

The Value of Sustainability put into Practice at Heart To Hand School

A fundamental aspect of Waldorf Education is a **commitment to nurture, sustain, conserve, steward, and wisely utilize the gifts provided by the natural world**. This is implicit in every Waldorf School.

Here at Heart To Hand School, this commitment is consciously and regularly discussed in our faculty, board, and parent meetings ... and then put into practice. Examples include:

- Our early childhood curriculum includes activities such as on-site ***gardening, composting, reusing, and recycling***, through which students learn to become stewards of the environment in which they live.
- Our ***gardening and landscaping*** practices seek to both conserve natural resources and strengthen our ecosystem. Long before the concept / philosophy of ***permaculture*** arose in the 1970s, Waldorf schools such as ours have always had ***stewardship*** of the earth as one of their central pedagogical and community priorities. Since their founding in 1919, Waldorf education has consciously held and developed a ***biodynamic*** understanding of earth stewardship.
- Instead of plastic and metal, almost all of the toys in our classrooms and play garden are made of ***natural materials*** that stimulate the senses: wood, silks, rocks, shells, wool, feathers, bamboo, cotton, beeswax, etc.
- Most of our ***handmade*** outdoor play equipment and many of the ***handmade*** toys and tables in the classroom were produced by our faculty and parents utilizing ***found and reused materials***.
- All the food we cook, bake, and serve is made from ***organic*** ingredients. Every year, more and more of the vegetables and herbs we use in our cooking ***comes from our school gardens***, which are planted, maintained, and harvested by our faculty and students.
- In order to ***reduce paper and plastic product use***, we ask that parents (A) pack lunches in either a basket without handles (or foldable handles) or in a cloth sack; and (B) that they pack reusable heating/serving dishes, cloth napkins, and utensils with the lunch. On our side, the school provides glasses, bowls, cups, and utensils made from wood, glass, ceramics (often handmade within our community), and metal.
- For both health/safety and energy savings, we use ***toaster ovens rather than microwave ovens*** (and hope soon to begin using solar ovens), purposefully ***do not make use of Wi-Fi*** in the school, and ***turn off our cell phones*** as much of the day as possible.
- Very nearly all of our office paper product purchases come from ***recycled sources***, as does an increasing amount of our classroom paper products. We are constantly looking for ways to ***reduce*** the amount of paper and energy used in our communications. Used paper products are ***reused*** as much as possible – from children coloring on both sides of the paper ... to printing and copying on both sides of the paper whenever possible ... to office staff making their own note pads from left-over event posters – and almost all of it is eventually ***recycled***.
- Non-bleach sanitizers – ***vinegar and peroxide*** – are utilized whenever possible and appropriate.
- We use ***eco-friendly*** general cleaning supplies and hand soaps, as well as carpet and floor cleaning products and services such as Carbonated Solutions, NatureClean, and Seventh Generation's Natural Citrus Carpet Cleaner. As much as possible, we use reusable cleaning rags and sponges instead of throw-away paper products.
- We strive to ***limit our energy consumption*** every day, from going without the heating/air conditioning equipment as much as possible ... to turning on indoor lights as little as possible ... to keeping office equipment off unless in use. We also educate and advocate for the development and use of renewable energy sources.
- Twice a year, our Parent Association hosts a ***clothing swap*** where \$10 and a bag of donated used clothes (children and adult sizes) rewards you with a free bag of used clothes that you select ... the average value of each bag of clothes people go home with is estimated to be \$200!