

How to Build Your Waldorf Community: Discovering Waldorf

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How to Build Your Waldorf Community

– by Meredith Floyd-Preston

“Finish up your snack. It’s time to go wait for Daddy.”

It was 4:00 on a November Wednesday and I was preparing my 1-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son for the “wait for Daddy” afternoon practice that had been in place for months. It was a somewhat ridiculous exercise for several reasons...

1. It was a chilly November in a San Francisco suburb known for its depressing late-afternoon fog.
2. I knew very well that Daddy wouldn’t be home for another hour and a half.
3. Our suburban street was eerily quiet and unfriendly. Our long afternoon vigil would be a lonely and solitary activity.

Despite these arguments for abandoning the practice, after a long day at home alone with little ones, I looked forward to that “Daddy’s home!” moment with such longing, I was willing to brave the elements and create a little welcoming committee.

When I look back on it, it is clear that what I was really longing for was community. My children were little and a few days each week I had a Waldorf-inspired childcare in our home, so my options for community felt really limited. The highlights of my days were the few opportunities for adult interaction that I had managed to create...

- My long-held NPR habit became solidified as I snuck off to the kitchen during nap time to listen to soothing adult voices.
- We never missed weekly story-time at the library (I’ll never forget the tears that ensued one day when we arrived and found the library closed – I’ll let you guess if the tears were mine or 4-year-old Calvin’s.)
- I found a homeschooling group that met weekly a couple of towns over. Even though the academic-minded preschooler parents didn’t share my Waldorf leanings, we went as often as we could.

Community is Important

There is no doubt that community is important when it comes to raising children (it takes a village, after all.) According to the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development,

“When parents receive parenting support, they are more likely to feel better about themselves and their parenting abilities, and in turn interact with their children in responsive and supportive ways enhancing the development of their children.”

I know that parenting support in the form of a community during those fog-filled days would have made me less lonely, a better parent, a more caring wife and a more fulfilled individual.

Unfortunately, though, some of our Waldorf ideals can actually make community building more challenging.

- Waldorf ideals recognize and honor the importance of the home as the most appropriate place for the young child. Limiting exposure to the larger world and spending most of your time at home can feel incredibly isolating for many Waldorf parents.
- Holding Waldorf ideals can cause us to feel estranged from the larger mainstream world. When your children don't know the Frozen soundtrack by heart or you can't participate in playground conversations about traditional discipline, you can feel a bit left out.

Truly, parenting the Waldorf way can be a lonely and isolating experience.

But it doesn't have to be.

How to Create a Waldorf Community

That “Daddy's Home!” ritual that my little ones and I practiced feels like yesterday but it was 17 long years ago. The following year my son started kindergarten and we joined a Waldorf community.

These days, when I ask my Waldorf alumni children what they miss most about Waldorf School, they always answer “the community.” We found a supportive group of parents, teachers and children to connect with and that made all the difference.

It took some time for me to find the right way to get involved with this established community, but here are some ways you can start to find your own unique place.

If you have a Waldorf school nearby . . .

- Volunteer – Waldorf schools are always needing support. Donate your time, money or expertise to make the community a better place.

- Sign up for a class or camp. Most Waldorf schools offer parent-child classes and summer break camps. If money is an issue, ask for a scholarship. Waldorf schools want their communities to be thriving, interesting places and they usually won't let money get in the way.
- Post playdates, childcare and activities on the community bulletin board or weekly newsletter. There are bound to be other people like you looking for opportunities to get together with their children.



If you don't have a Waldorf school nearby . . .

- Attend meetings at your local La Leche League chapter. If your children are past breastfeeding age, contact the leader and ask if she has contacts for conscious parenting communities.
- Talk to other parents at the park. Be on the lookout for the parents whose parenting choices reflect your own. Be brave and start conversations.
- Use social media. There is an active Waldorf community online. Talk to people via forums on Mothering.com, [Facebook groups](#) or Twitter. The internet is a fantastic resource *for adults*. Using it to find community is not out of sync with Waldorf ideals.
- Recognize that the benefits of community far outweigh the drawbacks of plastic toys or media exposure. Though the parents at my weekly homeschooling group didn't share my Waldorf ideals, they were conscious, intentional parents and they provided my family with the community we needed.



DISCOVERING WALDORF

How to Build Your Waldorf Community



However you go about it, get out there and find yourself a community. You'll be happier, your children will benefit, and Daddy won't mind so much if you're not home to roll out the welcome carpet.

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Meredith Floyd-Preston is a Waldorf class teacher and mother of 3 who blogs and podcasts about her experiences at [A Waldorf Journey](#).

This workshop explains and guides you through the beautiful and meaningful philosophies that you can bring into your home to create a calm and creative sanctuary wherein your children will thrive.

In today's busy and over-scheduled world, so many of us are searching for ways to help our children enjoy an authentic and joyful childhood, one in which they have time for unscheduled play, building deep and meaningful connections with friends, animals and the earth and lots of magical time in nature.

I'm happy to let you know that a few key (and simple) changes can make all of this possible.

And, for a limited time only, I'm offering this workshop at a special discount for Magic Onions readers...

Blessings and magic,

Donni

[The Benefits Of A Daily Rhythm And How It Can Help Your Family Thrive](#)

A Waldorf family rhythm is the daily, weekly and yearly recurring activities that we do together, as a family, with intention.



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We all know that many of the hazardous chemicals in conventional cleaning products are often carcinogens, neurotoxins, mutagens, teratogens, or endocrine disrupters. Of course these

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