

## Grades 1 through 8 Christopherus Conference June 14 – 18 Chicago

We are pleased to announce an intensive week-long Christopherus conference focused on an in-depth study of the Waldorf curriculum for grades one through eight. We will look at various aspects of the curriculum including academic and artistic work. Participants will be enabled to come to a deeper understanding of what is behind the curriculum, how to approach the subjects, and how to bring this material to life in their homeschools.

Donna Simmons will be joined by a staff of experienced, friendly and knowledgeable educators who have a background in anthroposophy, teaching in Waldorf schools and/or homeschooling their own children.

### **How It Works**

The conference includes sessions of various kinds. For some of the sessions we will all be together; for others we will be split into two groups; and for the third “stream”, conference participants will be in their chosen “grades group”, 1 – 3, 4 & 5, or 6 – 8. We know that most homeschooling families have more than 1 child and that it would be great if participants could be in more than one grades group – however, due to severe logistical constraints, this is not possible. Participants need to choose 1 group and stick with that for the entire conference. You cannot switch between groups.

### **What Will Be Covered?**

Our days will be very full, beginning with singing every morning. We will have sessions in eurythmy and/or speech formation; wet-on-wet painting; drawing; form drawing and handwork as well as on in-depth coverage of topics such as math, language arts, science and so on. We will help you understand how to teach various subjects – both those you excel at and those which are a challenge for you! There will also be discussions focused on practical organizational aspects of homeschooling as well as sessions on the personal growth necessary for anyone contemplating homeschooling..

Keynotes will include: *Educating the Human Being for the Future*; *The Threefold and Fourfold Human Being*; *The Four Temperaments and the Twelve Senses*; *Goethean Science*; *The Unfolding of Human Consciousness: From Myths to History*; *Education as Art: the Teacher as Artist*; and *Geography: An Awareness of Connections*.

**The assumption for this in-depth conference is that participants will have a basic familiarity with Waldorf education and with our work at Christopherus. It is not a conference for those deciding whether they want to homeschool or those who know nothing about Waldorf education.**

## **A Typical Day**

Our days will begin promptly at 8:30am and end in the evening. Here is the provisional schedule for our opening day:

8am registration and coffee

8:30 singing

8:50 opening remarks

9:15 keynote: Educating the Human Being for the Future

10 to 10:30 eurhythm and/or speech formation (2 groups)

10:40 – 12:10 Grade Groups: a) math grades 6 – 8 b) overview of grades 1 -3

c) drawing grades 4 & 5

12:15 CATERED LUNCH

1:30 – 1:50 optional qigong (a relaxing Chinese form of movement)

2 – 3:30 Grade Groups: a) form drawing grades 1 – 3 b) handwork grades 4 & 5

c) geometry grades 6 – 8

3:30 – 4pm BREAK (with coffee, tea and goodies)

4 – 4:30 demonstration of eurhythm or discussion about speech formation

4:35 – 5:45 Roundtable discussion on Being Organized: Schedules, Siblings, and Outside Commitments

Do-Your-Own-Supper

7:30 – 9pm Personal development/Parenting discussion (two groups)

## **Practical Matters**

We have carefully considered financial issues as we have designed this conference. We are determined to keep costs to a minimum so that a wide range of people can attend. Here are some of the practical considerations:

- our venue, the Christian Community Church in Chicago is very reasonably priced, but small. A maximum of 40 people can attend this conference.
- \* The basic price for the entire week including a beautifully catered lunch each day is \$475. We are asking that those who can afford it pay \$525 so that those who are less able, can pay \$425. We ask everyone to think carefully about what they pay. If some people do not pay the higher amount, we will make a loss.
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- We have a range of housing options which include sharing rooms as well as sleeping bags on a floor. We will also try to arrange accommodation with local people in Chicago. Some people will also be able to stay at the Christian Community Seminary which is a block away from the Church. However, these possibilities are all very limited. Again, so that we can share the costs and help

those with financial challenges to attend, we respectfully ask that those who can afford to do so, stay in local hotels and b&b's. Anyone who can stay with friends or relatives in Chicago is also asked to please do so. The venue for the conference is located at 2135 West Wilson Avenue, near the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago.

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- The Church is extremely easy to get to by car, bus or "el" but those who are driving need to know that there is no parking lot and one has to just take one's chances on the street (it's a pretty safe neighborhood). Chicago airport is very close and easy to get to – a trip from the airport to the Church on the "el" is about 45 minutes long.
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- This is a conference for women who can be away from their children for a whole week. We respectfully ask that only those who can comfortably leave their children and focus entirely on the conference attend. We have no housing options which can include children and the venue is so small that we cannot even accommodate family members who would want to drop in during breaks! Because of the size of the venue, potential cramped conditions and fire risks, we will be very strict about this. Thus there can be no children present at this conference.
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- For two reasons we also ask that this be a woman-only conference. One issue is the accommodation – all the lower price options will be women-only. The other issue has to do with the evening conversations on personal growth. Over the years we have seen that the nature of those conversations is very delicate and that women share deeply – but only when they feel totally safe. Unfortunately, the presence of even one man – no matter how sympathetic! – changes the group dynamics and the level of conversation is not as deep. We have thought long and hard on this – and it seems that having this be a women-only event is in keeping with the nature of this very small and intimate conference (though there will be one or two men around as staff but not in our shared accommodation or present during the personal development conversations). In future, we will undoubtedly have conferences in larger venues where men will be warmly welcomed and encouraged – we do not wish to deny the value of a father's role in homeschooling, whether he works or is the homeschooling parent! But due to the very intimate nature of this particular conference, we hope that families will understand why we are doing this.

### **How To Register**

In late January or early February 2010 we will put a full schedule, biographies of staff and full details of the conference up on our website. At that point we will also have registration forms available for you to download which will include accommodation details.

AS THERE IS A MAXIMUM OF 40 PARTICIPANTS FOR THIS CONFERENCE, THERE WILL BE A CAP ON NUMBERS FOR EACH GRADES GROUP. WE WILL ALSO NEED TO ARRANGE ACCOMODATION ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED BASIS.

AGAIN – PLEASE THINK CAREFULLY. IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP LOW-INCOME WOMEN ATTEND BY PAYING MORE FOR THE CONFERENCE AND BY STAYING IN A HOTEL, PLEASE DO SO!

Please don't contact us for details of this conference yet – we are still making arrangements and cannot give you further details. Once the basic information is up on our website in late January or early February, we will be pleased to take your questions – and your registration forms!