



Foundation for Health Creation

Spring 2025 Newsletter

In this edition:

Introduction

Amanda Jacobs

Opening Poem

Annie's Poem

Health in Action:

The Healing Plant Initiative –
A Path Forward
by Steven Johnson, DO

Fire and Ashes

by Steven Johnson, DO

The Ezra Klein Show:

Our Kids Are the Least
Flourishing Generation

How Jonathan Haidt Won the
Fight Against Smartphones in
Schools

By Olivia Reingold - The Free Press

Resources of Interest

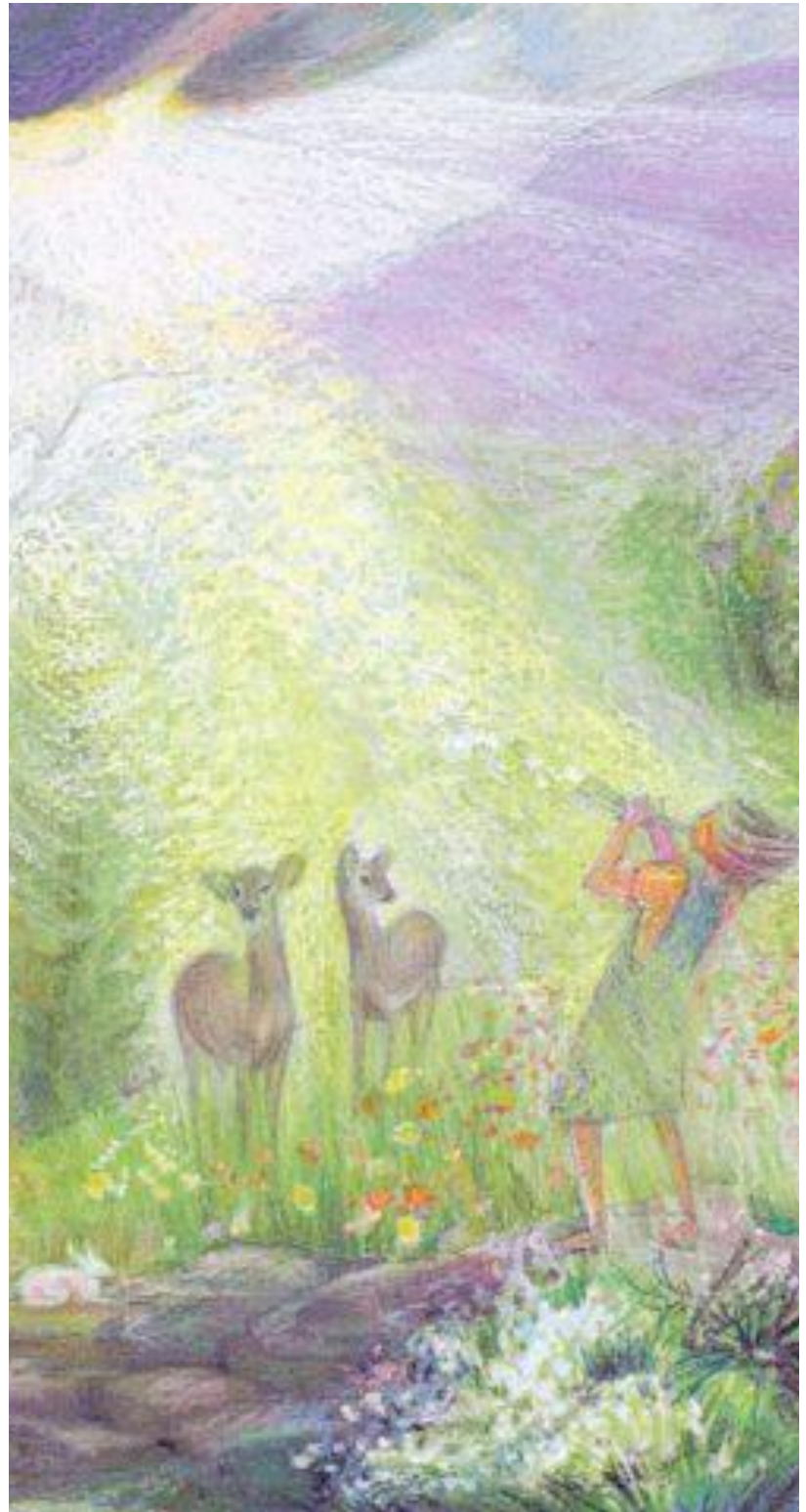
Keeping Tech in Check

~

Growing Up Healthy in a World of Digital Media

~

ScreenStrong Resources



"Ode to Spring" by Mary Southard

Introduction

Hello friends,

It's springing here and I'm delighting in what seems like the sudden appearance of gifts in the grasses- blooming flax, strawberry blossoms, hidden eggs, the reappearance of the neighborhood chukars, or some other surprises. Times are arduous though. They call for wisdom and vigilance, especially for those looking to grow food, flowers and forbs. I spend much of my spring hand-pulling cheat grass. As I crouch above the Earth, I imagine myself removing thorns from the surface of one most beloved, while also removing the thorns of misunderstanding from my mind. As Steven Johnson writes in the first of this issue's feature articles, "Working with plants may sound simple. But the reality is often repetitive, rigorous and humble. And yet it brings a profound inner reward. It is an act of love."

Love and attention is what our times are calling for. As Dr. Johnson points out in the second article, amidst all of the tragedies, afflictions and challenges of our current day, the best of our human nature also arises. You, our FHC audience, clearly and directly demonstrated this by responding to our call and generously donating to the recovery efforts of two Waldorf schools that were destroyed in the recent California fires. With your help, FHC was able to give \$525 each to Pasadena Waldorf School and Westside Waldorf School to assist in the rebuilding of their campuses.

The other features in this issue take a deeper look into this unique moment of opportunity we have before us to reconnect as human beings and to redirect our attention toward meeting each other and the future in a wise, courageous and transformative way. Even though the conversations are primarily centered around protecting and guiding children, the lessons and insights are valuable to all. The immensity of the challenges facing us can feel overwhelming, but we are a unique and surprising arising, we human beings, and in helping each other, we help our present and future selves.

