

Paul Vernon

Education since the Waldorf School:

Central Secondary School, London, Ontario
B.A. Philosophy, Columbia University
Currently in law school at New York University

Work experience since the Waldorf School:

2000-2002: United States Peace Corps in Mauritania (in West Africa): Water Sanitation and Community Health Worker.

2003-2004: New York County District Attorney's Office: Trial Preparation Assistant.

Current studies and/or job:

Law student, New York University School of Law

What I remember most about my experience at the London Waldorf School was how many different approaches we took to learning about a subject. My teachers presented each subject not just as a lesson to be learned but also as a story, as music or as art. The topic of each main lesson could become part of all our activities during any given day. In this way, what I was learning really came to life for me.

Learning in this manner prepared me well for my later educational experiences, which were all much more one-dimensional. I believe that remembering how things were done at the London Waldorf School made me able to bring subjects to life for myself.

In a world where much of what we must learn is presented in a dull and unengaging manner, I cannot imagine a more useful skill.

Duncan Patterson

Education since the Waldorf School:

South Secondary School London Ontario, Ontario Scholar

4.5 years at University of Waterloo School of Architecture, four months from finishing undergraduate degree

Work experience since the Waldorf School:

11 months of labour employment

16 months in junior positions in the profession of architecture

Current studies and/or job:

Jestico & Whiles Architecture (London, UK)

Student Architect

I found my experience at London Waldorf to be very rewarding. I was there for a full 10 years beginning in Nursery and ending in Grade Eight. I find various facets of the pedagogy to be very intuitive:

a) A lack of pressure on the individual students to push themselves beyond their present level of development, allowing the education to respond to the child's natural growth. I feel that the decision not to provide numerical grades in the younger years or having an official program of "pass or fail" was key as it responded more subjectively to the student's particular needs on an individual basis.

b) I found the pedagogical approach of introducing the children to wide variety of mythological perspectives as a foundation upon which to lay a historical understanding of the world to be a highly sophisticated technique. I feel it gifts the children with the wisdom that mythology contains without highlighting its moral dimensions. It also provides the children, early on, with an understanding of the plurality of understandings of reality and the way in which mythology pervades our existence. As Thomas King wrote, "The truth about stories is that's all we are," and I feel that the way in which my education was administered agrees with this.

c) The emphasis upon teaching the stuff of education (maths, grammar, etc) in a wholistic manner (combining it with art, physical activity) is conducive to the development of well-rounded students. Bringing creativity specifically into all aspects of the education engages a special part of the student that I believe is vastly underappreciated by other approaches to education.

Shaylih Muehlmann

Education since the Waldorf School:

2002: Combined Honours BA in Anthropology and Linguistics (University of Western Ontario)

2003: Masters in Linguistic Anthropology (University of Toronto)

2004 to present: PhD in Linguistic Anthropology (University of Toronto)

Work experience since the Waldorf School:

Lots of odd jobs: waitressing, bookstores, ballet instructor in Montreal. More recently a research assistant for a discourse lab as well as a teaching assistant for several different undergraduate courses in Anthropology and Linguistics at the University of Toronto.

Current studies and/or job:

I am currently a doctoral candidate in Linguistic Anthropology at the University of Toronto. My research focuses on how linguistic strategies used in disputes over the Colorado River have contributed to the establishment of radically unequal water rights among different groups. I am currently conducting my doctoral fieldwork among the Cucapá Indians at the end of the Colorado River in Northern Mexico. In the Mexican delta, over use of the river upstream has created an environmental and political crisis which has had devastating effects for the Cucapá community. While maps still show the Colorado River running from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of California, in recent years, it rarely reaches the sea.

The London Waldorf School was quite possibly the last public venue that concerned itself with my well-being as a whole person. My educational and professional experiences since, while rewarding in many ways, have focused on developing and assessing only very limited sets of skills necessary to become a student, worker, or professional.

I'm grateful for my time at Waldorf for reinforcing from such an early age the importance of my development as a human being – with an awareness of a responsibility to others and to the world, as opposed to a straight focus on competition or material success. This emphasis fostered a deeper sense of self-esteem and self-worth, which wasn't contingent on external markers of success, and as such I think it provided a crucial foundation from which to pursue my own interests and trust my own convictions.

Jennifer Sheppard

University of Berkeley, PhD candidate. Currently writing a dissertation on Czech opera

The London Waldorf School gave me the ability to approach material in a creative and original way. The subjects that were taught, the way they were taught and the holistic direction behind the curriculum shaped the way I think about things. A Waldorf education gave me the ability to think outside of the box.

Meghan Herd

Risk Manager, TD Waterhouse

Going to high school, I was way ahead and well prepared. My education at the London Waldorf School helped me to be a creative thinker. It influenced my critical thinking. The curriculum and in particular making our own text books made me more independent and confident.