



**Tuesdays with Ms. Mall in the  
Front Lobby 8:45am - 9:30am &  
2:30pm - 3:15pm.**

- 11.3.11 WPG Meeting, 6pm @ Winterberry
- 11.10 - 12.11 Waldorf Teacher Training
- 11.14.11 NO SCHOOL
- 11.17.11 WCC Meeting, 6pm @ WBerry
- 11.18.11 EARLY RELEASE • 7th Annual Lantern Walk 6pm @ Goose Lake
- 11.24 & 25.11 Thanksgiving Holiday!
  
- 12.1.11 WPG Meeting, 6pm @ Winterberry
- 12.9.11 All School Assembly, 6pm at Bartlett High School!
- 12.15.11 Early Release • NO WCC MEETING
- 12.16.11 - 01.02.11 Winter Break
  
- 1.5.12 WPG Meeting, 6pm @ Winterberry

Dear Winterberry Families,

Below you will find answers to many site-related questions that have come my way over the last few months. Please feel free to contact me via email, phone, or in person if you have further questions. Change is never easy and our hope is that we will be able to move together toward the change. Part of doing this successfully will involve direct and consistent communication. Please join us in striving for this goal in all interactions with each other.

### **Why Include Grades 7 & 8 at Winterberry?**

Walking into school this morning after an early morning appointment I had the pleasure of watching Winterberry's seventh and eighth grade students making their way to Movement class. As a former middle/high schoolteacher I noticed something different about this group; they radiated joy in their running, skipping, and laughing bodies. Another

and steadily built up our middle school classes. Much of this has been dependent on the two factors of space and qualified staff. This continued vision of including grades seven and eight is consistent with Waldorf models both private and public. Additionally, the curriculum itself is one that spirals from grade one through eight and is not fully finished until the close of eighth grade.

Families who have committed to completing this circle know the vast riches it provides. The faculty members at Winterberry have also witnessed the incredible growth and change in our middle school students and teachers. In response to this they support this continued journey as a vision that is right action for our school. Each year we build our middle school program as we did in the early years with our grades program. Every year we have more students remain at Winterberry or join as new students in the middle school.

**Why is the school moving out of downtown when the intention of the founding families was an urban/downtown setting?**

This is a great question that requires a bit of background beginning in 2004 when the founding families began this journey. Finding physical sites for charter schools was, and continues to be, a national challenge. When the group began the process of considering a charter they had their sites set on an underutilized church on 11<sup>th</sup> and E Street. Before they had even submitted the charter the church was demolished in favor of condominiums. The group continued their search and were able to make connections with the community of Shiloh Baptist Church located between Fireweed and 15<sup>th</sup> on Ingra. What the interior of the building lacked in space, it made up for in proximity to wild space in the form of the Chester Creek Greenbelt. Pastor Brown worked with our founding families and made a good faith offering of the use/rental of the building if all obstacles could be removed.

This is the point (April 2005) that I entered the process as the administrator of Winterberry. I began meeting weekly with Pastor Brown and a small team of parent volunteers to resolve occupancy issues. These meetings continued for six weeks without any movement toward the end goal. I began

From: Members of the Winterberry Staff

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Re: Open letter to the Winterberry community

Dear Winterberry Community, Charter Council, and Parent Guild;

We are writing to clarify our needs around our school space. It has come to our attention that we have not been clear about these needs to all concerned parties, and we wish to take this opportunity to make some of these needs known. Thank you for listening.

