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ANNOUNCEMENT OF RIBBON CUTTING

Ribbon Cutting and Celebration of The Farm at Ithaca Waldorf School

ITHACA, NY - The Ithaca Waldorf School (IWS) Board of Trustees invites the public to the ribbon-cutting ceremony on **Saturday, December 9th, at 10:30 am** to commemorate the groundbreaking of The Farm, the newest initiative of the school's Farm & Land Stewardship program. This ceremony will precede the school's annual Elves's Faire, a free family holiday crafting event that is open to the public from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The Elves' Faire is the school's annual parent-led winter festival where the school transforms into an Elves' workshop and the community is welcome to celebrate the winter holidays together. This family-friendly and child-centered event is filled with food, family fun, and holiday gift buying, with a portion of proceeds benefiting the school's scholarship fund. This year's event will feature items produced through the school's Farm & Land Stewardship program, showcasing the strides the school has taken to establish The Farm program. There will also be family activities, a book sale, and a bake sale.

In November 2023, IWS welcomed retired dairy cows Joyful, Strawberry, and Sherbet to their new home on campus where they have become part of a new school rhythm and endeavor to establish an outdoor classroom and learning center. The Farm & Land Stewardship program provides students with the opportunity to feed and water the cows each day and observe their overall health and well-being as they acclimate to people and their new surroundings. The next phase of the program includes the addition of worm composting and chickens. These are the early steps toward a fully formed farm classroom that will eventually include a pumpkin patch, forest garden and aquaculture.

"IWS students have always spent plenty of outdoor time as part of the curriculum," shares Board President and owner of Remembrance Farm Nathaniel Thompson. "We are excited to continue maple sugaring and other aspects of our land stewardship program, with the added dimension of these animals."

Waldorf education is rooted in a curriculum that values and moves in harmony with the natural rhythms of the land and the seasons. Through farming, students learn about the fundamental connections humans have with the earth, plants, and animals that sustain their ecosystems. “What makes The Farm different is learning how to be around a very different kind of living creature," Thompson adds. "A cow is much larger than us and she moves in a different way. You learn a way of interacting and you feel the responsibility of taking care of them.”

Middle school teacher Victoria Dehan observed, “When they take care of the cows, the students work with each other, learning to distribute the workload fairly. The interactions with the cows bring calm and levity to the students. There’s a lot of social-emotional learning happening as they have learned how to center themselves before they enter the space. ”

One student recently remarked, “Sherbet is more comfortable around us now that we spend time with her every day.” Another shared, “It’s cold in the morning, but it’s totally worth it."

For information about Ithaca Waldorf School, The Farm & Land Stewardship Program, school tours, or the Elves Faire, please contact Laura Hayes, School Director via email at lhayes@ithacawaldorf.org or Business Manager, Amelia Lefevre at alefevre@ithacawaldorf.org, or call 607-256-2020.