



August 2020

**Dear 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents and Students,**

Welcome back to another school year at our fabulous Waldorf School! I am honored to be your teacher as you continue your educational journey through the middle school. With three new students, the social fabric of our class continues to grow and expand in a dynamic and nurturing way. I have spent most of my summer out near Seattle after driving my family across the country and back. During this time along the rather empty roads of America, I have pondered my time with you soon to begin anew. The beauty of nature around me, the lakes of Minnesota and the flat-lands and endless sky of North Dakota, followed by the rising Rockies and Cascade mountain ranges that mark the West like giants defending their land while also welcoming visitors – witnessing the ever transforming landscape has reminded me very much of the middle school years. Each of you are on your own unique journey, yet are connected by the friendships in our classroom. Your journey is inward and outward, intellectual, artistic, emotional. There are mountains to climb and rivers to swim in, and roadblocks to overcome. As we embark on another exploration of the world around us, I hope your love for play is matched by your quest for knowledge and discovery.

We will begin our year once again using Zoom for our daily classes and Google Classroom as the hub for all things related to our studies. Please refer to our Google classroom for all things from each of your teachers, including assignments and instructions, your daily Zoom schedule and Zoom links, your main lesson block rotation for the year, and places to upload your work. When we hopefully return to the physical classroom in October, our class will be that much stronger having held ourselves together as a class and a family of friends during this challenging time.

Updated log-in information and other instructions related to Google Classroom will be shared with you later this month.

Below please find the 7<sup>th</sup> grade main lesson block rotation for this year along with descriptions of each main lesson.

**September 8<sup>th</sup>-October 2<sup>nd</sup> Renaissance I – Mr. Yaeger**

In this main lesson we will begin where we left off at the end of Middle Ages, focusing on the flowering of culture and thinking that erupted in Europe, beginning first in Florence, Italy and then spreading to all parts of Italy, to Spain and France, and beyond. Great artists from the time period will be celebrated and explored through storytelling and the

reading of first-hand accounts. Main lesson books will contain carefully crafted maps, portraits and illustrations that bring to life this amazing time period in history.

**October 5<sup>th</sup>-October 30<sup>th</sup> Algebra - Mr. Gentile**

This main lesson block brings students from the “known” to the “unknown” in mathematics. Students will move from concrete to abstract ways of thinking. The main lesson block in Algebra begins with the history of Algebra and moves on to many important algebraic concepts. Through prior knowledge of arithmetic and working with numbers, the algebraic expression will be introduced. From there, students will explore solving one and two step equations. Through pattern recognition, the students will also study and perform operations with Integers. The final topic of the course is an introduction to polynomials. Each day will begin with a math warm-up exercise based on an activity or mental math in an effort to strengthen the skills they have already studied throughout their journey in Math.

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>-November 25<sup>th</sup> Asian Geography – Mr. Yaeger**

This main lesson will bring to life the geography and cultures of Asia, focusing on how the land has influenced the array of cultures found there. Students will learn about historic Emperors and trade routes, unique spiritual beliefs, as-well as assorted cuisines that define each culture, and Asia’s immense influence on the world throughout history. Mapmaking and composition writing, as-well as colorful illustrations, will make up the bulk of the main lesson book. A final project will be to research and present one unique aspect of a chosen country’s culture.

**November 30<sup>th</sup>-December 18<sup>th</sup> Chemistry – Mrs. Stemkoski**

The study of chemistry begins in the seventh grade, and work in this branch of the physical sciences continues through high school. In this first block, the topic of chemistry is introduced through careful study of familiar phenomena. Students are always surprised to realize how much more there is to see and understand, even in something as commonplace as a burning candle - and the guided process of discovery draws them fully into the work of the course. With an emphasis on safe and appropriate technique, students gain experience with common laboratory equipment and procedures as they explore combustion and neutralization reactions.

**January 4<sup>th</sup>-January 29<sup>th</sup> Physiology – Mrs. Stemkoski**

Who are we? The seventh grade study of physiology engages students in examining the wonderful inner workings of the human being. Discovery of the connections between form and function during the investigation of major body organs and organ systems allows students to develop a new appreciation for both the whole human organism and the relationships among its many parts. Detailed discussions and modeling activities develop strong understandings of the digestive, circulatory, respiratory, endocrine, and human

reproductive systems. They also reveal many additional questions. Coursework therefore also typically includes study of nutrition, blood types, substance use, human sexuality, and illness & disease. Comprehensive compositions and beautifully technical illustrations form the foundation for the main lesson book in this course.

