

Foundational Principles of Windsong School

Process and Intent

Below represents a working draft of Windsong School's Foundational Principles completed in the summer of 2018. This was processed weekly in a group for two hours at a time with founding members who were available and able to contribute. Each week the group reviewed paragraphs written by specific individuals the week prior.

This document is not yet in finished form, and some sections are only bulleted lists or thoughts that came during working on other sections. There is not a single section that has received sufficient attention or editing to be considered its final version. As a work in progress, this document likely contains bad writing, duplication in thoughts/paragraphs, and incomplete thoughts as well. Please keep this in mind as you read.

It was an act of will to begin work on this document and will continue to be for completion. Work began again in the summer of 2019 with all available founding members.

The intent of this document is to describe the ideals that brought Windsong School into being. These are the ideals that invited the interest of the spiritual beings that ushered Windsong School into existence and allow it to continue. When the school began, these ideals "lived" in the group that was working on the school's behalf. With the school's growth, having these ideals in written form is necessary for the work to continue and to have a foundation to reference when needed. Upon completion, this document can serve as a guide for new potential staff and faculty to better understand the work upon which they are embarking. It can also serve as a guide for parents to better understand the school they are choosing.

History

Before Windsong's beginnings, it had been said that Spokane had been waiting for a Waldorf school for years. A group began to form around the idea of beginning a school, drawn together by an article Windsong founding teacher Pat Hughes had written for the Peace and Justice Action League. An "interest group" formed that included many of the founders of the school. That same year, an interest group member, Eve Bowers, checked out a Steiner book from the library and when she went to renew it, found that it had been reserved. A note was tucked inside the book containing a wish to connect regarding Waldorf education. The person who checked the book out next, Christine Pomeroy, was active in the Waldorf homeschooling community and contacted Eve to tell her about a beautiful place near Holy Names Music Center that would be a perfect site for a Waldorf school. The place she was referring to was the very place that Windsong sits today.

Through a series of events, a Waldorf initiative group was formed in 2010 and came together each month to learn more about Waldorf education. The group meetings of regularly 25 or more people were held at the Unity Church on the South hill. Pat Hughes provided care for the children of attendees. In late 2010, as the initiative group was coming to a close, a survey was taken of attendees to provide feedback as well as indicate their

continued interest in starting a Waldorf school. From the results of this survey, a focus group was formed in February 2011 to begin tackling the job.

That focus group, consisting of Renee Rahn, Pat Hughes, Michele Burkey, Melissa Wright, Eve Bowers, and Lauren Bergstedt, formed the non-profit corporation Spokane Waldorf Education Association (SWEA). In March, paperwork was filed to become a 501(c)3 organization, and the search for a site began. In July, SWEA leased what would become Windsong School's early childhood building on the campus of the Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute and began the work of preparing for the very first students at Windsong School. Windsong opening its doors for the 2011-2012 school year, offering a kindergarten, a 3-day nursery, a 2-day nursery, and a parent toddler class. That first year saw the enrollment of 20 total families.

The Foundational Principles of Windsong School

The impulses that ignited and sustained the founding of our school are important. They illuminate the strengths and unique aspects of our school. Understanding the foundational principles that guide our school will allow for clarity in our mission and will avoid confusion for teachers and parents. Working out of these principles will make our work stronger. They are not perceived as being correct, but they are what brought Windsong School into existence, and they have sustained it. There are many ways to do good work in schools, however, we are sure that a shared vision is key to healthy schools.

Vision

Our initial vision was to create a nonprofit organization founded on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, commonly known as Anthroposophy. This organization would found a Waldorf school offering early childhood programs and growing to offer grades one through eight as well as community and parenting offerings to provide opportunities for self-development in Anthroposophy.

Anthroposophy

Our school exists because of Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy. The founding of our school was assisted at every turn by spiritual beings who took interest in our work, because the people who took up the work made sacrifices and let ideals and principles serve as guiding lights. If our school is to remain successful, the impulse of sacrifice, of selflessness, and a dedication to ideals and principles must always be present in our work.

We determined from the beginning to share our work on Anthroposophy with parents. This means we speak freely about prebirth experiences, destiny, angels, good and evil, nature spirits, the Christ impulse, and other ideas contained within the body of Anthroposophy. We do not expect parents of our students to work with the ideas of Anthroposophy, but we do expect them to recognize and respect that they have chosen a school that does.

