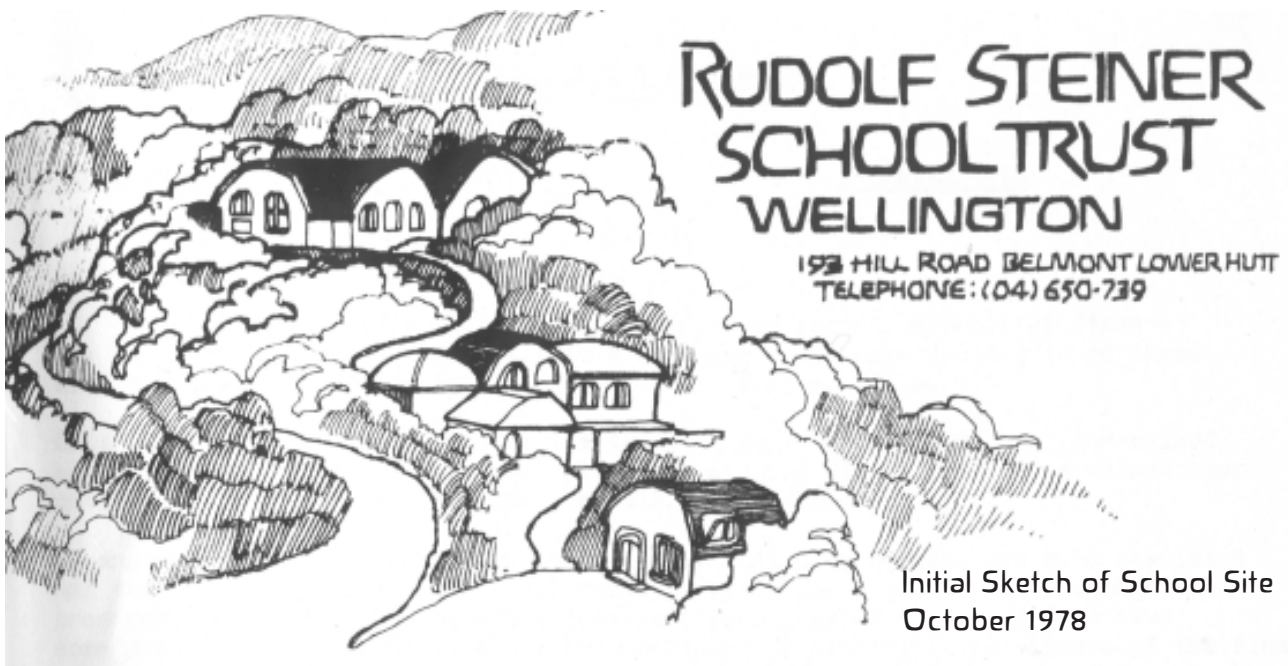


Raphael House

celebrating 25 years

1979 - 2004

CHRONICLE NO 12 - 11 JUNE 2004



What's it all about? Paul Denford on 25 years of Steiner Education

We named the school Raphael House - because house means home, safety, nurture. That's the kind of school we wanted, a school where children are happy. Because happy children will be children who are learning.

There are so many ways in which children are diverted from a wholesome childhood. A Steiner education - by its very nature - gives life.

We saw that the teacher (particularly in the lower school) needs to be both practical and artistic and be someone who sees children with open inner eyes.

As teachers we need to know that every child has that sensitivity, that special inner world - and to know how to speak to that child, to that sensitivity. To allow that awakening.

People move about in life without being able to connect with it, without discovering anything in it. This is a characteristic of our time. People do not observe anything meaningful in life because they do not learn as children to see the beautiful in it.

We wanted to provide an artistic education that spoke to these sensitivities of the soul.

And because every child is different, we wanted to build a school that was never static, never defined and frozen. We will never arrive.

We must learn to observe children, must grow with them into our feelings, be inside them and not rest content with outer experimentation.

In my vision there's a lot more still to do. The same effort that was for buildings - needs to go into different things now.

Part of that vision is that a family should together with the school know and educate the child as wholly and fully as possible.

Bringing that understanding to the parents who want it, is crucial in the sense of a deeper understanding.

I've always seen adult education as part of the task. That the parents can start on the inner journey as well - at least to the extent that they will walk alongside their child.

I would like to see that parents and teachers together, love the place in such a way they can share in the new growth that happens.

We prepare the children for the time at and after puberty in such a way that they learn to love correctly, that they develop love in the right way...love is something that extends to everything, is the innermost impetus for action. We ought to love what we do. And this love develops in the right way only if we go along with the child's inner development.

There should be a dynamic of change, as the awakening perception arises in ourselves, in our students, in our community, and in our world. Ripples in the pond, going forever outward.

COMMENTS IN ITALICS FROM RUDOLF STEINER: EDUCATION FOR ADOLESCENTS

PAUL DENFORD WAS
INTERVIEWED BY JILL HEMMING

