

WHAT DO WE NEED TO LEARN TO ENABLE WALDORF EDUCATION TO GROW BEYOND 100 YEARS?

Heather Church on behalf of the WECAN Board

A century is a long time; some of us live to that age, and many of us do not. One hundred years of Waldorf early childhood education represents a rich history of practice, development, and growth. Many dedicated educators have traveled far and wide to share and support those seeking Waldorf education, while others venture out to find colleagueship, growth, and inspiration and bring it home. Today, Waldorf early childhood education is present in 37 countries worldwide.

How does an organization last for 100 years? It signifies that Waldorf Early Childhood has worked with clear intention, a strong supporting culture, and a deep commitment to avoid complacency. How does an organization or a movement enter, with grace, into its next 100 years? To step into the next century, we must continue to hold this clear intention to serve the young child, to innovate with full awareness of why we do what we do, and develop and grow our capacities to meet the changes—both good and difficult—that we face in the world today. To mark 100 years is to show that we have paid close attention to the evolving needs of education worldwide. Now we must ask how we can, as those responsible for Waldorf Early Childhood, work together to ensure that this education endures into the future?

For these reasons and more, WECAN has chosen the image of the magnificent butterfly as a symbol for this milestone in our development. The butterfly is a creature that starts as a crawling caterpillar, carefully choosing what it eats to grow and develop, then becomes a chrysalis, and eventually unfolds into an entirely new creature: a butterfly with the gift of flight! Although it appears delicate, the butterfly travels great distances to find the right environments in which to rest and grow. Perhaps most notably, the mighty Monarch journeys across all three nations in North America that united to form WECAN - traveling across borders through Mexico, Canada, and the United States. WECAN invites you to discover the extraordinary life of the butterfly in your classrooms and communities.

This is a way to celebrate the past 100 years and look ahead to the next century. In this packet, you'll find some ideas to begin your journey of celebration within your classrooms, schools, and local communities.

Be creative, be inspired, and enjoy this celebration of Waldorf Early Childhood Education.