Steiner's six exercises are part of the school's biography. We continually find ourselves turning to these exercises in our ongoing work to develop as human beings.

The Pillars of Windsong

Discipline

Colleagueship

Selflessness

Idealism

Courage

Trust in the Spiritual World

Why was a school created?

Windsong School was created to change the face of education and to be a source for social renewal. The importance of education was ever at the forefront of the effort to create a school. Windsong was not created to be an alternative to public education, but rather to give families who are seeking Waldorf education the support needed to raise a family in our times and to deeply and broadly educate the rising generation. Our staff were, from the start, highly educated, and education highly valued. Our wish for our students is that they can fulfill their destinies, become people of good will who can think clearly and flexibly, and who can discern and take action. We hope to help raise people of conviction and courage. We want our students to inherit our willingness to sacrifice and to be resilient people who can find joy around every corner.

Child Development

Child development, as seen in the light of Anthroposophy, is the basis of all of our pedagogical decisions. We also highly value current research and alternative ideas, and, as according to Steiner's own urging, we use these ideas to put ours to the test and to continue to evolve.

Child development, out of the stream of Anthroposophy as well as the art and discipline of observation, is our ultimate touchstone for teaching. It must be behind every decision and every action that we take. Mindful observation is part of moment to moment meditative practice and is the daily task of being a teacher.

Ideal of Accessibility

Windsong School was not necessarily created as a private school but rather an independent school. From the start, we committed to avoiding wait lists, to keeping tuition as low as possible, and to make true the statement that, "Anyone can send their child to Windsong."

Professional Development

Study, study, study, study. Our founding impulse is that to teach we must first and foremost be students. Continual development is the lifeblood of our school. For this reason we dedicate our faculty meetings and other mandatory meetings to development.

Social Renewal, Competence, and Resilience

Social renewal cannot come without the ability to engage in authentic relationships with others. Authenticity in a relationship takes many different forms and is unique to each person. We believe that we all have something to learn from one another and that everyone comes into our lives with something to teach us or receive from us.

We value authentic interaction. We allow children to experience conflict, because we are committed to helping children develop social and emotional competence. We have respect for the fact that relationships are highly personal, and our students have a right to form relationships in ways that work for them. When conflict or what may seem to be unhealthy relationship patterns arise, teachers monitor student interactions and carefully step in when students cannot make headway with a situation. There are definitely behaviors that are categorically not allowed. Students are not allowed to swear or to hurt other students. Students are expected to treat classmates, and all people, with dignity. Students are expected to respect school property and the property of students and staff.

Our position is that all students try on the roles of victim and aggressor (among many other roles), and we understand that, as teachers, *we do not have the power to prevent this natural occurrence in development*. We understand that children try on roles because it supports the development of empathy. Our position is that students make mistakes and that relationships are complicated. We understand that relationships, to reference Kent Hoffman's idea, are strengthened by rupture and repair and that this process is vitally human and preferable to relationships in which no rupture ever occurs. Our Anthroposophical viewpoint holds that, as human beings, we have intentionally brought about a rupture with the spiritual world in order to have the opportunity to repair, and that all human evolution depends on our ability to do this. The macrocosm is the microcosm.

We do not get in the way of student learning, whether it be in mathematics or the social realm. We try our best to embody the gesture of support, accompaniment, measured guidance, and non-reactivity. We know our own personal issues can be triggered by student behavior and that this is dangerous ground. We may do great harm if we act unconsciously. We try very hard to be humble and know that when we feel most "sure" of something, we may be most prone to blindness.

We allow consensual rowdy play for the sake of sensory integration, for the bonding it provides, and for the opportunity to allow for children to practice setting and respecting boundaries. However, we do not take a "hands off" or non-interventional approach. Students are not allowed to make another student feel uncomfortable. If a teacher feels play is too risky or is disturbed by an activity, the teacher should heed the prompt of intuition and bring the activity to a halt. Teachers may act out of authority and do not need an immediate reason to stop a game or otherwise take action. The teacher is the final authority, and our responsibility to provide time for self-directed activity and authentic social interaction is balanced by our responsibility to guide and protect children.