With that, dear readers, I leave you to enjoy the Spring issue. I am off to do something else fun, like watch clouds or dye eggs or plant cabbages. All of us at FHC wish you a beautiful and happy season!

Amanda Jacobs, for FHC

Annie's Poem

Annie wrote the following poem during the pandemic when she was nine years old. She and her parents have given their permission to share it in the knowledge that all feelings are okay and naming them is an important first step to coping with them.

I am a boat leaking with worry water

I am the sea that carries it far beyond the sunset

I am the fish that feasts on the worry water

I am the eagle that feasts on the worry fish

I am the girl who reads this poem

I am her mind that breathes in the worry

I am the body that meditates the worry boat

To worry island.



The Healing Plant Initiative – A Path Forward

by Dr. Steven Johnson

Over the past six years, a devoted group of biodynamic gardeners has been collaborating with Uriel Pharmacy in North America to integrate local plants into existing anthroposophic remedies, create new medicines, and explore previously unused medicinal plants and minerals. Recent additions include *Monotropa uniflora* (Indian Ghost Plant) for trauma and pain, and Sun Pyrite for the rhythmic system and upper respiratory conditions.

Jean-David Derrameux, Ben Davis, and their interns at Churchtown Dairy near Hudson, NY—alongside Mark Blachere, Andreas Fontein, and their colleagues at Camphill Copake—have steadily provided an increasing supply of plant and animal preparations to Uriel Pharmacy. Adults with developmental disabilities at Camphill are active contributors to this meaningful work.

A wide array of biodynamically grown and wild-crafted medicinal plants from the United States are now part of remedies used daily by thousands of children and adults. These carefully harvested tinctures are created through anthroposophic and alchemical processes, tested for safety and quality, and include mother tinctures prepared using the delicate day/night rhythm methods developed by WALA in Germany.

Once harvested and crafted, tinctures are shipped to Uriel Pharmacy in Wisconsin for potentizing, processing, qualitative analysis, and purity testing. This entire effort reflects a deep commitment to the elemental nature of the plant, animal, and mineral kingdoms. Not only can you sense the freshness of these tinctures, but their exceptional quality is also visible—through chromatography, their extended vitality, and their effectiveness. Qualitative research is expanding, with new laboratory facilities underway.



