

Board Report

Louise deForest, WECAN Board Chair

We had a full and active Board meeting last month in Spring Valley, N.Y., inspired by our study and artistic work with Chapter 5 in *How to Know Higher Worlds* by Rudolf Steiner. Informed by our conversation with many Regional Representatives before the meeting, we looked at the health of our programs and the children and spent time discussing how we can continue to offer support to teachers and parents through our webinars, books and other resources, conferences, and regional gatherings. It was an exciting and fruitful discussion.

Our Spring Board meeting is when we hear from our working groups and committees about their activities over the last year and their intentions for future work. With Lynn Turner (on Zoom) and Leslie Wetzonis-Woolverton (in person), we celebrated the accomplishments of the past three years of IDEA activity as we complete a three-year grant-funded project to integrate inclusion, diversity, equity, and access into all aspects of WECAN's organization with Lynn and Leslie as our IDEA Coordinators. With WECAN'S ongoing commitment to this work, we also looked at future needs and activities. The Board and staff honored Lynn and Leslie at a special dinner where we expressed our heartfelt thanks for all they have accomplished during their tenure and we look forward to the next steps in this work.

The year 2026 will mark the 100th anniversary of Waldorf Early Childhood Education. The first official Waldorf kindergarten opened in 1926, in Stuttgart, Germany. The Board discussed ideas of how to celebrate what has gone before us, explore what and look forward to what the work with young children will become, and several plans are underway. Mark your calendars now for a World Conference in Dornach in mid-April 2026 and think about how you and your community would like to celebrate this special occasion.



From left to right: Louise deForest, Heather Church, Laura Mason, Anjum Mir, Keelah Helwig, Susan Howard, Magdalena Toran, Ruth Ker and Gabriela Nuñez Plata

At this meeting, the Board also said goodbye to Magdalena Toran, who is leaving after ten years of service on the Board. Magdalena has guided the Board's early work with diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, as well as the board's envisioning processes. She has been instrumental in focusing on and solidifying the work with our youngest children, and, together with her Birth to Three colleagues, has gathered an advisory circle of experienced caregivers, expanded our resources, and organized birth to three conferences. She will continue to be active in the Birth to Three Working Group.

One year ago, the Board hired Heather Church to join Susan Howard as a Co-Director, and the Board spent time reviewing their work together this year. They are wonderful compliments to one another, and the work of WECAN and our work has grown under this new (for us) leadership model. Susan Howard plans to retire in 2025-26. Reviewing the Co-Directors' positions and tasks will help the Board have a succession plan in place, and we worked on this in this meeting.

The next WECAN Board meeting will take place in Playa de Carmen, Mexico, from Oct. 29th to Nov. 1, 2024, when we will have the opportunity to visit local Waldorf early childhood programs and meet our Mexican colleagues in the area.