Ultimately, our approach to social-emotional development has been a priority and a strength of the school since its founding, and it requires courage and support from colleagues to uphold. It is much easier to relinquish the need to discern and act, or the need to have patience and trust, than it is to set down rules and punish those who break them. However, our dedication to truth and authenticity require we go deeper than what might feel good on the surface. Our way is more difficult, but we are certain it is of great value to our students.

Children are Children

Children are at the very beginning of becoming who they are going to be. They are able to shape themselves, and they have the best chance to fulfill their destiny if they are accepted for who they are and given the opportunity to grow in freedom. Freedom is knowing that children are children. That they don't have the same life experience that inform the way they speak, act, or interact as adults do. Behaviors that are unacceptable for adults may be completely appropriate for children. We cannot place adult expectations on children. For example, we do not believe that the young child can be a "bully." Young children are newly entering the social realm and are going to make mistakes. We need to do right by childhood and allow children to make those mistakes without placing adult thinking and judgement upon them. If we were to do so, we would hinder their development. We believe this enters the moral realm, and we believe that it is wrong to look at child behavior and characterize it in adult terms.

Risk Taking

Students are allowed to engage in risk taking at Windsong School. In early childhood, this most often presents itself as physical risk - climbing trees, jumping off high platforms, attempting to walk along logs, building huge structures, etc. Not only does physical risk taking allow a child to incarnate into their physical body more deeply, but it also satisfies the human need for challenge and to find a "breaking point."

Once students move into the elementary school years, if the need for physical risk taking has been satisfied in early childhood, they move into the feeling realm of risk taking. This most often occurs in the social realm and can be very tumultuous. The teacher accompanies students through the hard work of birthing the astral body.

During one's life on earth, risk cannot be avoided. If children are not able to satisfy this human need in the physical and emotional realms in childhood, they will do so in adolescence or adulthood, when the implications for failure are much greater.

Child Observation

Child study as a practice in observation is strongly held as an opportunity for teachers to practice objective, deep, and compassionate observation. The exercise of open-mindedness and the willingness to be surprised is key for this approach. We offer our observations to our colleagues in the hopes that they will pull the child in question into their heart space and to stimulate further observations and research into child development and modern childhood. We do not seek to change the child but hope only to increase our understanding. We try to cultivate humbleness and understand that the child's guardian will only let us approach if our motives are selfless. We are not called upon to offer the child's teacher or parents advice or to think we know what is happening with a child. We understand that "the other" is a mystery, and relationships between human beings are complex.

Cohesiveness

The founders of the school came together as individuals in order to create an ever renewing shared understanding of our work. Through the study of Anthroposophy, child

development in the light of Anthroposophy, Waldorf education pedagogical tenants, mainstream current research, and intense collaboration, we have sought to bring our programs into cohesiveness. This is in contrast to the idea of teachers working autonomously out of individuality. The reason for this is our commitment to true social renewal. We must live it for the children, and so debate and burning interest in one another's work and ideas are key. Coming to shared practices based on mutual understanding is preferred to "do it my way" thinking.

Direct Communication

Direct communication is a two way participation and requires both giving and receiving. The person speaking must be courageous and willing to speak their truth, to say what they feel and mean. The listener must be open to hearing what the other person has to say.

Direct communication with colleagues must be used to clear up misunderstandings, to bring concerns, frustrations, or even anger to each other. Individuals must be willing to engage with their fellow colleagues even if their own personal preference is to avoid confrontations and to work through indirect channels to resolve conflict.

As colleagues, we are dedicated to ensuring that one another are engaged in direct communication. We will redirect parents, staff, and colleagues if direct communication is not being used, and we shoulder the responsibility to be models within our community for direct communication.

Institutional Structure and History

Windsong School is a teacher-led institution. The teacher-led institution is a new model. It is hard at times and is not perfect, but the effort is worth it. Selflessness and a willingness to contribute draws the attention of the spiritual world. Windsong is a "give it all you've got" environment. We work hard and our students are inspired to do likewise. This mindset is part of the cellular fiber of the school, and the work is truly a vocation. This way of working isn't for everyone, because it requires tremendous commitment and discipline, and yet, through our service and dedication, we grow our capacity for the courage to give beyond what we thought we could give. Trust in each other's experience and motives is a foundational attitude of the school. We are willing to contribute to the whole and to trust in the spiritual world.