The Healing Plant Initiative – A Path Forward

by Dr. Steven Johnson

The seed of this initiative was planted in 1996 between Jean-David Derrameux and myself, when we began developing the Healing Plant Garden at Camphill Copake. Our vision was to use local plants in our medical practice, supporting both the Camphill community and a more localized, sustainable approach to medicine. We were inspired by the story of Karl König, founder of the Camphill Movement, who once spoke of receiving guidance in a dream from an elemental being. That quiet inspiration has guided our work with nature ever since, shaping our gardens into spaces of healing and contemplation.

König had a profound karmic connection with Dr. Ita Wegman, the world's first anthroposophic physician and co-founder (with Rudolf Steiner) of Anthroposophic Medicine. In 1921, she established the first anthroposophic medical clinic in Arlesheim, Switzerland—now the Ita Wegman Clinic.

Camphill Copake proved to be the right community to support our humble beginning. Over the past 30 years, our efforts have expanded significantly. Hundreds of plants have been incorporated into Uriel's offerings, and our gardens have become a cornerstone of anthroposophic medicine in the United States.

Together with local physicians and biodynamic gardeners, we regularly study Rudolf Steiner's guidance on working with the elemental forces of nature—insights that influence our landscape practices, pharmaceutical methods, and spiritual orientation. We reflect on how our inner attitudes shape the atmosphere around the gardens. This work is a remarkable confluence of phenomenological science and modern qualitative research.

Eventually, Jean-David relocated to a new garden that joined the initiative, while Marc Blachere has led the Copake Healing Plant Garden to become an essential part of the North American pharmacy impulse. The garden also serves as a therapeutic space for adults with special needs—a powerful local and national medical contribution.

Marc and Jean-David, both master biodynamic gardeners (and native French speakers who also craft delightful teas and culinary blends), have made working together a joy. Encouragingly, other gardeners across the U.S.—from Pennsylvania to California—are beginning to join this growing movement.

Economically, this work also represents a move toward more human-centered financial models. While Uriel Pharmacy supports much of the production, it's not feasible to fund every preparation. These medicines—often created in small, labor-intensive batches—are sustained by the nonprofit missions of their communities. The medicines touch thousands of lives across the country and abroad. They cannot be mass-produced. Their quality depends on manual work and spiritual care.

Rudolf Steiner envisioned localized pharmacies providing regionally sourced remedies, noting that illnesses are often connected to local geography. Allergies, for instance, may respond better to locally made preparations. While there is still a long way to go, this initiative offers a hopeful beginning.

The Healing Plant Initiative – A Path Forward

by Dr. Steven Johnson

This initiative is supported by quarterly retreats, bringing together physicians, gardeners, and pharmacists—like Mark McKibben of Uriel Pharmacy—to study plant and mineral substances and formulate new remedies. From these gatherings have come innovations like *Helleborus niger* for cancer and inflammatory diseases, *Reynoutria* for Lyme disease, bitter formulations for digestion, and *Viscum vitalizer* for chronic disease prevention. These efforts continue to inspire doctors across the country.

In recent years, this initiative has become a foundational source of anthroposophic medicine in North America. Apprentices are now learning the craft with enthusiasm. At Camphill Copake, a new facility is under construction, which will include a laboratory for improved testing, expanded pharmacy work, and eventually research. A second facility is in planning nearby.

Steiner spoke of the essential unity between medicine, agriculture, natural science, and therapeutic education. Waldorf schools were originally envisioned as places where physicians and teachers worked together to support children's health. Today, local schools—including both Waldorf and public—visit these gardens, experiencing nature in a rare and meaningful way. The medicines serve both children and school physicians.

With companies like WALA and Weleda exiting the U.S. due to regulatory and economic hurdles, it's fortunate that we anticipated this shift. Over the last six years, this initiative has quietly taken root. We remain in dialogue with Weleda in Switzerland and WALA in Germany, exploring continued collaboration and future certification possibilities.

We're also grateful to have guidance from alchemical pharmacy teachers like Albert Schmidli, former chief pharmacist at Weleda Switzerland, and Mark McKibben at Uriel Pharmacy, whose openness and innovation continue to support the evolution of this field.

