



Who is Doing What

VWS Alumni Corner

Luisa Kodweiss

Class of 2011

VWS: Tell me about your work and education after graduating from the VWS. (post-secondary schooling, travel, work experience, family, etc...)

LK: After graduating from the VWS I first went back to Europe for two months to visit my family. When I returned to Vancouver I worked as a Lift Operator on Grouse Mountain for the rest of the summer and one winter season. The following summer (2012), I worked as a trail ride guide in Lake Louise, AB. Since then, I've been working there for 3-4 months every summer. From September 2012 I have been studying at Quest University Canada in Squamish.

VWS: What kind of work/study are you involved in now?

LK: I am currently a third year student at Quest University (Grad 2016). I am doing a work/study program at the university to help pay for tuition, through which I am athletic events staff, meaning that I keep score and help with the organization of basketball and soccer games that happen at our school. During the summer I work as a trail ride guide in Lake Louise, AB. There, I take tourists on horseback rides and deliver groceries on pack horses to lodges that cannot be reached by car.

VWS: What advice would you give to this year's graduates?

LK: It's ok to not know exactly what you want to do with your life when you graduate from High School. The freedom you have after graduation can be scary and overwhelming, but take advantage of it. It allows you to explore the world and figure out what your passions are.

VWS: What are your fondest memories of your time at the VWS?

LK: The camping trips were among my favorite memories. I remember specifically, on the fall hiking trip to Stein Valley in 2009, we came into an area that had been recently hit by a forest fire. At first we were all amazed to see the burnt trees and ashes. After continuing to hike through the burnt area for a couple of days we were all dirty from falling in the ashes! It was an amazing experience to walk through such freshly burnt woods. It's not something one would usually do, or get the chance to do. It makes you realize the power of nature.

It was especially fascinating to see the edge of the burn, as we stepped from a completely gray and dusty, ash-covered trail into a beautiful green forest, simply by crossing a small bridge.

The Michael Bauer Schule (Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany) had a school-run circus, which students starting from Grade 6 could attend. I was a part of it in Grade 8 and 9. Students could engage in all sorts of disciplines, from juggling, tight-rope walking or acting as clowns. I participated in rope skipping, mini-trampoline jumping, and human pyramids (students standing on each other's shoulders up to 4 levels of people high). It was an amazing opportunity to engage in, improve skills in these disciplines, and to work the whole year towards a performance weekend, where all grades would put together a program that we performed in a real circus tent.

VWS: How did Waldorf education affect your life, and your choice of career?

LK: I think it's a little early to tell, since I only graduated a few years ago. However, I will say that the Grade Twelve Project prepared me well for university-level writing. It was a huge advantage to be familiar with doing research and properly citing sources, as well as with the amount of writing that was involved. I now regularly write 2000 word research papers. It affected my career choice indirectly, in that I chose to attend Quest University because it relates to the learning principles of the Waldorf School, and the Foundation Course program at Quest led me to my career choice. It's tough to point out specific things about Waldorf education that has helped and is helping me with my studies now, partially because I have attended Waldorf school my whole life and can't compare it to public schooling. At Quest specifically, having the experience of learning one subject at a time (main lessons), and knowing how to delve into a subject and further one's knowledge about it every day was an advantage. Learning how to work independently and budget your time to meet the deadlines while still taking part in other courses and doing regular homework has proven to be very useful in day-to-day life at Quest, as well as it has prepared me well for the Keystone Project everyone at Quest does as part of their education. My Quest question is, "How do humans impact wildlife?" With that I am working towards getting a Masters in Wildlife Biology.

*Interview by Ronaye Ireland, for Development
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