Like most Waldorf schools, Windsong School is structured very differently than other private and public schools. Our teachers are the heart, soul, and leaders of our school. Consensus is our model for decision making, allowing everyone the opportunity for participation and responsibility in his or her own work and the work of the school as a whole. We have no "principal" or "headmaster" who makes final decisions on issues or problems that arise. Instead, we work out of freedom to bring our best selves to serve the school and all individuals within it with respect, trust, and humility.

Our institutional structure, when looked at as a whole, can be compared to the structure or model of a plant. When taken apart, you are able to see the individual roles of each part and how the health or disease of each can affect the whole plant. Unless all are working

together healthfully, there will be breakdowns, disorder, or chaos, and eventually death or failure.

Consensus

Consensus is the working model for decision making. This means that groups who are responsible for decisions utilize consensus, but it does not mean that every stakeholder in the school weighs in on every decision. Consensus at Windsong is not about personal satisfaction with decisions but rather about one's ability to support choices that serve the school. One can find a way to support decisions one does not favor by understanding that the full spirit of consensus is to avoid satisfying our ego's desire to "get its way." Rather, it is to focus on the process of decision making. When we look at the experience, integrity, work history, training, and diverse make up of our committees and decision makers, we can find reason to trust them. When we look at the process these groups follow, we can find reason to trust them. Every faculty member holds power in our school. If a faculty member does not think a decision is in the best interest of the school, they may voice their concerns. We must keep in mind that if our concerns are heard and nothing changes, there is a possibility that the group and process came up with a good decision. There is also the possibility that there are many acceptable decisions, and another idea may be as good as our own. The consensus model means that every faculty member is able to stand behind school decisions. Working this way requires colleagues to trust one another and requires that faculty members keep themselves informed. Each faculty member bears responsibility for testing our assumptions in reality, for paying attention during committee reports and to written communications, and for creating an environment that supports the work of our colleagues when they are tasked with decision making. Open mindedness is probably the most helpful attitude to keep in mind as a member of the faculty.

Inner work allows us to come to consensus. It allows us to work with our own ego and make space for the broader picture.

Dedication to Early Childhood as the Foundation of the School

From the beginning, we have been dedicated to our Parent Child program for its own sake. We specifically articulate that we want the Parent Child program to have its own space and to be considered a program on par with all other programs. It is not a "side" program.

We also strongly recognize the Early Childhood program as the foundation of the school. Our early childhood staff are highly educated, both in general and in regard to child development. They participate in professional development that keeps them fresh by cultivating a keen life of the mind. They are not your typical early childhood teachers. The parent work done in the Parent Child program and the early years work done in the Early Childhood program are crucial and require highly skilled staff.

The elementary years serve as a similar foundational development for the feeling, or astral, realm, which rests upon and is only as healthy as the lower realms of the physical and etheric. These ideas relate to our first hosted conference in which our presenter spoke of planting seeds that will mature 500 years from now. We are in for that.

Dedication to Life at Home

Our school hours are intentionally set and reflect our founding commitment to the home. We seek to balance time at school with time at home, and we value the time children spend at home. We do not see school as being more important than the home. Time at home allows children to learn from family members, to participate in and so learn to value homemaking, and to digest what has been experienced during the school day. Children also need the opportunity to be bored, because boredom is a wellspring for initiative and creativity.

Spokane Waldorf School

As part of our founding and in our study of other schools, we realized we wanted to be a school for Spokane. We chose to prioritize training and hiring teachers from Spokane, and we seek to avoid the pretentiousness that can sometimes bloom in a mission-driven setting where philosophies are in place that seem “right”. We wanted to be humble, work hard, avoid judgement, and serve all of the people in our community equally. This led to a steadfast commitment to tuition reduction efforts.

Making an Offering

Our school is founded on the premise that we craft an educational offering for our community. Early in the school’s founding, there was pressure to somehow make a school that would be everyone’s perfect school. We realized that if we aimed to fulfill everyone’s preferences, the education would be shallow, disjointed, and untethered. Instead, we chose to create a cohesive, clear offering, based on our principles, and to make that offering as clear as possible so people can choose whether it will meet their needs. We understood that responsiveness is different than catering to people.

