



One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree.
“Which road do I take?” she asked. “Where do you want to go?” was his response.

I was asked to write this letter because we moved to the area so that our children could attend River Valley Waldorf School. Allow me, with a little help from Lewis Carroll, to share our story.

A few years ago, we were struggling to maintain our ideals in the community where we lived. Our son, Aidan was nearing nursery school age and I began to seek our first school experience. One day, I received an email from an acquaintance detailing a Waldorf Early Childhood Intensive Training program at Sunbridge College. I had read a bit about Waldorf education and was intrigued. I decided to attend, hoping to continue my own education as a teacher and perhaps bring some of the ideas to my community. At Sunbridge, I felt the pull toward the beauty and sense of Waldorf education but was dismayed that there were no Waldorf schools in our area. “You move for a Waldorf school, most of us did,” a woman stated in a matter of fact tone. There were nods from the patient and compassionate faces around the room, (imagine Ms. Kathy’s warm smile... she was there). “They must be mad!” I thought.

“But I don’t want to go among mad people,” said Alice.
“Oh, you can’t help that,” said the cat, “We’re all mad here.”

So, here I was, mad about Waldorf education, with no school in sight. We commuted forty-five minutes to a Waldorf-inspired nursery school for one year and then found a teacher and six children for another beautiful year in our own Waldorf initiative that eventually dissolved. Our path had become clear. We had to find an existing Waldorf school and a community that would meet our family’s needs and standards. After visiting a few Waldorf schools, River Valley felt right. With a leap of faith, our son Aidan began kindergarten the very day that the moving trucks crossed into Pennsylvania.

The River Valley area is centrally isolated – few people are here by mistake. Moving here and attending RVWS, we have felt like Alice dropping down into the rabbit-hole. The ever changing palette of the seasons and scenery, the creative, warm and wonderful cast of talented characters and the seemingly magical rhythm of life here at RVWS supports us and our children well. Being here inspires us to reach deeper into ourselves to give more, to be the most we can be, to realize our ideals. We are seeing our son blossom and begin to come into his own power at RVWS.

In the short time we’ve been here, we have also seen great growth in the school and have begun to understand the power of a community served with devoted hearts and hands. We’ve witnessed festivals take off through the most cooperative efforts. We’ve felt the strength of the

new leadership team, shared in the building of the garden and bread oven sheds, and marveled at the re-organization of the middle school that will surely lead us into a bright future.

In these challenging economic times, being a part of an independent school community can be a struggle for many who, like us, find this education to be a fit for their family. Increasing enrollment is more challenging in this market, but the costs of running high quality programs stay the same. Improving and expanding programs and expensive utilities increase costs, but RVWS remains committed to keeping tuition as affordable as possible. Thanks in part to efforts to expand our donor base beyond the walls of our school, the goals for the 2008-09 Annual Appeal remain the same as in recent years: we must raise \$50,000 to help us meet our financial needs and we count on 100% participation to present a committed community to potential donors and grant-makers.

“There is no use in trying,” said Alice, “one can’t believe impossible things.”
“I dare say you haven’t had much practice,” said the Queen. “When I was your age, I always did it for a half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

Let’s make it happen. Give what you can give; every gift helps and we can only reach 100% participation if *you* give something. For those who are fortunate enough to give more during these difficult economic times, please give generously. For some, the auto-payment program is in place to facilitate smaller monthly donations that add up to make a real difference.

Please return your pledge by **January 31** to save the school time and money in follow-up reminders. Let’s continue on this road together, giving all that we can to keep River Valley Waldorf School an inspired place of learning.

Warmly,

Felicia Holtz, 1st Grade & Garden Gate Parent