on the community input).

Detroit Waldorf School Governance Component

Introduction and Overview

Governance at the Detroit Waldorf School provides the structure upon which all other aspects of the work of the school is completed. Governance was a primary focus of the 2007-10 Strategic Plan, and by far the majority of the work called for in that plan has been accomplished by the school community. Over the coming two years it is essential that this focus and prioritization of strong and functional governance structures continue.

Definition and Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities

It is essential to the strength of the School that everyone involved has a full and complete understanding of both his/her own and all others' roles within the school, and that those roles be clearly defined. The need for understanding and clarity is especially important when it comes to responsibility for administrative tasks. Over the past three years we have clearly delineated the majority of the roles in the administrative, teaching and parent areas. We need to increase clarity for board members and leadership. In addition, a regular renewal of mandates is needed at this time.

Redefinition of Administration Roles

We call for the review and revision (if needed) of the administrative roles of the Board President and membership using the five (5) components set forth in this Strategic Plan:

- Create new job description for the Board President that incorporates the active support of a culture of care and attentiveness in the school (discussed below), including but not limited to effective and timely problem solving and appropriate attentive communication.

Clarify the roles of the Administrator and the College with relation to the hiring /firing of faculty to the extent that the school must be in compliance with ISACS Standard of Membership E3.

- Update the job descriptions and/or committee mandates to reflect clarification of the responsibilities for hiring and firing of faculty.

Review and/or Create Mandates for Each Governing Body in the School

Each governing body in the School needs to regularly review its mandate and responsibilities in conjunction with the Strategic Plan components and the new

administrative job descriptions discussed above. If necessary, mandates should be revised or created. Each mandate must include:

- Clearly set forth responsibilities and processes for prompt and responsive decision-making.
- A commitment to and understanding of the culture of care and attentiveness being strengthened throughout the school.
- A clearly identified “go to” contact for the Community.
- An easily understood updated statement of the governing body’s mandate that must be provided to the Board before January 1, 2012. The Board must approve these mandates prior to the All Community Meeting in the new year to facilitate distribution of these statements to all Community members.
- The Administrative Council should recognize the importance of prompt and careful decision-making that is transparent to the whole community.

Continued Strengthening of the Governance Role of the Board

An effective Board is essential to the health of the Community. We call for the continued action from the Board to enhance its effectiveness and transparency:

- Review and strengthen Board internal development committee and increase attention to board member development
- Review and amend (if necessary) Board Committee mandates.
- Support the active work throughout the school of all the Board Committees: Enrollment/Outreach, Development, Finance and Building and Grounds
- Reiterate and communicate the fact that all Board meetings are open to the Community.
- Continue to ensure that the profile of the Board and its members throughout the School is high including but not limited to: (1) posting pictures of all Board members on the downstairs bulletin board and on the website; (2) providing easy access to the Board President; (3) creating a greater presence at School events; and, (4) providing a monthly column to *Through the Gate*.
- Commit to the Board’s term limits imposed by the By-laws.

- Continue to report to the Community on a regular basis in *Through the Gate*.
- Review and revise the By-laws of the Board to support Strategic Plan and School needs.
- Develop a multi-year financial plan that includes an analysis of: the Sustainable Tuition program, benchmarking of faculty salaries and benefits, appropriate balance of fund raising and tuition as an income source, and prioritizes maintenance needs
- Articulate in the Board of Trustee's bylaws the effective boundaries between the policy-making role of the Board and the role of the Administrator and College for day to day operations of the school.

Continued Strengthening of the Community Awareness of the College

As with the Board the Community needs a clear understanding of the role and membership of the College. We call for the College to:

- Review and amend (if necessary) all College Committee mandates as described above.
- Continue to report to the Community on a regular basis in *Through the Gate*.
- Continue to ensure that the profile of the College and its members is high throughout the school including but not limited to: (1) posting pictures of all College members on the downstairs bulletin board and on the website; (2) providing easy access to the College Chair; (3) creating a greater presence at School events; and, (4) providing a monthly column in *Through the Gate*.
- Create a better understanding of the role of the College, by clarifying their administrative role in community decision-making during the New Family/Parent orientation.

Communication Improvements

Over the past three years a significant amount of work has been done to enhance and strengthen the school's communicative capacity – both internally and to the wider Detroit Community. The continuation of this work during the coming two years is essential.

Mission, Vision and Value Statements

The schools needs a single coherent statement of its mission, vision and values

- Consolidate the language for mission, vision and value statements in to a single mission statement that succinctly addresses why the school exists as a Waldorf School Detroit.