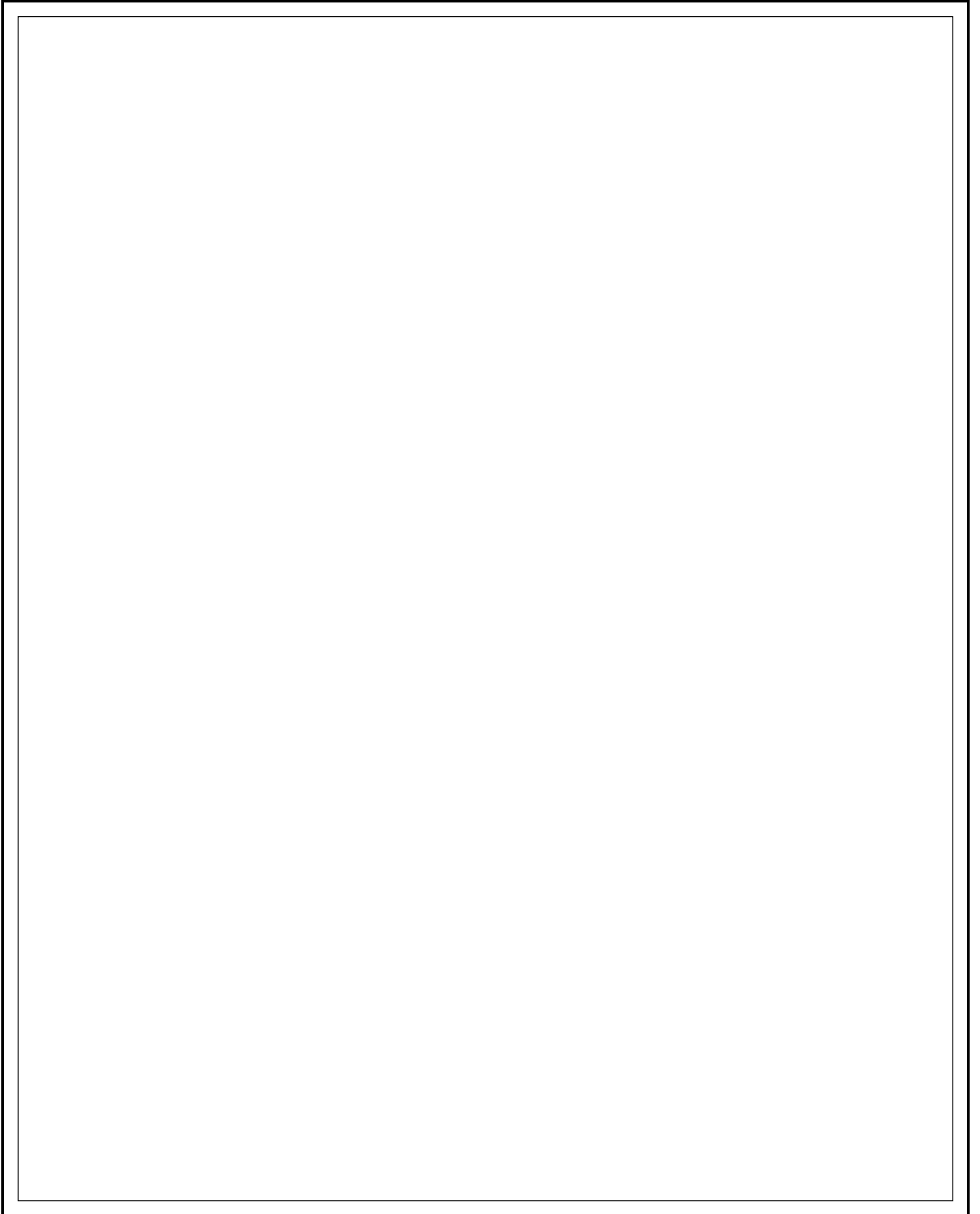
First of all, we are grateful for the space that we have, and we utilize every inch of it. We are, however, feeling close to our maximum in terms of what we can do with the space we have. We have implemented many creative solutions to teaching in small spaces, and while this is working on some level, we believe that we have hit a ceiling in terms of what programs and experiences we can offer the children.

Last spring we surveyed the Winterberry community, and several issues were of unanimous value to all three of our bodies: classroom space, play space, and room for specialty classes were three of the most important across the board. With this letter, we would like to illustrate the importance of these aspects to our school space.

Our current space has the following limitations: classroom size is adequate for desk lessons but far from ideal for any movement or active time; hallways are small and bottlenecks contribute to the noise experienced by our upstairs neighbors; our specialty teachers have no space of their own and must move about, lugging their materials on a cart, or cram themselves into classroom with the desks pushed to one end; our play area, while large enough, has no flat area of any size on which to play games; we have no large indoor space for communal gatherings, eurythmy, indoor movement, and assemblies; and we have no real space to house our enrichment program, the one program which actually generates revenue for us. We are currently finding space for music, languages, handwork, movement, and enrichment by utilizing classrooms when the children who occupy them are gone. This creates obvious human challenges, particularly around transitions and creating a workable schedule.

We have concerns about the future of our space. We are feeling the need to grow, both in terms of numbers of students (we would like to see full classes in every grade very soon, even by next year), and in terms of the "diet" which we offer the children. We are moving towards an interdisciplinary approach to teaching, which requires frequent collaboration, sharing, and a weaving together of the curriculums into a cohesive whole. This will require, we believe, space in which to offer music, languages, handwork, and movement. This space should hold the feeling of the discipline being taught, and despite our intense efforts, does not appear to be possible if the children cannot move from the space in which they spend their main lesson time. We ask that a search for a new school site that will meet the long-term vision of the school be undertaken by our school governing bodies by utilizing information gained from the Administrator's Committee on Growth and Future Development.

