



RUDOLF
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Focus on Kamali Sripathi

by *Limor Geisler*

Kamali Sripathi (HS Class of 2005), a third-year doctoral student in pharmaceutical chemistry at the University of Michigan, has just returned from a research trip to the Czech Republic when I meet with her at a coffee shop to talk about her experience as a student at Rudolf Steiner High School (RSHS). She is studying the hepatitis delta virus: specifically the structure and function of catalytic RNA that aids in the virus' replication. Sripathi recalls proudly her Czech hosts' response to the depth of her knowledge of modern Czech history and the reforms of Vaclav Havel. "I told them, 'this is so strange. I'm two and a half hours from Prague, which I learned about in high school.' They were really surprised."

Sripathi says she had an early interest in languages, math and science. A competitive child who thrived on academic rigor, Sripathi remembers the Steiner curriculum as "flexible enough to allow you to go ahead if you want to or need to."

She was in an accelerated math program in eighth grade that culminated in college-level calculus in the twelfth grade. This mirrors the very nature of Waldorf education, which is to be more open to each child's learning style.

When asked what a strong arts education was like for a mathematically and scientifically inclined child, Sripathi responds with assurance that she liked it because it teaches you to think in a different way. "Because you are developing both parts of your brain, essentially, it helps with outside-of-the-box thinking. I think that the conventional school system places a lot of emphasis on memorization and regurgitation and you see that a lot. Eventually you are going to come to a place in any job where you need to troubleshoot or you need to use your imagination."

Sripathi was mentored by former U-M chemistry professor and RSHS chemistry teacher Dr. Seyhan Ege. "She was an amazing woman," remembers Sripathi. After Sripathi entered the U-M where she studied plant biology as an undergraduate, she would visit Dr. Ege every few months. They would talk about what she was learning and Dr. Ege would give her journal articles to read. Sripathi describes this encouragement and faith in her potential as "humbling."

"A lot of the time it seems like she is still taking care of me." Even after her death, "it feels like she still has her eye on me."

Sripathi describes the way Ege taught as a "meeting between Waldorf and the University of Michigan." She taught the high school students college-level fundamentals – orbitals, redox reactions, balancing equations – but she tried to lead them to the answer and encouraged class discussion.

"One of my favorite memories of Dr. Ege is that she said she loved the way that Waldorf students describe color. It's never orange or green; it's chartreuse or vermilion or Prussian blue. It's true. Whenever I describe colors in my head it's never red: it's cinnamon. And I think of her."

Sripathi says this keen development of her senses makes her a better observer in her work as a scientist. "Waldorf education helped me in other ways, as well. Eurythmy helped my vision. And I am more comfortable working with my hands." All this has benefited her work in the lab.

As we prepare to leave the coffee shop, Sripathi offers a final reflection on her experience at RSHS. "I am deeply grateful at an educational, emotional and professional level for the Waldorf education I received." ■



Kamali Sripathi

What's Inside

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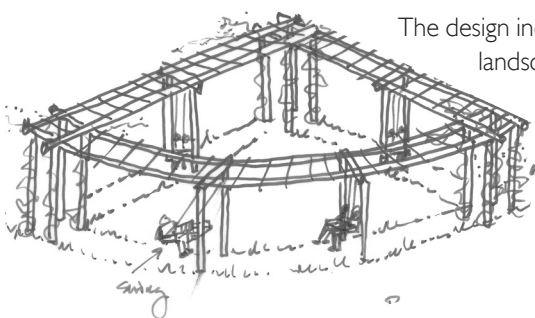
Many thanks to our editors:
Maryanne Lawrence,
Melinda Mathias-Porter
and Katrina Klaphake

Natural Playground Master Plan Complete

by **Katrina Klaphake**

Picture a natural, outdoor space where children can create dams and rivers from a water pump, hop between tree stump “stepping stones,” hang out on huge boulders, or practice fort-building skills with natural, loose parts. These are components of a vision for a fascinating new play space for our pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students. This Master Plan was designed by Shannan Gibb-Randall of InSite Design with support from the James A. and Faith Knight Foundation and an anonymous donor.

The components of the playground encourage creative problem-solving and appropriate risk-taking in an environment that pays attention to native species and environmental stewardship.



The design includes reshaping the landscape into gentle slopes and curves that create spaces such as an amphitheater for outdoor performances and a



rejuvenated sledding hill. Rain water from the roof will be redirected through troughs in the black-top that spill into a circular channel, where children can play. This water then drains into a path of rain gardens that reduce the run-off that goes into the Huron River. An expanded garden, with waddle fencing to protect it from grazing deer, will further enrich the gardening and outdoor education curriculum.

Renovating the outdoor space at the Rudolf Steiner School will create an area that allows children to reconnect with nature while stewarding our land for the betterment of the environment. We are raising funds to begin phase one of the project. If you are interested in supporting this project, please contact Katrina at kklaphake@steinerschool.org. ■

Annual Fund 2010-11

Tuition alone does not cover the cost of a complete Waldorf education. Each year, generous contributions to the Annual Fund allow us to reap benefits that would not otherwise have been possible and enable our school to grow and thrive. When we demonstrate a commitment to the school through the Annual Fund, it encourages external organizations to support the school as well. Last year, we raised \$40,000 from outside organizations, in part, because we showed the highest participation in the Annual Fund in our school's history.

