

Michaelmas



Tears streamed down the faces of the children standing around the table. Although each child wielded a knife, they were all smiling. No, this wasn't some macabre ritual—this was part of the Michaelmas service project!



The kids were cutting onions for the large pots of “stone soup” that would be distributed to people in need via St. Paul’s Church. I joined this boisterous (and teary-eyed) group as they moved on to carrots, potatoes, and squash. Cheerfully we peeled and chopped the seemingly endless supply of vegetables and marveled at how quickly the pile of diced goodies grew. Before we knew it, savory soup was bubbling away in the large pots on the stove in the seventh grade classroom. Many hands truly do make light work.



Meanwhile, around the school, other groups were planting bulbs, making “compost soup”, digging fence holes and clearing paths. Parent volunteers, classroom teachers, and subject teachers joined the students in these community service projects. The mixed-class groups were comprised of kids

from grades three through six. Second grade was busy decorating the campus for Michaelmas, while the first and seventh buddies played tag on the upper field.

One way we Waldorf parents mark the passage of time is seeing our children move on to different parts in the Michaelmas play. I remember when my kids were in early childhood and watched breathlessly as St. George brought the many-footed dragon to its knees. I have seen both my daughters in peaked red gnome hats march to the beat of sticks on their way to forge the magic sword. Many a frantic eve of Michaelmas has been spent in our house pulling together variations of farmer fashion, and this year the young children from Eva’s once-combined classroom were now the oldest kids—holding the flags and providing musical entertainment.



The Michaelmas festival was particularly festive this year. After so many soggy days it was lovely to see everyone enjoying sunshine, sack races, and cider (not to mention fresh King Arthur bread!).



Hurricane Irene was dispiriting to many of us at UVWS and devastating

to a few in particular. This whole day—from the work projects in the morning to the play and festival in the afternoon—was a wonderful reminder that despite the trials life throws at us there are hands to help, songs to be sung and apple crisp to be eaten.



Rachel Gross, UVWS Parent