Essential Communication Documents

To provide parents and the Community as a whole with easy access to necessary information, we call for the following document to be kept up to date and available to the school community:

- A conflict resolution process memorialized in a flow chart.
- A written list of the appropriate go-to person for each body in the school, complete with contact information.
- A Parent Handbook.
- An Employee Handbook.
- A diagram and brief summary of the school structure and decision-making responsibilities.
- A diagram and brief summary of the leadership roles of different individuals within the school. This diagram and summary should be designed to clarify responsibilities of the administrative office staff, College, Faculty, and Board.
- Explore developing use of social media – twitter, facebook and other applications – in a sustainable way to increase the reach of our outreach efforts
- A list containing contact information and preferences for all Faculty and Staff.

<h3>Support for Development of a Parent Organization</h3>
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A strong and committed parent body is essential to our school. We believe that the appropriate vehicle for channeling and supporting such a parent body is an active Parent Organization. Over the past three years significant process towards a strong Parent Organization has been made, with a formal structure now in place. We call for:

- Continuing to hold two (2) to three (3) parent social events during the year, at least one event for parents only (no children).

- Actively recruiting parents for school committees and organizations.
- Support the newly formed Parent Organization through interaction with both the Board and the College

Necessary Internal Supports and Structure
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Leadership at the Detroit Waldorf School is supported by internal policies, procedures and structures. Throughout the past three years there has been significant progress towards clarifying these supports, and infusing the school with a culture of care and attentiveness. It is important that these efforts continue as we move forward. This work includes:

Continued Strengthening of a Culture of Care and Attentiveness

- Ongoing faculty meeting discussions around creating, promoting, and supporting a culture of care and attentiveness.
- Coordination with the class parents to spread this culture throughout the parent community.
- Ongoing efforts to ensure the transparency of decision-making and communication regarding decisions.
- Actively seeking to create a warm connection between parents and administration, including regular welcoming of families at the gate, high presence of administration at school events, and a commitment to relationship building.
- Continued and expanding use of the Parent Section of the website to ensure that parents are well informed and information is shared in a timely manner.

Clarity around Professionalism and Confidentiality

Professionalism from the Faculty and Staff to the Community, appropriate setting of boundaries, and protecting confidential information about particular students, families and/or community members is always a challenge for Waldorf schools because community members often have multiple roles in the school (e.g. teacher and parent; Board member and parent). DWS is no exception. Decisions within the school are often made in a highly public context, yet may relate to individuals' lives and privacy. Many of the difficult issues that cause parents to disengage with the school lie in this area. Therefore we call for continued commitment to the following:

- Faculty focus on professionalism and discretion. The Faculty should work toward creating a culture of trust among colleagues so that “dirty laundry” is not aired in ways that burdens others in our Community.
- Increased transparency within, and accessibility to, decision-making structures in the School.
- Faculty discussion and delineation of clear professional and pedagogical roles and responsibilities.
- A school wide discussion on the importance of confidentiality and how to work with it in a caring community.
- Creation of a Faculty wide consciousness of what it means to speak for the school and how to do that well.

Detroit Waldorf School

Enrollment Component

Introduction and Overview

Strong enrollment is the key component of the financial and community health of the Detroit Waldorf School. The economic downturn of the past three years has significantly challenged enrollment in the school, and preserving current students while growing new enrollment, especially in the Early Childhood Center is essential.

Retention of Current Students

To retain our current students it is essential that the School works to provide the best possible experience for all families throughout the School. This experience is made up of many interactions and events, some of which we can directly positively impact. We need to constantly and consistently reinforce the reasons that originally made families choose to enroll at DWS so that they are confident walking through the grades and eager to share the message of the School with others who might be potential community families. In addition, families are more likely to feel a connection to the school and continue in the Community when they have warm, informative, and constant contact with the class teacher. The guidelines laid out below are designed to ensure that families are supported in their involvement at DWS and therefore supported in continued enrollment.

Parent Education through the Grades Designed to Support Continued Enrollment

When parents enroll their children at DWS most only partially understand the depth of the curriculum, the pedagogy supporting it, and how it is developmentally presented. Even Waldorf educated parents begin to lose sight of the brilliance in the curriculum over time. It is essential that DWS educate families on the curriculum and the ways in which the School appropriately meets the needs of its students. Understanding child development and the way Waldorf curriculum is designed to bring information to children will reinforce to families why they chose to send their children to this School, and, by offering educational opportunities about Waldorf's philosophies and strategies for raising healthy children, we offer additional value to the families' lives. Therefore we call for the following:

- Two grade-specific parent education meetings around topics relevant for specific grades, such as reading in grades one (1) and two (2), adolescence in grade five (5), and mathematics in grade six (6). These discussions should show parents how each grade's curriculum feeds into and creates the basis for a future grade's curriculum.
- A parent education section of *Through the Gate* that includes articles on relevant topics.