If you haven't yet contributed, now is your chance. Please give to the best of your ability. Print the donor form or give online at www.steinerschool.org/donate. ■



Focus on Arbor Farms Market and the Fox Family

by **Cindy York**

There is an obvious synergy between RSSAA and Arbor Farms Market. Arbor Farms is a long-established organic and natural foods market specializing in locally grown produce, meats and poultry. A full-service grocery, the store also boasts an extensive deli counter, wine and beer selection, and vitamin, supplement and personal care section.

In 1979, Leo Fox cofounded Arbor Farms Market; his first business partner moved on to other interests in 1983. Leo and his wife Dianna then ran the store together until 2004 when Store Director Robert Cantelon became a partner. Last year, Arbor Farms celebrated its 30th anniversary.

The Fox family and Arbor Farms have been long-time supporters of RSSAA, through personal service and financial support to the school. Leo says Steiner parents, like he and Dianna, want quality and are willing to invest in it – quality education for their children and quality food on the table.

A quality education was their objective when Leo and Dianna decided to place their daughter Anni at the Lower School for kindergarten. Leo said that they visited several schools before deciding upon RSSAA. He said the deciding factor was an emphasis on a developmentally-appropriate curriculum for the education of the young child – “let kids be kids.” It was obvious, he said, “Anni was clearly a Steiner kid.”

The Arbor Farms Market Scrip Program

In 1994, Leo Fox and Steiner parent Becky Schmitt put their heads together to figure out a way to more closely connect Arbor Farms and RSSAA. Long before the current popularity of standardized Scrip programs in the local schools, Becky and Leo devised a program called Simple Scrip. Steiner families and friends who shopped at Arbor Farms could advise their cashier that they wanted a portion of their purchase donated to RSSAA. At the end of every month, Arbor Farms totals the gross receipts and remit a 5 percent rebate check to RSSAA. The original Arbor Farms Simple Scrip program has since evolved to the current program, which uses reloadable cards. Leo and Dianna have not kept track of the amount they have donated over the years, but the checks from Arbor Farms



(left to right) Suzanne Reinhardt, Anni Fox, Dianna Fox and Leo Fox

total hundreds of dollars each month. The Scrip program requires families to do nothing more than what they would do every week anyway – shop for groceries.



For the school and for Arbor Farms, it's truly a “win-win” situation – Arbor Farms Market develops new and devoted customers, and in return, RSSAA receives a significant financial benefit. Arbor Farms Scrip cards are available Friday mornings at the Lower School and in both High School and Lower School offices. (For questions on the Scrip program e-mail Martha Leabu at marthaq@sbcglobal.net.)

Leo Fox's Personal Service to RSSAA

Leo Fox has volunteered a lot of his personal time to the school, serving on the Board's Finance Committee and as Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. He was also involved in the creation of the High School. Anni entered the ninth grade during the year that the High School campus on Pontiac Trail opened, bringing Leo's commitment to help create a Steiner High School full-circle.

Anni is now a staff member at the Lower School, joining this year as the Aftercare Director and Kindergarten Assistant. The Fox Family and Arbor Farms remain committed friends and supporters of RSSAA . ■



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RSHS Alumni Reunion

Join your fellow graduates for a fun evening of food and camaraderie.

Sunday, Dec. 26, 2010
8 pm at Cafe Habana
211 East Washington

RSVP to awalton@steinerschool.org
or (734) 669-9394, ext. 11

Steiner Athletics Shine

by Neil Kagan

Inclusive. That's the defining term for sports at the RSSAA. Some 80 percent of students at the Lower School in 6th-8th grades have joined a team. Over 50 percent at the High School participate.

According to Becky Chapin, the High School Athletic Director, "Our sports program reaches students who might be left out at larger schools and gives them the opportunity to benefit from the experience of participating as members of a team." Becky says that the experience can teach valuable life lessons, including the importance of making a commitment and channeling individual effort for the betterment of the group.

Sports offered at the Lower School include coed soccer, girls' volleyball (coached by Chris Cristian), boys' and girls' basketball (coached by Lawrence Mathews, Betsy Howell and Becky Chapin), and boys' and girls' track (coached by

Linda Teaman). This year, soccer finished a stellar season by winning their conference tournament with coach Kirsten Hallstrom.

The sports program at the High School expanded with the addition of boys' and girls' soccer. Debra Molitor coaches the girls' team and Moses Mlothia the boys' team. This year also saw the addition of boys' and girls' cross-country, where Carol and Rob Benedict coach both teams. The girls' volleyball team swept all four matches at the Mid-South Conference tournament this season under the direction of Coach Cristian assisted by Alex Perrin. Tenth grader Josephine Mathias-Porter was unanimously selected by all of the conference athletic directors and coaches as the 2010 Player of the Year; the first time a RSHS student has been recognized in this way. Josephine and three other High School volleyball team members, Tessa Belanger, Anika Sproull and Anthea van Geloven, were selected as all-conference "Dream Team" members. Boys' and girls' basketball continue with Jimmy Belanger coaching girls and Bob Cosey coaching boys. ■