The heart of Winterberry, is, of course, the people and the community. We are offering our children a rich and developmentally appropriate educational experience as we are now. But to grow a truly interdisciplinary program, with a healthy student body and a waiting list that will insure future support and funding, we believe very strongly that a new space must be a priority by the time our current lease runs out. We have a need to come together as a community with ease in our own auditorium; to have the possibility of eurythmy on site, to tumble in, to participate in Greek Wrestling, and so on; to



have also seen an incredible increase in their monthly out of pocket expense. When I began teaching in 1998 teachers paid \$70/mo out of pocket and now they pay as much as \$400/mo for the same care. I know this is nothing new to most of us, but I hope it will shed some light on the current fiscal demand associated with staffing a school to serve the children.

We do have a committee of parents who are participating with other charter school parents to advocate for additional funding. I know that this committee is always looking for new members and energy. If you are interested, please send an email to a member of the WCC (emails available at the end of the newsletter) and express your interest.

### **Why are we moving to Muldoon?**

As a point of fact, we are not. The proposed location is on Bryn Mawr and Wesleyan Drive. The University Community Council is the district where the school will be located if all property issues are resolved. As a point of reference, in regard to traveling via car, below you will find the comparisons between traveling to our current site and traveling to the site:

**Kincaid Area** to current site (508 W 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue) = 9.5 miles

**Kincaid Area** to new site (4800 Bryn Mawr) = 12 miles

\* additional 2.5 miles of travel distance

**Abbott Loop Area** to current site (508 W 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue) = 7.9 miles

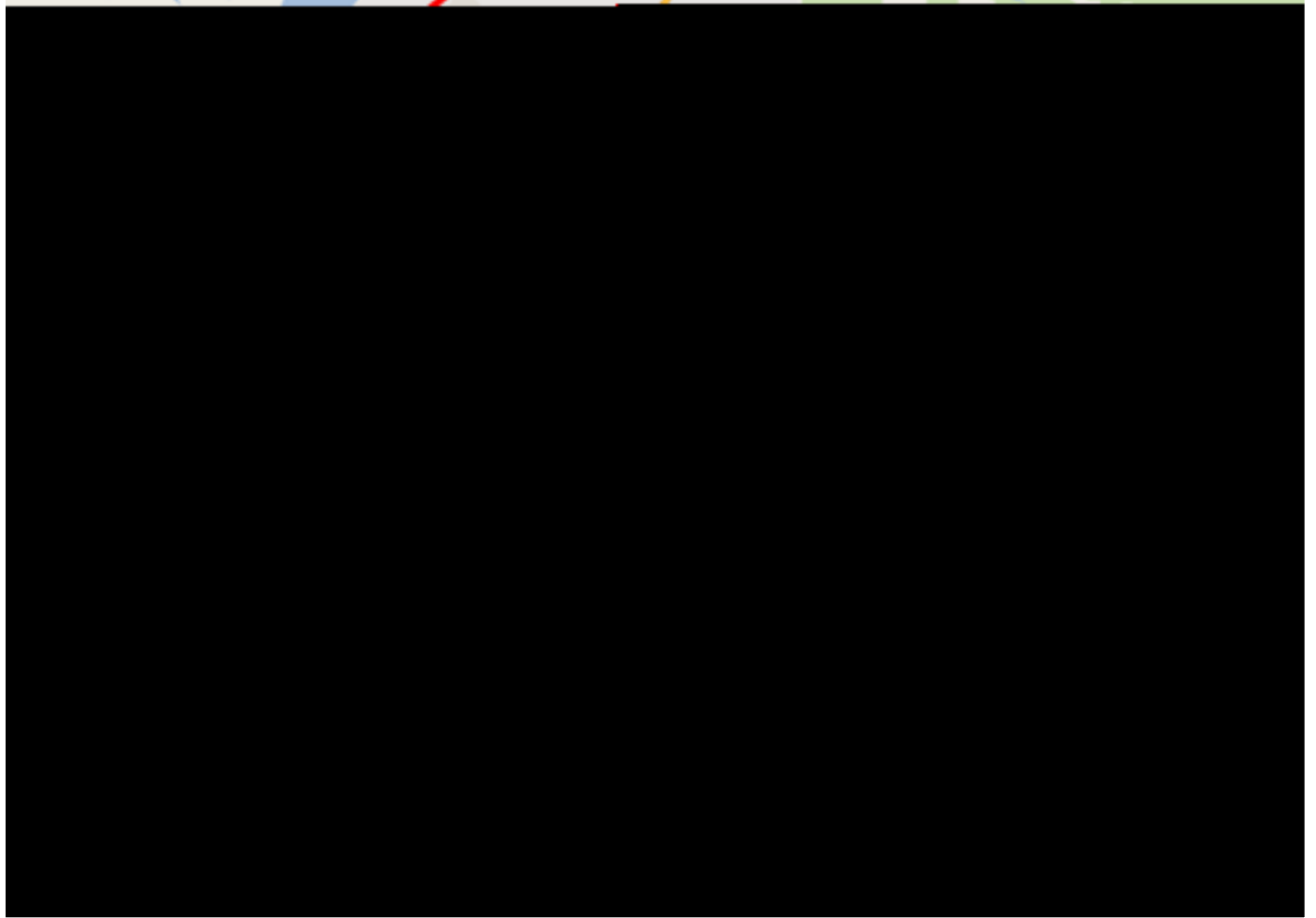
**Abbott Loop Area** to new site (4800 Bryn Mawr) = 5.4 miles

