



## Fall 2008

Dear Friends,

Hurricane Ike in September was quite something! I was up during that memorable night looking out the window at our newly planted Satsuma tangerine tree, marveling at how it weathered the storm. I hope you and your loved ones weathered the storm as well as this little tree! In the meantime one of the parents at Shining Star has cut beautiful new blocks for the children - they are called "Ike blocks". I must say some of the branches and logs from cut-down trees in front of houses in our neighborhood were marvelous. I just had to collect some of them. We hope you also have found ways to make the best of this storm and that you are enjoying the cooler fall weather! Happy Thanksgiving and a joyful holiday season!

### Kindergarten News

Javiera Guevara is the lovely new assistant in the kindergarten. She is a native of Chile but has spent several years of her adult life in New York. She has valuable experience from her work as a professional babysitter for nine years and as a dance and creative arts therapist for children and adults. Ms. Guevara also has training and/or experience in illustration, acting and voice, bioenergetics analysis, and biodynamic farming. She plays the recorder and is fluent in Spanish and English.

Ms. Guevara attended grades five and six in a Waldorf school in Chile - an experience that changed her life. Ms. Guevara and

*"If you want your children to be brilliant, tell them fairy tales. If you want them to be very brilliant, tell them even more fairy tales."*

- Albert Einstein

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### Calendar

**Visitor Mornings**

**Thursday, December 18th, 2008**

**Thursday, January 22nd, 2009**

**Thanksgiving Holiday**

her husband recently moved to Houston, and she is excited to work in our kindergarten. Welcome Ms. Guevara! Or, as the children would say: Welcome, Mrs. Javi!

See the Calender in the sidebar for upcoming kindergarten visitor mornings. Come on by to see Waldorf Education come alive!

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## Festivals



The Martinmas Lantern Walk was postponed to November 18th this year due to stormy weather on November 11th. Shining Star alumni as well as friends of the school joined the celebration. We enjoyed seeing them! The children delighted in carrying their lit, hand-made lanterns through Russ Pitman Park. We celebrated kindness and the spirit of sharing by sharing our snack. And Ms. Dorothy, the kindergarten teacher, told us the story of St. Martin sharing his cloak with a beggar.

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## Website Update

Albina Molina (Ilyas' mother) and Dagmar Truckses (Tatjana's mother) have given their expertise and effort on a new website for the school. We are pleased to announce that it is up and running. Check it out and give us your feedback! The website is now hosted under [www.waldorfhouston.org](http://www.waldorfhouston.org) and the domain names [www.waldorfhouston.com](http://www.waldorfhouston.com) and [www.shiningstarschool.org](http://www.shiningstarschool.org) link directly to it.

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## Silent Auction

We are planning a spring fundraising event with a silent auction. At the moment, we are collecting donations for the silent auction. If you have a business or know of a business that could donate an item or service, we would love to hear from you! It's a great way to advertise and you'd be helping our school. Alternatively, do you have a skill you could volunteer to teach (for example a craft skill like knitting, felting or doll making)? Please contact Dagmar ([dtruckses@yahoo.com](mailto:dtruckses@yahoo.com)) with any donations and suggestions.

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**and Professional Development Days  
(School closed)  
Nov. 24th - Nov. 28th, 2008**

**St. Nicholas Festival  
Sunday, December 14th, 2008**

**Winter Break (School closed):  
Dec. 22nd, 2008 - Jan. 6th, 2009**

## In the News

This past summer the UTNE Reader caught my attention while standing in line at the check-out at Wholefoods. The headline read:

"The FUTURE of CREATIVITY  
In our Schools,  
Our Businesses,  
And Our Lives"

Six articles in this magazine were on this topic. The first, introductory, article was written by Jeannine Quellette, a Minneapolis- based writer and teacher at the Waldorf Schools there. In her article she talks about the value of open- ended creative play - play that is unencumbered by adult direction and does not depend on manufactured items or rules imposed by someone other than the kids themselves. The following are quotes about this kind of play advocates and researchers mentioned in this article:

"...allows children to envision possible future worlds, very different from the worlds we inhabit now, and to bring those worlds into being."

"Kids determine their own strengths and weaknesses, they learn peer negotiation and become familiar with taking chances and forging ahead in the face of mistakes and failures - all traits that employers fear are waning in young new workers."

### Green Fundraising

Shining Star School is now signed up for Greenraising - a green way to fundraise. If you shop from their [website](#), the school will receive 25% of the purchases! Greenraising sells all kinds of neat stuff. For example, items for school like lunch bags made from recycled juice boxes and wrap-n-mats: washable mats that replace sandwich baggies. They wrap around sandwiches, close with Velcro, and open up into a clean, reusable placemat. For the upcoming holidays they have recycled wrapping paper, cloth gift baggies, LED holiday lights, soy candles, fair trade chocolate, etc. So shop Greenraising for the holidays and beyond!

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### Help Grow Shining Star School

Advertising our school through word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful ways to spread the word about our school. However, telling other people succinctly what Waldorf education is all about can be tricky. Recently, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) released guidelines to provide concise and consistent messages regarding the value of Waldorf education. If you find that you need help describing what Waldorf is all about, here are some of the core messages from AWSNA (and summarized by Mark Gorgas from the Richmond Waldorf School) to help in your discussions with others:

Waldorf education is "An Inspired Approach to a Love for Life-long Learning."

This message conveys that the primary value is a child who has ignited within him/herself a desire for life-long learning.

Additional benefits include a child:

- who has a cultivated freedom to act and think;
- who is prepared for the ever-changing world;
- who has a spirit of teamwork and achievement among classmates;
- and, has a sense of connection, support and responsibility with the community.

How are these benefits achieved? Through an Inspired Approach that, by design, includes:

- Developmentally appropriate education that responds to the inquisitive and inquiring needs of the child at each stage of development.
- A warm and inviting environment that nurtures development, growth and learning.
- Integration of the visual, textural, and performing arts to activate the senses and create deeper and more meaningful learning.
- A commitment to academic excellence in order to foster the

"The ability to imagine alternative possibilities and make them real - literally change the world - is a deeply important part of our evolutionary inheritance."

To read the whole article, go [here](#).  
Enjoy!

capacities of thinking, feeling and willing.

Other reasons to believe in Waldorf education:

- 89-year track record
- About 1000 independent Waldorf schools and 1400 independent Waldorf kindergartens globally with 182 schools in North America

Just writing this makes me excited about Waldorf education! You can paraphrase these messages and mention them in your discussions with family and friends. And, when others show interest, there is no substitute for seeing; please encourage them to attend one of our upcoming visitor mornings!

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### Letter from a Board Member

I sit at my freshly cleaned kitchen table after a delicious lunch, hearing the happy laughter of children in the backyard - my son and his friend who has come over with his two younger siblings so that their mom can have some uninterrupted time to organize in her home. This mom cares for my son three mornings a week before school starts and takes him with her children to the Austin Waldorf School. This is a tiny glimpse of my current Waldorf community in action.

My son's early years in Shining Star Kindergarten were equally supportive, happy, and fun. I was happy to have him in such a nurturing environment, fostering his physical, social, and creative growth through its carefully thought out structure, its singing and movement time, its stories, and especially its creative free play. I met wonderful friends who have not only supported my parenting but also my growth as a free human being.

My decision to send my son to Shining Star over seven years ago has affected my life in extraordinarily wonderful ways. I invite all who receive this newsletter to join our community at its festivals and visitor mornings and to consider enrolling your children.

-Carol Denson,  
Board member, teacher, writer,  
parent of former Shining Star Kindergartner

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This message was sent from:  
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