

December 18, 2020

Dear Live Oak Charter Community Members,

Wow, what a year. Looking back, so much of what we accomplished this year has more to do with our creativity, trust, and resolve more than I can ever remember in my tenure in education. Creativity shines through as a hallmark attribute we strive to cultivate in our students at Live Oak. Starting in Kindergarten, we engage the heart and call upon the child's imagination in order to facilitate learning through play. Through the use of stories, song, dance, instruments, paint, pencils, and color all of our students thrive in the environment purposefully designed by our masterful teachers to foster a kinship with the imagination. When COVID first came across our desk, our devoted teachers took the opportunity to practice what they teach by sparking creative and imaginative ways of not only educating students but also continuing our inspiring Waldorf ways amidst distance learning.

Yes, 2020 has not been easy. However, it is important to build on our strengths highlighted due to the pandemic. Our community is steeped in relationships through connection and love. There is a deep seeded root of trust within this community whether through volunteering, collaborating, or planning we come to the table as partners in wanting to continue to move Live Oak forward no matter how incremental the movement. I so appreciate the effort and dedication of all of the wonderful people who trust the process of weaving love, passion, and commitment into the inner fabric of Live Oak. You strengthen the bond that holds us together.

As we bid farewell to 2020, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the hardship of the day in and day out grind of facilitating distance learning in the home. Our community showed tremendous resolve to continue the mission of a Waldorf inspired public education. At times uncomfortable and frustrating rising up to a level of mental anguish that no education can prepare one for, we found comfort in the container of expectations, no matter how trivial at the time, as a means to focus our energy and efforts. Much like the learning in handwork, regardless of which skill or project you are working on, we want students to carefully craft their work with diligent hands and focus. Mistakes are expected and looking backwards in order to learn by needing to "unravel a stitch" is par for the course.

In true optimistic fashion, looking back, despite all of it, maybe the lessons learned in 2020 were worth the pain, imperfections, and difficulties. Maybe those were all perfect in their own unique ways. It's hard to say. I will say that without a doubt, I cherish the journey and the ups and downs of 2020 because community learning and growth of this magnitude don't come around that often.

Here's looking forward to what lies ahead for us in 2021!

Happy Holidays!

Justin Tomola
Director