\* +/- 2.5 miles less travel distance

**Girdwood Area** to current site (508 W 2<sup>nd</sup>

## **Why are we moving to a site that is further away from most of our families?**

Actually we are not. Please see the below map to understand our overall community representation from Chugiak to Girdwood.



## **Why are we moving to a site that is so close to Anchorage Waldorf School?**

Again, taking the time to read over the RIM report on our website as well as a brief search of the Anchorage Municipal Listing System will illustrate how difficult (and prohibitively expensive) it is to purchase land in Anchorage. Our search has led to a piece of land that is within a three-mile radius of the private school. The Waldron site we initially looked at was within a four-mile radius of the private school.

As many of you know, I meet regularly with the administrator from Anchorage Waldorf School. During these meetings we collaborate and work together to address the needs of our communities. In response to our move both school staffs have had internal meetings about regarding changes to be coming in the future. Additionally, we have asked George Hoffecker (who serves as a mentor at both schools) to meet with the members of both faculty groups on the first Thursday of December.

In addition to this work, our school communities continue to collaborate as part of a study group exploring the feasibility of beginning a public high school inspired by Waldorf education. While the timeframe of something like this would be many years out the process provides an opportunity to connect and talk about issues that are important to all of us.

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In order to reduce classroom distractions, continue our commitment to upholding Steiner's views on materialism, and respect the needs of all students, families, and staff, we respectfully ask that student attire be comprised of:

- \* solid colors,
- \* stripes,
- \* polka dots,
- \* or patterns.

We also ask that all outerwear and accessories (including indoor shoes and lunch boxes) also follow these guidelines. Please choose plain shoes that do not include electronic lights, sounds, wheels, or commercially produced pictures.

When students come to school with items that do not meet these guidelines, school staff may ask them to alter the clothing so it is not distracting (turn a shirt inside-out, for example), give the student an alternative item to wear instead and/or work together with families to find an alternative within a reasonable period.

Our goal is that we can come together on this issue out of respect for all community members knowing 320 Te on TmSu

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Melissa Janigo, Chair  
Tara Smith, Vice Chair  
Erin Fleischer, Secretary  
Della Swartz, Treasurer  
Arthur Harmon, Staff  
VACANT, Community Member  
Todd Robicheaux, Parent  
Bob Steinmann, Parent  
Lynne Jablonski, WPG Rep  
Meg Eggleston, Faculty Chair  
Faculty/Staff Seat, VACANT  
Shanna Mall, Principal

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Monthly Meetings: 3rd Thursday of each month, 6pm, second floor of  
Winterberry Charter School unless otherwise stated & advertised.

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Craig Lyon, President  
Eric Judge, Vice President  
Christina Eubanks, Secretary  
Sarah Rygh, Treasurer  
Lynne Jablonski, Fundraising Chair & WCC Rep  
Mike Rehberg, Volunteer Coordinator  
Jeremy Crawford, Faculty Rep  
Bob Steiner, Grade Eight Rep  
Karie VanDusen, Grade Seven Rep  
Emma Allen, Grade Six Rep  
Dave Swartz, Grade Five Rep  
Brian Sarka, Grade Four Rep  
VACANT, Grade Three Rep  
Haras Cullers, Grade Two Rep  
Tara Petter, Grade One Rep  
Leif Lidin-Lamon, Grade Kindergarten Rep  
Shanna Mall, Principal

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