

# The Detroit News

## Detroit Waldorf students' postcards make connections around the world

[Shawn D. Lewis](#), The Detroit News Published April 1, 2019



Detroit Waldorf School third grader Za'Keyra Davis, 8, of Hamtramck shows her postcard design to her teacher Justin Trombly. John T. Greilick, The Detroit News

Detroit — Henry Heaselgrave painstakingly colors the feathers of the kingfisher bird a bright blue.

More precisely, “it’s a belted kingfisher. We’re studying birds right now,” says Henry, 9, motioning to one of the bulletin boards filled with colorful birds in his third-grade classroom at Detroit Waldorf School.

He's making sure his drawing is accurate because it's a handmade postcard being sent to another Waldorf school almost 4,000 miles away in Lima, Peru.

It is part of a worldwide postcard exchange project celebrating a century of Waldorf education. Thousands of students ages 6 to 18 are connecting with students in 1,100 Waldorf schools from more than 80 countries.

So far, more than 700 postcards have been mailed out from Detroit Waldorf School, and 300 have arrived from six continents and more than 35 countries. Some of the postcards are displayed in three separate sections of the school and are geographically divided into Africa/Europe, the Americas and Asia/Australia.

Henry of Detroit, who said he'd like to be either a plumber or an archaeologist when he grows up, added a black tip to the wings.

"When they receive it, I hope they like it," he said.



These hand-drawn postcards on display at the Detroit Waldorf School were sent from students at Waldorf schools in Europe and Africa. (Photo: John T. Greilick, *The Detroit News*)

He was one of 27 students in Justin Trombly's class on a recent afternoon. Students with heads bent over their art creations colored with square crayons made from beeswax.



Third graders Scarlett Greene, left, of Detroit, Callie Watts of Wyandotte and Corrina Rebain of Detroit work on unique hand-drawn postcards to send to students at other Waldorf schools around the world. John T. Greilick, *The Detroit News*

Trombly said the project began last year and will continue through September when the 100th year of Waldorf education is commemorated.

“Students learn that children around the world are learning some of the same things, including farming, gardening and house-building,” Trombly said.

Paris Terry, 9, of Southfield, highlighted those house-building skills on his postcard.

“I’m working on dwellings, so I’m drawing a wigwam,” he said. The postcard was addressed to Western Cape, South Africa.

“I know some people who live there, and they’re doing the same thing,” said Paris, who would like to be an actor when he grows up. “This helps us connect to students around the world, and I like to see what they’re working on in their postcards.”

Noah Marrocco, 9, of Chesterfield Township, was sending his postcard closer to home, to Meadow Vista, California, about 2,300 miles away from Detroit. He was drawing an American flag on a colorful background.

“I tried to make it a rainbow background,” he said. “It’s just exquisite to me, and I hope they know I put a lot of work into this, and I hope they really like it.”



Third grader Pfeiffer Atwood, 9, of Detroit works on a hand-drawn postcard to send to students at other Waldorf schools around the world. (Photo: John T. Greilick, *The Detroit News*)

One postcard mailed to the school from Switzerland featured a skier on a downhill slope. Another from the Netherlands highlighted a windmill. A card from Germany was written in English and began the greeting with, “Hello my American friends,” with a happy face.

But some cards, such as one from China, are written in their own languages.

Students at Waldorf Detroit learn both Spanish and German, beginning in the first grade and continue through eighth grade.

The Waldorf approach to education was created by Rudolf Steiner and launched in 1919. It offers a curriculum in academics, arts, music and physical education in a historic Albert Kahn building erected in 1913 and surrounded by estates in Detroit’s Indian Village. The private

school education is offered to a geographically, racially and socio-economically diverse student body.

Greta Fidler, 8, of Detroit, was working on her second postcard.

“I’ve already done one, and it went to Denmark,” she said coloring in red hearts drawn on her latest postcard to South Africa. At the top of the postcard she drew “I (drawn heart) South Africa”



This hand-drawn postcard was sent to the Detroit Waldorf School from a student in Kyoto, Japan. (Photo: John T. Greilick, *The Detroit News*)

While adding more hearts, she said, “I like getting to see other people’s personalities in their art.”

Greta said when she was in pre-school, she wanted to be an astronaut.

“A little later, I wanted to be an archaeologist, but now I want to be an architect like my parents,” she said.

Scarlett Green, 8, of Detroit was drawing a red guitar with a black strap. Her postcard was addressed to Western Cape, South Africa.

“I think it’s really fun because I get to show how I’m good at drawing, and I can see what kids at the other Waldorf schools are doing,” she said.

Julia Toro, administrative coordinator at the school, described the project as a “worthwhile exercise.”

“Students get to see that there are people just like them learning some of the same things in different parts of the world. When sending and receiving, they can see a child their age wrote a postcard the same way they did.”