The idea of making an offering also led to another experience in our founding years. We came to see that our offering is not better nor superior to the work being done at other schools. We saw that we did not want to promote our school at the expense of other schools. Every school is working for a positive future, and there are good things happening at every school in our community. This strengthened our idea that we are simply making an offering and that our first interaction with parents is to help them perceive whether our offering will support them in their work.

Media Technology

It is our position that there is no appropriate use of media technology in a Waldorf elementary classroom. From the beginning, we have seen the need for all teachers to work with families to decrease or eliminate media in the home. We also see how important it is that teachers engage in this endeavor both personally and with their own children.

The infiltration of media into every corner of human life has profound consequences. As Waldorf educators, we are called upon to shine a light on the areas of modern life that are currently out of balance. When it comes to balancing media technology, this can mean giving parents articles, hosting parent meetings to explore media use, etc. We resolved to be creative and nonjudgemental in how we approach the complex topic of media technology and the human being’s destiny.

We hold that media technology is an important tool that has tremendous power for good, yet terrible darkness is attracted to this potential. Our foundational attitude is that we are not afraid of media technology, but rather we seek to introduce it to children when they are ready. We are not “anti-media.” We are “pro” using media with all consciousness.

Because balancing media use was an important topic that contributed to the founding biography of the school, all teachers at Windsong should feel comfortable with recommending that parents not allow screen use in the early childhood years, that strict monitoring of entertainment technology be practiced in the school years with restrictions that do not allow internet “free-ranging,” and that smart phones not be available until at least age 14. Teachers should also feel comfortable foregoing screen use in the classroom. Furthermore, we have always considered that media is addictive, and we do not want to model addictive behaviors for our students.

As for our attitude toward our students’ media use, we will not ask parents to sign any document or make any promises about media use. Likewise, we do not have a media-free policy. Allowing people to control media via their own free will is more important to us than ensuring our students are media-free. Such policies set up situations in which people might feel compelled to lie, and our stance is that policies in general can create friction with the school or teachers. We resolve to approach media use directly with parents. If there are negative consequences of media use that appear in the classroom, teachers will work with parents to decrease or eliminate the student’s media exposure until the individual child’s health as well as the health of the class as a whole is no longer negatively affected. Teachers should be prepared to explain to parents the reasons they believe media use is contributing to a problem.

Community Building and Relationships

Community is a bedrock principle of our school. We are not service oriented. We are community oriented. As Steiner once said, “A healthy social life is found only when, in the mirror of each soul, the whole community finds its reflection and when, in the whole community, the virtue of each is living.” At Windsong, we think of our community as a living being where each person is an integral part of the life of the whole organism. We all (faculty, parents, children) have something to give, to receive, and to learn each day. Each of us is striving for authentic social relationships through the daily interchanges as this is the work that creates compassion for ourselves and others. This is not a school where parents may drop off their children and expect the teacher to do it all. The responsibility of the building of the community lies within us all.

Collegial Relationships

Collegial relationships are founded on a shared understanding of Anthroposophy and dedicated study of the teachings of Rudolf Steiner as they relate to personal and spiritual development as well as to the practicalities of teaching. Collegial relationships are strengthened by each individual’s ability to engage in and expect direct communication.

Selflessness

Windsong School would not exist without selflessness and sacrifice. To say that selflessness is part of the school's biography doesn't capture the way that our school relies on this quality to sustain itself. We can also distinguish between generosity and selflessness. It is clear that our school is sustained by the generosity of others who give both time and treasure. Without this generosity, our school would not be financially viable, however, we are sure that, in a much deeper way, our school is sustained by the quality of selflessness. If the quality of selflessness is not willfully and consciously living in our school, our school will fade away. It will no longer be interesting to the beings who helped form Windsong School. It will be a disappointment. Joyful selflessness is the lifeblood of our school. Selflessness is an extremely difficult practice to maintain. It is hard to tell when one is crossing over from selflessness into something unhealthy - martyrdom, for example. Very early in the biography of our school, Waldorf educator Julie McCallan presented to us the picture of our founders standing in a circle, forming a vessel. Surrounding the group were the archangels who would, if we deserved it, fill the vessel with one drop of wisdom. We are sure that for Windsong School to be deserving, we must practice selflessness. This is sacrifice in the spiritual sense, and the incense of our sacrifice rises to the heavens.

