

## **BOARD REPORT**

Louise deForest, WECAN Board Chairperson

The WECAN Board continues its commitment to review and revise our documents in the light of diversity, equity, and inclusion. At the October Board meeting, we spent some time defining Mission Statements, Vision Statements, and Value Statements, knowing that these are living documents and will need to be constantly revised. Small groups were formed to word these statements and bring them to our Spring Board meeting.

Many Board members were able to attend a Zoom meeting with some of WECAN's Regional Representatives before the Board meeting, which is always so helpful for the Board. The Reps shared with the Board the realities of the schools in their areas and presented a mixed but sobering picture. Some schools and one training center have closed and many have low enrollment, untrained teachers, and a lack of clarity around the responsibilities of the administration and the faculty. Children and families are needing more support and the transition into first grade is not successful for an increasing number of children. There is resistance to the DEI work from some members of the faculty or administration, and educators in childcare centers are increasingly exhausted.

Through IASWECE, we know that the Waldorf EC movement is struggling in other parts of the world, too, but there are pockets of light: in Mexico, where schools often compete with each other, there is a new openness to work together, old grudges are buried and there is a new mood of collaboration and mutual support. Educators everywhere are reaching out beyond the traditional boundaries of the Waldorf early childhood movement to make Waldorf EC education accessible to underserved communities, and strong connections are being forged with other organizations working towards safeguarding childhood, such as The Trust for Learning and its Ideal Learning Round Table, the Screentime Action Network, AWSNA, the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, the Medical Section and its Care 1 Project, and the Association of Waldorf Schools of Mexico, to name a few.

Over the past year, WECAN's Birth to Three Committee and I.D.E.A Committee have hosted several successful webinars, and the Birth to Three Conference in November was sold out. Our website resources for educators and parents are expanding, with a newly designed online bookstore and a list of recommended children's books (from a DEI perspective). Our publications have also increased this year with two new translated books, several revised and updated books, 4 new publications, and four more due to be published this year. And, of course, we are preparing our upcoming yearly East Coast WECAN Conference from February 9-11<sup>th</sup>, "Creating Spaces for the Children Coming Towards Us – Awakening our Fire", in Spring Valley, New York.

This past year a new WECAN working group has formed, called the Digital Media Working Group. They are presently collecting media statements from WECAN member schools and hope to create a statement on media that can be used in schools and may help guide parents in their use of digital media. They are also compiling resources for parents and teachers to put on our website.

So, the WECAN Board continues to be actively engaged in the issues of our times with the hope that we can continue to offer support and resources for all those who care for children in these difficult and challenging (and glorious) times.