- Distribution of *Renewal* to all parents.
- Continuation of events (conference, film series, parent education evenings, etc) with a conscious decision to select topics that support parent education and development.
- Inclusion of alumni updates in the monthly newsletter.
- Continue the new parent orientation, to include organizational information about the school.
- Continue the requirement for applicants to attend a tour. The content of the tour should be very concrete, specific and pedagogically-based. It should also include an overview of the grades' curriculum.
- Continue to hold Strategic Alignment Meetings with all families, new and returning. Update the content each year to include aspects of the history and pedagogy of the school; and each year include strategic plan updates and a budget overview.
- Continue to improve communication with parents:
 - Keep the website updated so that all possible content distributed to parents is available on-line
 - Utilize the automated phone system to keep parents up to date of events, meetings, etc.
- Organized distribution of essential class information by all class teachers each year, including main lesson block schedules, and suggested home/family activities that can supplement or reinforce the Waldorf curriculum for each grade.
- Further development of the Parent Organization with a focus on ensuring that parent needs in this area are met.

Family Support in times of Financial Challenge or Crisis

When families face difficult financial times they are particularly vulnerable to making a decision to leave the School, especially if they feel uncomfortable about requesting financial assistance. Over the past three years, the Sustainable Tuition program now in place throughout the school has made us much more capable of responding to family needs, both during the enrollment process, and when changes in financial situation occur during the school year. We need to ensure that the Sustainable Tuition program continues to grow and develop with an awareness of parent needs, and a consciousness of the need to ensure that the school is sustainable. We call for:

- Ensuring that all families receive the full sustainable tuition packet with ample time for completion of paperwork before the re-enrollment deadline.
- Include user friendly sustainable tuition information in the Parent Handbook and all registration materials.
- Include a reference to the availability of tuition assistance in all outreach/recruitment materials.
- Directly ask families who are not reenrolling whether further tuition assistance would help them make a decision to stay.
- Review all materials, including contracts, to ensure that a philosophy of community support and responsibility is present throughout.
- Implement and maintain flexible and liberal tuition assistance policies for all families, especially for those who have been with the school for at least one year.
- Ensuring that parents continue to participate in the Sustainable Tuition and Adjustment conversations as conversationalists.
- Renew a commitment to ensuring that all personal family data is held in the highest confidentiality and communicating the policies that protect this data to the community.
- Hold exit interviews to best understand what motivated a family to not return to the school.

Recruitment of New Students

Outreach to new families is essential for the continued growth of the School. It is important that we continue to pay a great deal of attention to this administrative area.

Expansion of the Early Childhood Center

The Early Childhood Center is the place from which the school grows and establishes both financial and community stability for the full DWS Community. To support full and healthy individual grades we need to:

- Expand the Early Childhood Center to three kindergarten classes, providing a total of 20 – 25 children who are likely to be ready for first grade each year.

- Continue to support the Parent-Tot position in the Early Childhood Center supporting a variety of play groups, parent study groups and infant-parent programs.
- Continued study of comparable local preschool programs and monitoring to ensure that our programs stay competitive in all areas including program, pricing and schedule.

Parent Involved Outreach

Parents who have excellent experiences with the School will tell their friends, thus spreading the word about DWS throughout the wider community. This is the heart of a parent-ambassador program and essential to our enrollment outreach. What follows here is a non-exhaustive list of the tools that parents will need to spread the word about our wonderful School:

- A small business-sized card or tri-fold with key information about the school and contact information.
- Continue to keep outreach focused pages on the website to provide information to potential families.
- Monthly events at the school designed for parents to invite visitors, guests, and prospective families to show off the school in its best light.
- Relevant publicity materials such as bumper stickers, lawn signs, t-shirts, etc.
- Ensuring that parents and board members are present at outreach events to communicate their connection to and involvement in the community life of the school.
- Parent participating at booths and festivals where the school is advertising.

Marketing Plan

The process of advertising is costly, and does more to improve name recognition than actually bring in enrollment, as approximately 70% of our enrollment comes by word of mouth. We are committed to:

- Continuing to maximize our print advertising dollars, by doing joint ads with the Waldorf schools in southeast Michigan, for metro-wide publications.

- Partnering with at least one like-minded magazine: Edible Wow. This will be evaluated on a yearly basis to determine if it brings enrollment, as after the first year it did not.
- Continuing monthly emails to prospective parents designed to increase their interest in and connection to the school
- Continued issuing of press releases, and development of key press contacts, to generate free publicity. The focus will be to continue in this route, to promote more publicity without financial resources, with an eye to building “name recognition” and relationships with press so that they want to write about us.
- We will continue to evaluate which publications are the best value and most effective for helping to establish name recognition.
- Marketing materials developed over the past three years as part of the strategic plan will be kept current and updated as appropriate to ensure that they continue to speak to the wider community.
- Use appropriate and current social networking sites, as available.

