

WECAN Full Membership Renewal 2013-14

Site Visit Report Section I: Information

Sections I and II of this form should be completed by the Site Visitor and returned to the program or school. The program or school will review it for accuracy and then forward it to their WECAN Regional Representative(s) and the Membership Coordinator. The Regional Representative(s) and Membership Coordinator will make the decision about renewal.

School name: **Prairie Hill Waldorf School**

Address

Street: **N14 W29143 Silvernail Road**

City, State/Province, Postal Code: **Peawaukee, WI 53072-4855**

Country: **USA**

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School website: **www.prairiehillwaldorf.org**

Early Childhood contact

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Site Visitor

Name: **Lori Daniels**

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Date of site visit: **December 13, 2013**

Site Visit Report Section II: Observations

Please comment on strengths and challenges in each of the following areas, based on your review of the Self-Study Update; the previous Self-Study; the recommendations from the previous Site Visit Report; the *WECAN Shared Principles*; and your observations. A WECAN Full Member demonstrates alignment with the Shared Principles.

Please give full responses, to give the Regional Representative(s) and future site visitors a clear picture of the program, and to help the teachers, administration, and board “see” themselves through another’s eyes.

- 1. School name:** Prairie Hill Waldorf School
- 2. Programs and facilities:** Prairie Hill Waldorf School offers 7 playgroup (parent/child) classes, one Wonder Garden classroom which serves children ages 2 years and 9 months to 4 years of age and two kindergartens serving children ages 3 to 6 years old. The Wonder Garden offers a three and five day a week program. Eliminating the two-day option this year enhanced the experience in the classroom and did not affect enrollment. The three-day program offers half or full days, whereas the five-day program is only full days. The kindergarten is a full day, which has proven to be a positive change this school year.
- 3. Commitment to the ideals and practices of Waldorf early childhood education and anthroposophy:** It is clear the teachers hold the ideals and practices of Waldorf early childhood education and anthroposophy in their work. The classrooms are beautiful, outdoor space is utilized quite well and anthroposophy is studied and discussed. There is room for improvement of the outdoor space, which is being looked into, including safety around the parking lot.
- 4. Teacher preparation and ongoing professional development in light of the WECAN Expectations for teacher education:** The teachers are very skilled, however, the majority do not fulfill the WECAN expectations for teacher education. Training has been recommended and the teachers are very open and eager to meet this goal. Professional development days are built in, allowing observation to occur in other classrooms and schools.
- 5. Governance, finances (including reference to Shared Principle C6), and enrollment:** The school has sufficient resources for the early childhood program. With the addition of the lunch program this year, tuition or supply fees must be increased to cover this expense. To fully expand the early childhood, a capital campaign needs to get underway.
- 6. Collegial and community relations:** This early childhood group is strong and healthy. The administration supports the early childhood both

financially and collegially. The parent community feels wholly welcomed, included and thrilled with the entire early childhood program. The faculty also supports growth in the early childhood, but some more education as to why this is important should be brought to the co-workers circle for further understanding and backing.

7. **Growth and development:** The parent/child class has grown from five classes to seven classes per week, with the whole early childhood serving more than 85 families, up from 61 during the 2006-2007 school year. Another Wonder Garden is being added next year. This growth must continue to meet the goal of enrolling at least 24 children in first grade each year.
8. **Relationship to the wider Waldorf early childhood education movement:** The early childhood staff at Prairie Hill offers puppet shows during the summer months in parks and libraries, The staff put together a regional EC gathering last year with schools in the tri-state area and would like to continue doing this with Waldorf schools in the tri-state area of Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota.

Section III: Commendations and recommendations (numbered or bulleted points preferred) regarding the overall growth and development of the program

Commendations:

- The Early Childhood staff has a wonderful working relationship steeped in Waldorf pedagogy, warmth and respect for one another and the families they serve.
- The change to full day programming in the kindergartens has allowed the teachers and children a slower pace to breathe through the day. This has met the needs of the children, parents and teachers
- The school understands the importance of having a strong early childhood. The teachers feel support from the faculty, administration and board as they focus on funding to encourage growth.

Recommendations:

- As the school plans to add another Wonder Garden classroom for the 2014/2015 school year, consider the needs of the community and determine if the five day program would benefit from offering half days to fill the mornings. Perhaps if only a few families register for five full days, the two Wonder Gardens could combine the afternoons to help alleviate expenditures.

- The school should explore different ways on how to support lead teachers in becoming fully trained. Support to meet the recommended 200 hours of training for assistants should also be considered.
- The assistant teachers should take on the majority of food preparation so the teachers can focus on the children and curriculum.
- A capital campaign needs to begin to support the growth of the early childhood program. To grow, a kinder house needs to be built, as there is no more space inside the school building to accommodate expansion.
- The teachers carry a very large workload between CoC obligations, mandate groups, meeting with their assistants, training of new faculty members and report writing, in addition to the most important work with the children and their families. The school should explore ways to support the early childhood staff. This could be done by requiring less mandate work, and offering time for the EC to meet/work during a portion of the CoC meetings.

Section IV: If you have any concerns regarding the renewal of membership, please describe.

- I have no concerns regarding the renewal of the membership.

Site Visitor's Name: Lori Daniels

Date: January 5, 2014