

Outdoors Curriculum Major Initiative, July 2019

Santa Fe Waldorf School Outdoor Education Major Giving Initiative Case for Support

“The future will belong to the nature-smart—those individuals, families, businesses, and political leaders who develop a deeper understanding of the transformative power of the natural world and who balance the virtual with the real. The more high-tech we become, the more nature we need”

— Richard Louv

Our Goal: Raise \$182,000 over multiple years to anchor our preschool through Grade 12 Wilderness Curriculum.

A Unique Outdoors Curriculum

Waldorf Education’s commitment to the natural world is a hallmark of our curriculum, a unique, holistic form of instruction that meets the whole child--head, heart and hands.

We have found, as is backed up by science, that regular access to nature helps students learn more effectively, be less stressed, and benefit from improved memory, concentration, creativity and mental health. This aligns perfectly with our mission to create well-rounded human beings that become effective leaders in today’s world. Waldorf students grow up to excel in every field, and SFWS graduates include astrophysicists, Google executives, international fashion designers, architects, and concert musicians.

Our home in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo mountains allows us make the most of this mandate, as we are surrounded by exceptional natural beauty. We teach our students to become stewards and adventurers of nature through our distinctive curriculum-based Wilderness Education Program, where our students experience so much more than the standard field trip or overnight class camp out. Our program includes off-campus field courses in Organic and Biodynamic Farming, Forest Ecology, and Ancestral Pueblo Archaeology, among others.

A Fully Supported Wilderness Education

Our robust outdoors program is well loved and draws families to SFWS. However, as can happen in a small school still in a building phase, much of the costs associated with the program have been unwritten by volunteer work, parent and teacher donations, and sporadic fund raising. This meant that the curriculum was unevenly applied based on resources. As a now full and growing institution, we are seeking to endow this curriculum with stable funding to fulfill our mandate and make sure every student

benefits from a strong academically-founded connection to nature. A variety of levels of funding are available for specific facets of our program.

Areas of Need:

Forest Ecology Week

We seek: \$5,000 to cover one year of multiple grade trips. \$1,000 covers one day's group travels, **OR** for food, supplies, transportation and fees.

What we will be able to do: Every SFWS grade's curriculum has learning blocks that tie into the natural sciences. This funding will take each grade on trips to study ecological factors and evidence of environmental impact. (For which 5 grades?)

Nurture to Nature

We seek:? Can't find any info on this title for SFWS or Waldorf pedagogy in general.

What we will be able to do:

Geology Week

We seek: \$7,500 to cover one year of multiple grade trips. \$1,500 covers one day's group travels, **OR** for food, supplies, transportation and fees.

What we will be able to do: This funding will support three grades on weeklong series of trips to various geologic formations in the South Western region, including the spectacular centerpiece of the sixth-grade mineralogy curriculum, a trip to Carlsbad Caverns. (For Grade 6 and which other 2 grades? 11th in Black Canyon?)

Farm Week

We seek:\$15,000 for one week's food, supplies, transportation and guest teaching fees over a two-year period.

What we will be able to do: Students deepen their understanding where our food comes from as well as apply their lessons in the natural science by camping on a biodynamic (or organic) farm, using hands on techniques to fully understand the pathway of farm to table food sourcing. (For Grade 3 or 9?)

Pedagogical Garden

We seek: \$35,000 for fully implement a two-year creation of a Pedagogical Garden for the High School. \$17,500 covers one year of curricular development with faculty and materials

What we will be able to do: Although the school has a garden of flowers and vegetables on the Grades campus, it is fully utilized by Grades students. We are ready to create a small garden near Hooper Hall for High School students to learn biodynamic principles and grow vegetables, and possibly sell them. This funding will cover the initial tilling and preparation of the ground, as well as part-time faculty oversight and support.

Vallecitos Retreat

We seek: \$45,000 to cover four years of one of our signature programs. \$10,125 funds one week of the annual experience, including rental, food, and fees.

What we will be able to do: At the beginning of every school year, the twelfth grade welcomes incoming ninth graders at the Vallecitos Mountain Retreat Center in Tierra Amarilla, NM. It has become a vital tradition of camping, reflection and activities that helps freshmen become acclimatized to the High School culture. To prepare themselves for their final year of high school, our Seniors do a 24-hour solo experience.

Grades Trips

We seek:\$25,000 supports the annual camping programs throughout the grade. \$2,500 supports one week.

What we will be able to do: Our nature-based trips are carefully constructed to meld seamlessly with our pedagogy so that students receive a direct experiential understanding of the material. Two of our major programs, the Pentathlon in Grade 5 and the Medieval Games in Grade 6, which are camping and athletic weeklong events including regional Waldorf Schools, that culminate an entire year's curriculum. (is this to cover 10 grades or is a multi-year proposal?)

Van Fleet

We seek: \$50,000 completes the purchase of four new vans, including SFWS wraps. \$25,000 provides financing for one vehicle.

What we will be able to do: SFWS has an aging bus fleet that interferes with our ability to deliver our sports and outdoor programs in a safe and practical way. We urgently need to update our vehicles. We have partnered with Kia of Santa Fe to purchase four vans at beneficial rates over the next few years. (We can add more to this when I know the fate of the program!)

Question: \$50,000 for one year cycle of the overall program ??

Santa Fe Waldorf School Outdoor Education Major Giving Initiative Donor Engagement

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Areas of Need

We currently have eight funding programs that will bolster our Wilderness Curriculum over the next X years. The first seven are all programs directly related to grade-specific pedagogy. The eighth is to provide transportation for the trips. We are seeking \$182,000 to fund the following programs::

- **Forest Ecology Week**

- **Nurture to Nature**
- **Geology Week**
- **Farm Week**
- **The Pedagogical Garden**
- **Vallecitos Retreat and Senior 24-Hour Solo**
- **Grades Trips**
- **Van Fleet**

The Results:

- In-depth experiential activities to enhance the natural science curricula.
- Cornerstone trips to our region's unique geologic features, including Carlsbad Caverns.
- A hands-on understanding of biodynamic farming and farm-to-table sourcing.
- A High-School level garden that enhances the biology and botany curricula.
- A student-led source of fundraising through the sale of school-grown vegetables.
- Greater community building and social culture enhancement throughout the High School.
- Improved student achievement and independence in through 24-hour solo experiences for Seniors.
- Participation in the regional Pentathlon Games, the culmination of the Ancient Cultures curriculum in Grade 5.
- Participation in the regional Medieval Games, the culmination of the Medieval and Renaissance curricula in Grade 6.
- Four new vans, with SFWS wraps, to safely convey students on trips and athletic events.