Outreach to Potential New Students

We need to continue to maximize the use of our financial resources by appealing directly to families who are open to our message. We suggest that continue to focus our outreach in the following areas:

- Establish enrollment goals for the coming three years – 125 students in 2010-11; 130 in 2011-12 and 135 in 2012-13.
- Seek out potential families with children in like-minded institutions and groups within twenty (20) miles of DWS, including Montessori preschools, alternative medical centers, le leche league chapters, home and doula birth centers, Family YMCAs, progressive churches, etc.
- Collaborate with institutions and organizations that share our goals. These collaborations should be individually and creatively tailored, depending on the resources/needs of the like-minded organization, but should be used to develop interconnection and wider exposure within Detroit and the near suburbs.
- Continue targeted and strategic advertising in a wide variety of relevant local publications, catalogs, programs and magazines.

- Continue to develop connections with the local media to become a respected resource for programs related to children, education, and education opportunities in the area.

Changes in Outreach Events

Community Outreach was expanded dramatically during the original three years of the strategic plan. In the 2009-10 school year there was a carefully planned expansion in the arena of community involvement and bringing people to the school. Over 900 people participated in outreach events, over half of whom were not previously connected to DWS. This type of community involvement needs to continue to feed continued enrollment growth. We suggest:

- Continued expansion of events to draw community members to the school with an intention to expand attendance by at least 100 individuals per year, but most importantly, to refine the attendance to those most likely to enroll.
- Ongoing evaluation of which events received the most participation and created the most partnerships – and building upon those successes.
- Continuing to look for new ideas and new partners, especially those that connect us more securely to Detroit innovation and development.
- The cultivation of parent volunteers to support these events is essential as our reduced administrative staff cannot manage the expansion alone.
- Continued commitment to making sure the events are sustainable, both financially and human resource-wise.
- Continue to distribute the packet of materials that each visiting family receives at the conclusion of any open house or outreach event at the school.
- Ongoing training of all open house and enrollment event volunteers (including parents, Faculty, Board Members and administration staff) to support them in the role of warmly reaching out and accurately informing people about the School.

Detroit Waldorf School Curriculum Component

Introduction and Overview

Over the past three years the curriculum and program of the Detroit Waldorf School has been deeply affected by the transition to combined classes. These combinations have offered both challenges and opportunities across the curriculum, and during the coming two years the key responsibility of the college is to continually evaluate and reflect upon the best way to deliver the full Waldorf curriculum to all the children in the grade-school classrooms.

Curriculum/Program

The curriculum is the heart of a Waldorf School. Waldorf education centers on approaching children as developing human beings with particular needs and abilities at particular ages. Waldorf education is also committed to developing the entire human being in all areas: intellectual, emotional, social, and physical skills and strengths. At the Detroit Waldorf School we have a strong history over our forty (40) years of offering a complete and spirited Waldorf curriculum.

Oversight of Combined Class Curriculum Delivery

The currently combined classes present some unique challenges and opportunities for the faculty, students and school community. To ensure that we continue to deliver the highest quality Waldorf education in this configuration we must:

- Annually review thoroughly what has been more effective and what has been less effective about the curricular modifications implemented for combined classes at each specific grade
- Annually review thoroughly what has been more effective and what has been less effective about the curricular modifications implemented for combined classes at each specific curriculum area
- Annually invite and review thoroughly parent input about what has been more effective and what has been less effective about the curricular modifications implemented for combined classes.
- Collaborate to develop a new educational plan, including curricular scope and sequence, so as to address the weaknesses identified in the combined class review

- Bring congruence between scope and sequence document and classroom practices
- Prepare for one day re-accreditation site visit in March 2012 to review our documentation and evaluation of the combined classes
- Regularly prioritize which topics can be taught in combination and which are better taught in individual grade groupings.

Curriculum Focus Areas

The Detroit Waldorf School exists to provide children with the full depth and breadth of a Waldorf curriculum. Families send their children to the school to provide them with this unique and wonderful education. This section of the Strategic Plan sets forth the areas in the curriculum that continue to merit growth.

- **Singing.** We currently have no specialist in the art of singing and do not offer any formal chorus. We want to offer a formal chorus to students in grades four (4) through eight (8).
- **Math.** We need to expand our capacity to meet the needs of children with various abilities and skills in math, especially in the upper grades. This expansion of our math program should be coordinated among the teachers as a School response rather than left to each individual class teacher. This is particularly important in light of the combined classes
- **Languages.** We have a continued commitment to offering two languages from first through eighth grade. In the 2010-11 school year we will return to offering both Spanish and German, and will work to ensure that both programs are strong and meet the needs of the children.
- **Gardening.** Our gardening program needs to be more consciously integrated into the curriculum of all the school grades.
- **Woodwork.** We are committed to finding cost-effective ways to continue to offer woodwork in the upper grades.
- **Resource Program.** In recent years our resource program has been limited due to staff limitations. We want to ensure we can meet all of the needs of the children in the School.