**February 1st-March 5th**

**Renaissance II / Explorers – Mr. Yaeger**

In this main lesson we will continue our exploration through history and the influence of the Renaissance on countries such as England and the key figures of this time period, including Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, and Shakespeare. Through stories and the viewing of artistic works from this era, students will gain a personal connection to perhaps our own country's greatest influence. In *Explorers*, we will expand our focus beyond the continents and explore the routes taken by a variety of cultures crisscrossing the oceans of the world in the spirit of exploration. From the Polynesians to the Vikings, the Chinese, African explorers from the Mali Empire, to Europe's quest to find a quicker route to the "Indies", this main lesson will bring to life these epic journeys and begin to touch upon the impacts of this age of exploration. Attention will also be paid to explorers in the scientific field, such as Copernicus and Galileo Galilee.

**March 9<sup>th</sup>-April 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Geometry – Mrs. Stemkoski**

Geometry in the seventh grade builds upon the skills and experiences using geometric tools begun last year and brings greater emphasis to precision and intricacy in multi-step constructions. Dividing the circle and creating regular polygons using the principles of point, line, and plane and only a compass and straightedge leads to investigating the qualities of numbers. Through work with the pentagram, the Golden Ratio, or *Phi*, is revealed and then further discovered in patterns of growth in nature. The Fibonacci sequence, Archimedean and Logarithmic spirals, and the Pythagorean Theorem are developed and considered through visual proofs and applications.

**April 12<sup>th</sup> – May 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Physics – Mrs. Stemkoski**

How does *that* work? Seventh grade study in physics broadens and deepens the work introduced last year. Playful exploration and serious experimentation in the fields of acoustics, optics, thermodynamics, mechanics, and electricity provide students with ample opportunity to observe and analyze phenomena both qualitatively and quantitatively. Students delight in discovering the mathematical relationships hidden within the experiences of their everyday lives - in music, in mirrors, in machines, for example. Technical writing skills combine with beautifully accurate illustrations and create the record of work in this main lesson book.

**May 10<sup>th</sup> – June 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Class Play + Wish, Wonder & Surprise – Mr. Yaeger**

In *Wish, Wonder and Surprise*, students will study the various crafts of creative writing, from poetry to fiction, short-story writing, among other forms. Great attention will be

paid to summoning the imagination in each student through a variety of observational exercises in and outside of the classroom. A final “reading” will be held where students will share a piece of their writing to the class. A main lesson book of writing terms, reflections and notes from various exercises that include drawings and writing, will be completed by each student.

Simultaneous to the work being done in this main lesson will be our class play!

## **Supplies**

If you have any supplies from 6<sup>th</sup> grade that are still in good condition, please feel free to have your child use them again in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, including dividers and binders.

**Please be aware that once we return to the school building students will not be allowed to share their supplies.** By the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade a number of students had very worn down colored pencils and some broken rulers and other materials for Geometry. Please double-check to make sure that all of your child’s supplies are in good working order, as they will not be permitted to lend a classmate supplies this year.

**Supplies marked with an asterisk (\*) can be purchased in our school supply store. You should soon receive directions from school on how best to do this during this time.**

- 1 3-ring 2" wide binder for main lesson material (can use current binder)
- 2 packages of dividers
- 1 package of wide-ruled paper
- 1 3-hole pencil case to fit 3-ring binder
- 1 C-thru ruler\*
- 1 Staedtler compass
- 1 set of Mercurius colored pencils 24 count\*
- 3 lead pencils and 1 pencil sharpener
- 1 eraser
- 1 ink eradicator pen\*
- 1 set of V5 Pilot Fine Point Colored Pens

Other important items that your child needs:

- A dedicated pair of gym shoes that will remain at school.
- A water bottle with a safety cap.

**First Class Meeting: Tuesday September 15<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm via Zoom**

With great excitement and joy I await the chance to see all of you again for our next installment of middle school at the Waldorf School of Garden City. There are new stories to write together as a class, new worlds to explore and discuss, and new friendships to make. May this welcome letter serve as an open door to all of you as we soon set off on our adventure together.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. I do ask that you refrain from texting me except when urgent, but rather use my school email address for communication, or give me a call. I prefer not to be contacted after 8:00pm, thank you.

Peace to you,

**Mr. Yaeger**

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