Festivals

Festivals at Windsong School allow the community to come together in the social realm in a rhythmic way to celebrate the seasons. These festivals have been celebrated since the beginning of time when humans were more connected to cosmic rhythm. In celebrating at Windsong, we strive to bring spiritual pictures into the material world. The community gathers in an artistic way to create an imagination of the festival as a sacred gathering to warm our hearts and enliven our thinking. Festivals are anchoring points for both the children and the whole community. They are the same year after year, as students look forward in anticipation to this repetition. We want to keep our festivals simple and meaningful, which is why there are few.

Transparency

From our beginnings, we have put ourselves out on a limb, so to speak, not only in starting a school with all the many aspects involved, but in starting a Waldorf school. Waldorf education has at its basic foundational principles Anthroposophy-the work of Rudolph Steiner. Very simply defined as humanity's wisdom to transform itself and the world through one's own spiritual development.

Anthroposophy lives in the forefront of our school as the truth. To hide or conceal that fact is a disservice to our students and their families, our faculty, and our community at large. Spiritual development can be defined in many ways depending on your perceptions, prejudices, life experiences, etc. When we speak of our spiritual development in Waldorf education, we are defining it as the intention of seeking meaning, purpose, and fulfillment to life through a living, moving model of education. Our curriculum, pedagogy, and teaching methods are designed to bring out each student's individual purpose in their life and their spiritual nature within it to serve humanity and the world.

Studying Anthroposophy is not a requirement to attend our school. We do have an active

study group that meets once a month if you are interested in learning more.

Reverence

To hold in high regard, deep respect, awe, or wonder are all definitions of the word reverence. However, it is difficult to condense the word as there is so much contained within it. One can experience reverence by observing an ant carry a grain of wheat to its nest, a crocus pushing through the topsoil in chilly spring, or a mother singing to her babe in arms.

Every day at Windsong contains within it multiple opportunities for our children to experience reverence, thus creating a sense of calm and inner nourishment to take with them into the world. From our daily rhythms and stories to our festivals and our curriculum as a whole, reverence is abundantly available.

The daily verses that are spoken cultivate a deep respect for many activities during the day such as morning greetings, painting time, mealtimes, rest periods, etc. Listening to stories and the rich language they have to offer, opens up a world of beauty, strife, grace, struggles and gratitude. In other words-what it means to be human.

Rather than being “taught” science formally in early childhood and early grades, our students dig in the earth and sand, climb, build forts and make mud pies allowing them to experience and participate, thus taking in deeply the world around them. Observing the seasons, growing a garden, observing birds, insects and other animals all give rise to how children see and relate to the environment.

Windsong carries this tradition of reverence and gratitude - those moments of stillness that allow the mind to settle and breathe in what surrounds us, guiding us to connecting with all that is. All these things and so much more are the gift of reverence we offer every day.

Free Will

We value opportunities to let people (students, colleagues, parents) work out of free will. Our mission is to develop the will. We can accompany people as they make mistakes and help them pick up the pieces. Letting people work out of freedom may be more important than avoiding problems.

Why are we a private school?

We're an independent school! We will support charter schools but will always keep Windsong alive for independence to seed the movement and to be a well from which all educators, including charter educators, can draw. If there is no independent setting, the well will run dry, and Waldorf education will cease to exist.

Why are we a poor school?

We find that being poor necessitates resourcefulness and creates resiliency, and we want our students to have these qualities. In the EC classroom, we must sometimes recreate scenes from the past so that children can do chores. We don't need to do this to create opportunities for resourcefulness and resilience. We have also determined to keep the

school accessible. This means tuition is kept as low as possible, period. We want families to keep their money, and we never want anyone turned away from our school because they can't pay. This doesn't mean we need to be masochists. It just means we need to remember that we don't want to be an exclusive school. If we are exclusive, we've lost something important that fed our students and our community. As founding teacher Renee Rahn has said, "We're all about real."

Childcare at Windsong

We have consciously decided to make part-time early childhood programs our priority. We do not offer before care, after care, or year round care. There are many benefits to this for both teachers and families alike which we value more than the financial benefit such programs would provide. When our programs dismiss, the children go home with parents, friends, caregivers, and/or relatives. We have seen our community strengthened as families create their own villages to care for each other's children or to share caregivers. Most importantly, the children get to go *home*, which we believe is a strengthening and life giving force that is needed for today's children.