Early Childhood Center Curriculum Evaluation

The Early Childhood Center underwent a significant change in structure during the 2009-10 school year with the creation of a separate grouping for children expected to attend First Grade in the coming year, with additional activities and experiences. We are

committed to a three year evaluation process to decide if this structure serves the children, the parents and the school well.

- We will hold a annual spring review and evaluation, in the college, of the success of the Early Childhood Center program over the ending school year – with a goal to ensure that our program stays both competitive and supportive of the children.
- Annual evaluation of whether forecast enrollment numbers will support the addition of a third kindergarten class
- Ongoing commitment to ensuring that the physical setting for the Early Childhood Center supports the implementation of the curriculum.

Aftercare Program

Prospective parents are very interested in the quality of and activities offered in our Aftercare Program. Therefore, we must offer an Aftercare Program that is dynamic and integrated into the Waldorf curriculum. We call for the following:

- Hire a Waldorf trained teacher to design, develop, and run the Aftercare Program.
- Provide a mentor to the Aftercare teacher to ensure that the aftercare curriculum is integrated into the Waldorf curriculum and fully supports the needs of the children and their families.
- Conduct annual surveys of parents to determine their level of satisfaction with the Aftercare Program.

Teacher Support and Development Plan

The teachers are the very center of the Detroit Waldorf School and their continued growth, development and health must be strongly supported.

Mentoring and Evaluation

DWS currently has a strong, well functioning mentor system. The goal for the next two years is to maintain this high quality mentoring program as needed. We call for:

- Expansion of the mentoring program throughout the school as needed.

- Continuing the relationship with The Waldorf Institute of Southeastern Michigan which is currently providing teacher education and teacher mentoring throughout the school
- Ensure the implementation of the plan for consistent, ongoing evaluation of the Faculty members.
- Strengthening and evaluating the use of peer visits throughout the school.
- Increase the number of Faculty members who have the opportunity to observe teachers at other Waldorf schools, especially those with combined classes.

Professional Development Funds

Teachers are currently eligible for a stipend of six hundred (\$600.00) dollars per year to use toward one (1) conference or activity such as summer intensives for class teachers. This amount of money does not cover the cost of most of these activities and is not available to use for ancillary costs such as travel, housing and meals. We call for:

- Increasing the professional development funds available to the Faculty;
- Instituting automatic annual increases to the professional development fund to ensure that the fund remains at a reasonable level over time.

Salaries and Benefits

Our Faculty members are currently paid at a level well below appropriate comparables for Waldorf schools locally and nationally. Many of our Faculty members must work second jobs to make ends meet. There is an immediate need to increase the salary and benefit levels of our teachers to ensure that we attract excellent teachers in the future, retain those teachers as part of our Faculty, and give the teachers more time to dedicate themselves more fully to their roles within the School. We call for the following:

- Raise teacher salaries from twenty-eight thousand (\$28,000.00) per year to a minimum of thirty thousand (\$30,000.00) per year.
- Review part-time hourly scales for consistency and appropriateness in light of the salary increase for full time teachers.

Long Term Teacher Development

In the coming few years DWS will have a significant need for teachers, and past experience shows that they are most likely to come from the school community. Therefore we need to increase our efforts to develop trained teachers. We should

- Work with WISM to increase the parent education opportunities that may directly lead to an interest in and commitment to teacher education and certification
- Actively work to develop teachers from within the school community.

Detroit Waldorf School Development Component

Introduction and Overview

Over the past three years we have made significant progress in the area of Development with the implementation of a development director, investment in development software, and the expansion of our development activity in all areas. Especially in times when school families are challenged to make tuition payments, development income is essential to the health of the school, and continued growth in this area is necessary over the coming two years.

Definitions and Standards

Definition of Development for DWS

Development is a multi-layered approach to creating and maintaining relationships with individuals, businesses, institutions, and foundations to support and invest in the Detroit Waldorf School. The purpose of development is support current operations and to invest in the future of the School and to enhance and facilitate growth of the School that supports: (1) the children's learning, (2) the teachers' and staff members' professional skills and capacities, (3) the parents' skills and capacities; and (4) the mission of the school within the community.

Ultimately, development activities raise non-tuition revenue and resources that are needed for the School's growth. Areas of development include:

- Annual appeal to parents, alumni, and alumni parents and friends.
- Fundraising events, such as the Knit-a-Thon and Auction.
- Alumni development as a reflection of our effectiveness as a School, as a resource for human energy and expertise, and as a resource for donations for operations and special projects.
- Grants from foundations to support programs and projects, sponsorships, human energy and expertise, and in-kind gifts.
- Corporate funding and partnerships, sponsorships, in-kind gifts, materials, and human energy and expertise.

