

**WIWS Administrator, Maureen Marklin, Interviews Hanna Anderson (Class of '06)**

**MM:** When did you attend Whidbey Island Waldorf School, Hanna?

**Hanna:** I graduated eighth grade in 2006. Peter Hayes was my teacher for all 8 years of grade school. We were the first class to have the same teacher all 8 years.

**MM:** How was that for you, having the same teacher for eight years?

**Hanna:** I loved it. I remember the first day I met Peter. I was in kindergarten and he came to play Red Rover with us. He really became a parent in a way. Our class became a family; we formed a tight bond, all of us. We were very comfortable with him. I think we went through everything with Peter. We ended strong too. There were 17 in the graduating class.

**MM:** Are you still in contact with some of the people from your class? Do you have any contact with your teacher?

**Hanna:** A few of my closest friends are people I was with at the Waldorf School; Elsie Henderson, Keegan Harshman, Jachen Machner, Eli Berednt. Lots of them have siblings still in the school. I see them whenever we are on the island at the same time. I am aware, through other people, what Peter is up to, but the teacher I stay in contact with the most is Jana McFee. She was the most influential teacher I had.

**MM:** How did she influence you, Hanna?

**Hanna:** Well, she was my music teacher first through eighth grade, and her daughter Annie was my classmate, so I knew Jana both as a teacher and outside the school as well. She was the one who got me interested in music, which is what I study here at Idyllwild. She was a really big part of my life at that time. I had a lot of respect and admiration for her. She was my favorite teacher. She was very strict. I remember a lot of people were actually scared of her. Yet, she was very good at cultivating an appreciation for music in young people. She taught choir, class music lessons; I played recorder, violin, and I sang. She even directed our eighth grade play "As You Like It".

**MM:** Well that's quite a Waldorf experience to have not only your class teacher for 8 years but also your music teacher.

**Hanna:** I had several teachers for many years. Raquel taught Spanish the entire time I was in grade school and Bonnie Freundlich had a big impact on me as well. She taught us Eurythmy from 5<sup>th</sup> grade on. I love eurythmy. She also taught us Physiology and Language Arts.

**MM:** Did you like Eurythmy while you were taking it, or did your appreciation come later?

**Hanna:** I had a love-hate thing with it in the early years, but after Bonnie came and by middle school it was actually really fun for me. I enjoyed it. We always complained about it but we had a good time while we were doing it. It took a while to really “get it.”

**MM:** Can you say more about that since it is not so easy for some of us parents to “get it.”

**Hanna:** (Laughs) Well I think it taught me a lot about the space around me physically, but that ties in to things like relationships. I notice this about myself, that I have good spatial awareness. Eurythmy gave us awareness and grace, both physically and in interacting with people. Learning through movement is a great way to imprint things as well. Even though I don’t do eurythmy anymore, it is still with me because I feel that it taught me something about myself, something about how I learn. I think this is one of the best things about Waldorf for all of us; it helped us to know ourselves better.

**MM:** How did your time at WIWS shape you; your sense of place and purpose in life?

**Hanna:** As to my sense of place and purpose, I’m still figuring that out, as are my classmates. We’re young, you know. But what Waldorf gave us is a sense that it’s alright not to know. My Waldorf education gave me stability within myself and the ability to find solid ground in new situations. I believe that we were taught good observation skills at Waldorf. I think it is common that Waldorf students are able to observe carefully and take things in, then consider within themselves and come to their own conclusions.

**MM:** How do you think your Waldorf Education prepared you for your academic work in High School?

**Hanna:** Well after I first graduated I felt a little behind, even though I wasn’t. In other ways I was ahead. Looking back, what I was really perceiving was how differently other teachers teach. Ours is a pretty unique classroom experience at Waldorf. But because I felt competent as an observer, and because I knew myself so well as a learner, I quickly realized that what I needed to do was to cultivate closer relationships with my teachers. This is how I learn best. Perhaps the biggest adjustment was getting comfortable with testing.

**MM:** Was that stressful?

**Hanna:** Yes, a little stressful. I have always taken my academic work maybe a little too seriously and testing is not a strong point for me. I think this would have been the case no matter what school I went to. In the end, I managed it all just fine.

**MM:** What about computer use, was that something you had to catch up on?

**Hanna:** Yes, I didn’t have any of that technology for a long time but once I graduated I picked up on all that really quickly. The biggest thing that would have helped is a class on typing. I figured it all out, but never learned to type properly.

**MM:** What was the most valuable thing your Waldorf education gave you?

**Hanna:** I would say the importance of community and relationships. The Waldorf community was extremely important in my development; the teachers, the school, the festivals, our friends. I feel we did just as much growing up at school as we did at home. I grew up in all ways at Waldorf, and I think the community really helped with that. I have sought out similar bonds of community where I am at now.

**MM:** Tell me about where you are at now and what you are doing these days.

**Hanna:** I am a senior at a boarding school in Southern California called Idyllwild Arts Academy. We have our regular high school academics in the morning and then in the afternoon, we have all our arts classes. Each of us has an art that we major in, mine is music and singing.

**MM:** What would you like to do after high school?

**Hanna:** I originally planned on pursuing singing as a career, but after four years I have realized that I would like to keep singing as something I do for myself. I am exploring some new ideas and right now I want to study psychology. I also like physiology and anatomy. I am going to take next year off and apply to Colleges for the following year. I am interested in a school called Lewis and Clark in Portland and maybe Evergreen in Olympia. I like small schools with strong community – just like the Waldorf School.