



Report from the Research Institute for Waldorf Education and Waldorf Publications

Patrice Maynard

There is a blush of accomplishment around the Research Institute for Waldorf Education (RIWE) as the Waldorf High School Graduate Research project begins the analytical phase of the abundant data collected from over 1,000 alumni/ae from Waldorf high schools across North America. Statistical analysis has been undertaken by Andrew Starzynski, himself a Waldorf graduate. Publication of results has been timed to coincide with the celebration next year of Waldorf 100 as one of RIWE's offerings to our celebrations around the globe.

Douglas Gerwin, Executive Director of RIWE, continues his work with the International Forum for Waldorf/Steiner Education by helping to draft a "Charter for Childhood," describing succinctly the tenets of a healthy childhood in relation to the rightful role and limitations of technology in education. It promises a different view of childhood from the market-driven picture commonly held in our culture today.

Patrice Maynard, Director of Publications and Development, has been involved of late in several radio interviews, prompting conversations around the topic, "Technology in Education – Helping or Addicting." Interest in RIWE's research on technology and its place in education and in our world came from the wide spectrum of real estate and interior design shows to educationally focused programs.

Waldorf Publications has just forwarded its recipient schools a *Research Bulletin* special publication, titled *Technology's Rightful Place: Selected Essays* and comprised of curated content from the Bulletin's three issues devoted to the question of technology. Our objective with the collection is to provide teachers and enrollment coordinators a handy reference of pithy articles addressing this important topic. The research on the effects of screen time reported in this collection is striking. See www.waldorfpublishations.org for more information.

RIWE has also partnered with three medical and academic experts on the issue of screen time. Victoria Dunkley, MD, is among these experts. Her remarkable efforts as a pediatrician have resulted in the formal diagnosis of "Effects of Electronic Screen Time" (EEST)

being accepted in the medical lexicon. This diagnosis now renders treatment possible. Her recommendation for treatment is to "Reset Your Child's Brain," which is the title of her recent book. Satisfying news is that when families go through her four-week reset plan, just about all heavy symptoms fall away (Oppositional Defiance Disorder, ADHD, and even bipolar disorders and signs of autism) when electronics are eliminated for this one-month period – a marvelous underscoring of the resilience of the young! Add to this the power of daily artistic activity in a Waldorf school, and hope becomes real transformation with these efforts.

Other new titles from Waldorf Publications include *Matt McFlack and His Flyaway Kite*, a happy little tale of childhood and the wind, and a brilliant new edition of Michael Preston's *Music from Around the World for Recorder*, complete with a CD performed by a professional recorder ensemble. Michael's introduction to recorders highlights the glorious practice of recorder playing woven into the weekly rhythms of Waldorf teaching. Because Waldorf Publications welcomed all Associated Schools of AWSNA to the Book Bank this year, all schools have received these three refreshing books.

A little-known fact about RIWE and Waldorf Publications is that its directors, Douglas and Patrice, even as they work closely together throughout the year, actually see each other in person only two or three times a year at all-day "threshing sessions," in which we review, decide, take stock, build and correct budgets, imagine, and plan. During these sessions we learn a lot and wonder at the cohesiveness of running parallel in different parts of North America, Europe, China, Brazil, and soon Iceland (where Douglas reports there is a Ministry of Gnomes – right up our alley!).

In the meantime, keep an eye out for our Annual Appeal. We will report our world map in new colors to illustrate the global reach of our research and publications.