- Capital campaigns for building restoration, renovation and special projects.
- Endowment campaigns to support financial aid and special programs.

Annual Fund

With strong board leadership, and a \$5,000 challenge gift in 2009, the DWS Annual Fund achieved its goal of \$25,000, but the full potential of the annual fund is not being met. In the coming years, we should work to continue to greater participation by members of the broader school community, as well as to increase participation by alumni and parents of alumni, and to expand our circle of supporters in the broader Metro Detroit community.

- Goals for the coming three years:

	Net Financial Goal	Participation level
2010-11	\$25,000	100% Board, 60% current families
2011-12	\$30,000	100% Board, 70% current families
2012-13	\$32,500	100% Board, 75% current families
- Examine and learn from other Waldorf School annual fund appeals
- Continue to create an expectation and practice of leadership gifts by Board members
- Aim for 100% participation by staff and current families, with increased benchmarks for participation each year
- Seek matching (challenge) funds as incentives for increase participation and levels of giving
- Include all school contacts in Annual Fund campaign – vendors, auction and knit-a-thon participants, persons attending all outreach events at the school.
- Expand participation by alumni and parents of alumni. Send a targeted fund appeal to alumni, beginning in 2010-11
- Create giving opportunities for recent grads/alumni to create a culture and expectation of “giving back” to the school early on
- Explore the use of e-mail appeals/social media to increase participation

Fundraising Events

Fundraising events represent a large portion of the annual non-tuition revenues, and are also important community-building activities in the life of the school. Given the budget challenges we face, and the success of our past fundraisers, the addition of new fundraisers is a frequently made suggestion. However, given that events are also very labor-intensive and depend to a great extent on volunteer time and energy, the question of human resources and expected return should be carefully evaluated before any additional fundraising events are added to the plan.

In the past year, our fundraisers have been transformed in an attempt to bring these events in line with the school philosophy and to nurture and reflect the impulse of social and cultural renewal represented in Waldorf Schools. This has led to the incorporation of a strong community partnership and community contribution aspect in our two major fundraising events.

Knit-a-Thon: Our Walk-a-thon, a long tradition in the school, was changed to a Knit-a-Thon in 2009. Participants knit squares that are then sewn into blankets or other items that are donated to charity. Funds raised through pledges still go to support the school, but the product of our knitting is donated to a local partner organization. This new approach highlights a unique aspect of our curriculum, and opens up registration beyond students and faculty, to a wider range of community members, including parents, relatives, neighbors, and knitters. It also expands media opportunities and public awareness of our school, benefiting enrollment efforts.

- Net Financial Goal for the Knit-a-thon:

2010 – 11	\$28,000
2011 – 12	\$30,930
2012 – 13	\$30,930
- Continue with the Knit-a-Thon fundraiser for through the 2012-13 school year.
- Create a partnership with a new organization each year to expand our connections in the community, and greater engagement by our partner in the effort. Hold a press conference with partner if possible (2010-11, Alternatives for Girls)
- Seek sponsorship and in-kind donations from yarn shops, yarn distributors and alumni
- Conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of this fundraiser after the 2012-12 school year, and make a decision about the future of the event.

Auction Our Annual Spring Auction has also been transformed to include a more public approach, and a charitable component. In 2010, the Detroit Soup Invitational and Benefit Auction was held at Gleaners Community Food Bank, with a portion of the proceeds, and donations of non-perishable foods, going to benefit that organization. The Soup Invitational component brought in 7 area restaurants in a friendly competition for Detroit's Best Soup, and attracted new media attention to the event. An honorary chair, a public figure with strong ties to the school, Ann Delisi of WDET-FM, also brought additional attention to the event, and our school.

- Financial Goal:
2011 \$55,000
2012 \$60,000 (Higher because of the school anniversary)
2013 \$55,000
- Continue the Detroit Soup Invitational and Benefit Auction through the 2012-13 school year
- Continue partnership with Gleaners, at least in 2010-11.
- Continue to expand the events' reach throughout the metropolitan area
- Seek an honorary chair from entertainment/media field (or "honorary auctioneer")|
- Seek media sponsorship, such as Metro Times, HOUR Magazine, WDET, Model D

Grants

The process of successful grant seeking involves creating successful relationships with foundations. As a small, independent school, the number of grant-making entities that will support our work is somewhat limited, and many of those have Waldorf affiliations. But, we can do more to nurture those relationships that we currently have, and as we expand our community outreach and impact as a school, we can expand the potential for foundation support outside Waldorf-affiliated funds and foundations.

There is a need to develop clear funding needs and priorities for grant writing, which are reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure a coordinated strategy, and allow Development staff to effectively vet funding opportunities, and to focus our limited resources on grant writing to most effectively meet the school's needs.

