

The Waldorf School of Princeton Care Group

*The healthy social life is found,
When in the mirror of each individual
The whole community finds its reflection
And when in the community
The virtue of each individual is living.
—R. Steiner*

There are many beauties to Waldorf Education, but one is that it is a social education, meaning learning to live and work with others out of a love and devotion to doing good work in artistic collaboration. Each one of us comes to life with enormous gifts and capacities. We each come with other aspects of ourselves that need support and growth. It is true of everyone.

The Care Group is a group of teachers and educational support specialists who have been mandated by the College of Teachers to hold in their attention children who are in need of additional support at any given time in their life at the school. The Care Group is not only for children who need additional support academically, but also for children who may be going through a challenging emotional time at home or socially at school.

There are several avenues to the Care Group. The child's class teacher might bring a child who has invited their attention. A parent might approach any member of the Care Group bringing an issue from either home or school to which they would like special attention brought.

More than one course of action then can be taken when a child has been brought to the attention of the Care Group. It might be felt that the child would benefit from additional support in their learning. This could be support of the foundational senses through extra lesson sessions, or other movement opportunities. It could take the form of Therapeutic Eurythmy or even additional practice of their lessons through tutoring sessions. Oftentimes, the course of action is clear to both the parents and the Care Group, and the additional support can be easily arranged. Other times the course of action is less clear and the question of how to best support the child is held within the Care Group. It might be decided at that time that a larger observation of the child including the observations and experiences of the child's parents, members of the Care Group, and the wider school faculty are shared. The idea is that after conscious attention has been brought to both the child's gifts and challenges, a clear picture of the child comes forth as does a clear avenue of support for the child. This process is called a Child Study. No matter what the situation is, the question the Care Group holds always begins in the same way: "How can we best serve this child and their family?" Often holding the question in the consciousness of the child's teachers, parents and the Care Group is enough for answers to come and a clear course of action to be taken when at first one was not seen.

The existence of the Care Group is an expression of all that is at the heart of Waldorf Education. At the heart of Waldorf Education is something radically different from the standardization that is widespread in the field of education today. From the Waldorf School's perspective the only

thing that is standard is that each of us brings something special into the world to offer. From there forward each individual is unique. How does each individual bring its uniqueness to the social and academic group of the class and the school? That is always the question we are working with at the Waldorf School. The Care Group continually endeavors to help children and their families who have invited our attention to receive the support needed in each individual case so that the capacities brought by the individual can flourish, and in its turn the community flourishes.

Members of the Care Group are:

Susan Eggers- Chair

Kristen Daley

Joy Sayen

Paola Tayvah

Kyle Dunlap