Current priorities for grant support are: Sustainable Tuition, Sustainable School Initiative, General Operating Support, and Building Maintenance and Improvement. Other areas may be funded as specific programmatic needs and opportunities are identified, as directed by the Board of Trustees.

- Communicate to the DWS community the role of Development staff in vetting and submitting grant requests.
- Work in partnership with DWS Board to identify funding needs and priorities, and review this annually, at a minimum.
- Continue to research foundation prospects relevant to DWS funding priorities
- Establish reliable methods for tracking foundation prospects, contacts, grant deadlines, reporting deadlines and requirements, and grant-making history.
- Invite current foundation contacts, and prospective foundation contacts, to School events on a regular basis.
- Apply for grants as appropriate and relevant to DWS funding priorities

Alumni Relations and Development

DWS (and their parents) alumni have benefited from the school perhaps more than any other group, and represent a potential source of strong support for the School, and yet, for various reasons, we have not reached the potential from this group's participation in fundraising activities or annual fund development. Lack of a functional database for tracking alumni has hindered our abilities to keep reliable records and easily maintain contact. We have lost touch with many older alumni, and need to seek ways to maintain connection with – and establish a culture of giving to DWS—among younger alumni. With the School's 45th anniversary approaching, we need to develop a plan for re-connecting and engagement of more alumni.

- Once the DaySchool software is in place, spread the word that we are trying to contact, and update our alumni database (use Facebook and internet)
- Regularly update alumni about school news, and invite them to school events via e-mail
- Identify DWS alumni to serve on the DWS board

- Engage alumni in Metro Detroit area as a source of volunteer support for DWS events
- 2010 - 2011
 - Hold an alumni reception before a school event (Harvest or Spring Assembly, May Day, etc).
 - Send a targeted appeal to alumni for the Annual Fund, have teachers sign letters to students
 - Begin tracking percent of Annual Fund donations from alumni, and set targets for participation levels and amount of support by alumni
 - Develop a project for the graduating (or recently graduated) 8th grade to “give back” to the school
 - Identify an alum or other volunteer to take leadership on outreach to alumni
 - Invite DWS alumni (targeting younger, high school and college aged) to participate in a DWS Community Service Day (MLK Day in 2011)
- 2011 - 2012
 - Establish a Parents of Alumni (PALS) of Detroit Waldorf School, to keep parents of alumni engaged
 - 2011-12 Engage alumni in planning for the 45th reunion celebration (spring 2012)

Capital Funding

This is an area of long-term planning and development, essential for the long-term sustainability of the school. We need to lay the groundwork now for future capital funding campaigns in two essential areas: building and endowment. A crucial element for the success of this work is a strong database and donor tracking mechanisms, which we will begin to put in place in 2010 with the introduction of the DaySchool software. Other important “building blocks” to put in place for a capital campaign include: 1) Master plan for Building, 2) strong alumni relations, and 3) strong marketing program (including social media).

Building – The DWS building is an historic jewel in Detroit’s architectural crown, but it is rapidly aging, and in need of repairs and renovation. We need to plan now to prepare our building for its second century, and lay the foundation for a future capital campaign.

- Seek funding for immediate needs, including a Building Master Plan and roof repair.
- Research other funding opportunities and apply for grants to support building maintenance and improvements, informed by priorities set by the

Building and Grounds Committee

- Begin planning immediately for a major gift initiative at the 100th Anniversary of the building (2013).

Endowment – An endowment is essential to the long-term sustainability of the school.

- Identify and cultivate donors who have the potential for larger endowment gifts
- Put policies in place to ensure proper management of endowment funds

Planned Giving

Planned giving is an essential part of a long term development and must be included in our ongoing development planning. We will:

- Identify professional development opportunities to educate ourselves about planned giving, and what we need to have in place to start a planned giving program
- If appropriate, raise community awareness about planned giving as a way to support DWS (newsletter articles, etc)
- Consider membership in the local association of planned giving professionals
- Hold discussions with key donors re: planned giving
- Promote participation in the RSF Social Finance “Waldorf Collaborative” by sending letter of introduction to prospects, article in Through the Gate, and information on the DWS web site (“Support DWS” page).

Corporate Donors/Sponsorships

A conscious approach to corporate donors and sponsorships also needs to be focused on as we grow our development capacity.

- Develop list of potential corporate sponsors (including media sponsors) for the Auction, Knit-a-Thon, and other public events as appropriate

- Identify parent employers as potential corporate sponsors
- Cultivate relationships with current corporate sponsors (Hantz Group, Great Lakes Medical Supply, Avalon, Brown and Brown of Detroit, Priority Health, St. John's Health)
- Invite sponsors to school events

In-Kind Donations

In-kind donations to the school currently include items donated to the auction, food, and other goods. In-kind donations may also include gifts of real estate, donations of vehicles, and more.

- Create a wish list of major donations, gifts that we would like and seek out opportunities
- Track and acknowledge in-kind donations

Donor Cultivation and Recognition

Donor recognition and ongoing cultivation helps to ensure that one-time donors become reliable long-term supporters of DWS.

Gift Recognition – appreciation ensures that people perceive how much we appreciate their support.

- All gifts (monetary and in-kind) to DWS, regardless of size will be gratefully acknowledged with a donor recognition letter.
- Establish a program of benefits or recognition for donors at different levels and types of giving (Annual Fund, Events, Capital Gifts, Planned Giving, etc).

Annual Report – A high quality annual report is an important outreach and development tool that will support recruitment, donor recognition and corporate/foundation work.

- 2010-11: Produce and distribute a high quality annual report
- 2011-12: Special annual report for 45th Anniversary year
- 2012-13: Produce and distribute a high quality annual report

Development Office Capacity and Infrastructure

The School currently lacks adequate capacity (staffing and other resources) needed to sustain the level of development work outlined in this plan. For the 2010-11 school year, the work will primarily be led by a full-time Development Director, and part-time (8-10 hours/week) parent volunteer grant-writer, along with parent volunteers from the Development Committee, and additional volunteers who assist with events, mailing, and office support. Without increasing the human resources (staffing and volunteer), and putting in place a centralized database for donor tracking and management, it will be very difficult to expand development efforts significantly beyond the fundraising events, annual fund, and grant-seeking activities that currently comprise the majority of fundraising efforts. Additional volunteers to assist with data entry and other administrative tasks, alumni outreach, and special events, will allow expansion of development efforts to new areas, but long term sustainability will require a full-time development director, part-time grant-writer, and part-time fundraising events coordinator. We need to:

- Clarify and communicate the role of Development Office to the school community
- Work with the Parent Council to create and communicate to the parent community volunteer job descriptions for key development roles – Development Committee Chair, office support/data entry, Knit-a-Thon Chair, Auction Chair, Annual Fund Chair.
- Redefine role of development committee now that a full-time development director is in place.
- Complete the transition to DaySchool software for development and enrollment data. This transition will require an initially heavy workload by Development, Administration and Enrollment staff, but will enhance and facilitate many of the fundraising tasks outlined in this work plan.
- Enhance coordination of development and enrollment/outreach effort
- Capture all names and complete contact information(including mailing address, phone and e-mail) for every person who attends events at the school.
- Create consistent messages about fundraising needs and expectations that begins with initial enrollment visit by potential parents.
- Identify opportunities for Board development/capacity building on fundraising
- Identify internship opportunities for Development support

Detroit Waldorf School Building and Grounds Component

Introduction and Overview

The Detroit Waldorf School Building is one of the School's assets and strengths and it is essential that the necessary investment to preserve and develop the building is made. The financial stress of the past three years has made this difficult, but as enrollment increases it is essential that we have a plan for meeting the needs of the building.

Priority List of Building and Grounds Work

Building Maintenance Work

Over the past three years we have done some roof replacement and repair, replaced exit devices in the Early Childhood Center, installed approved surface material beneath playground structures, laid a wood floor suitable for Eurythmy in the Winter Room, replaced broken sidewalk slabs, rebuilt a masonry wall on the terrace and completed the landscaping and fencing of the new parking lot. To ensure that regular building maintenance work is completed in the most cost effective and logical manner we need to:

- Continue to maintain an ongoing building need check list through the Building and Grounds Committee
- Complete a detailed building survey and capital improvement plan.
- Plan economically for the needed major renovations of the building.
- Conduct a thorough safety audit of all spaces of the school
- Install signs at all public access points to the campus that identify the school as private property and that after-hour use of the grounds is at the user's own risk
- Install radiator covers on all classroom spaces in the school
- Complete and ADA audit and compliance plan
- Complete the fencing of the upper grades play area.

Curriculum Supporting Building Work

The Building and Grounds Committee should provide information as to the most efficient and effective ways to support pedagogical and operational decisions. It is important that color and fabric choices be coordinated with the Faculty in all teaching areas of the

school. In addition, there are continuing opportunities to coordinate grounds work with the gardening curriculum.

Curb Appeal and Appearance Work

The detailed building survey and capital improvement plan mentioned above must include attention to the sustainability of the building, but also its appearance and the impression that it makes when potential student families visit the site.

Necessary Development of Building and Grounds Groups

Board Building and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee of the Board is essential to setting priorities and advocating for funds for projects affecting the physical structure of the School. The Building and Grounds Committee should include at least one (1) Board member and those members of the Community who are interested in long term planning. Experience with construction, maintenance, and/or finance would be valuable for the members of this Committee.

- This committee will coordinate the completion of a detailed building survey and capital improvement plan
- This committee will also coordinate with the Development Director around grant opportunities directly related to building improvement.