Still, we stand at a crossroads.

Can we find the spiritual, social, human, and financial resources to grow this work in an increasingly difficult regulatory and economic landscape? We don't wish to merely preserve what we've built—we want to evolve anthroposophic medicine into the future.

Our two remaining North American pharmacies—Uriel and True Botanica—have invested deeply in this vision. For this impulse to fully take root, more support will be needed: new facilities, research funding, and, perhaps most critically, the trust and goodwill of communities and patients who value anthroposophic medicine.

The Physicians' Association for Anthroposophic Medicine (PAAM) has supported a five-year pharmacy training program, now in its fourth year, certified by the Medical Section at the Goetheanum. Everyone mentioned in this article is participating in this training. If you wish to help, please consider donating to educational efforts through PAAM or the Anthroposophia Foundation, which supports physicians across the country in learning and practicing this medicine.

The Healing Plant Initiative – A Path Forward

by Dr. Steven Johnson

In closing: all of us involved in this work feel the profound significance of a renewed alchemical approach to medicine. We live in times that demand spiritual consciousness and moral will to counter forces that undermine health and harmony. There is a growing push to dismiss natural medicine as ineffective—despite global evidence of its value. Yet this is also an opportunity: a privilege to support the healing of both people and our ailing Earth.

To work with plants and substances in this way is, to me, a kind of new social sacrament. A sacrament where people unite in recognition of the sickness of our times and strive together to heal.

That, in itself, is a deed of love.

As a physician, I feel this truth every day when I see anthroposophic medicine work in patients—and so do my colleagues. For this initiative to flourish, we will need passionate new co-workers with deep interest and inner commitment.

Yes, working with plants may sound simple, even romantic. But the reality is often repetitive, rigorous, and humble. And yet, it brings a profound inner reward. It is an act of love.

This work can only continue with the emergence of a new consciousness—one that sees medicine not just as a science, but as a healing art and sacred social act.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Steven Johnson



Fire and Ashes

by Dr. Steven M Johnson



I had the great privilege to attend an Indian Ceremony just after the spring equinox. A group of us surrounded a ceremonial fire on a windy Spring afternoon. A ceremony of offering was generously gifted to our Camphill community medicinal garden by descendants of the local Mohican Indians whose ancestors had once walked these very lands. This was led by their leader Storm Hawk. They joined us with their families now expanded to include Indians of the Brazilian amazon forests who had bound their fates together through destiny and love for the land.

They were there to help us ask forgiveness of our transgressions to the land through the cutting down of beautiful trees to build a building for medicinal work and to house the activities of a diverse community that included people with special needs...a building we assumed we had permission to build. The ceremony spoke to the spirits of the four directions to ask forgiveness and to invite the spirits of the land to become part of this endeavor. Storm Hawk also invited all of us present to become part of the ancestral families that still to this day see their role as protectors and stewards of this land.

In one way, as I heard the ancient songs and received their cleansing blessing and offering to the earth spirits, my soul was transported to another dimension and time when our souls were part of the nature around us and joined in universal consciousness.

Another part of me felt the deep sadness and pain that went right into my bones of how these ancient caretakers of the land were so misunderstood. You could feel it through the ancient sadness in their eyes. I reflected how arrogant I had been not asking permission with my colleagues from the elemental nature spirits of the land to join us in this endeavor.

How painful it must have been for Storm Hawk's ancestors to watch the native spirits of the land recede in the name of modern progress. Yet, here we were now in this moment, being both forgiven and invited into their family and ancestry because we met this day at the time of the equinox out of a mutual love for the land and healing. Afterwards we all felt the bond of brothers and sisters and committed to stay in contact.

The leader Storm Hawk spoke about the ritual fire in a way that moved me and I thought perhaps it could move others of you too. He had in his possession ashes from ceremonial fires and sun festivals from around the country and abroad and from many years past. These were added to our fire and the ashes of our ceremonial fire were added to his collection of ancestral ashes. In this way our deeds and prayers for forgiveness, for cleansing and renewal were joined together through the burning fire that received our offerings and prayers; turning them into ashes which would now unite with other offerings and holy prayers from human beings far and wide. It was a beautiful moment for which words cannot easily express.

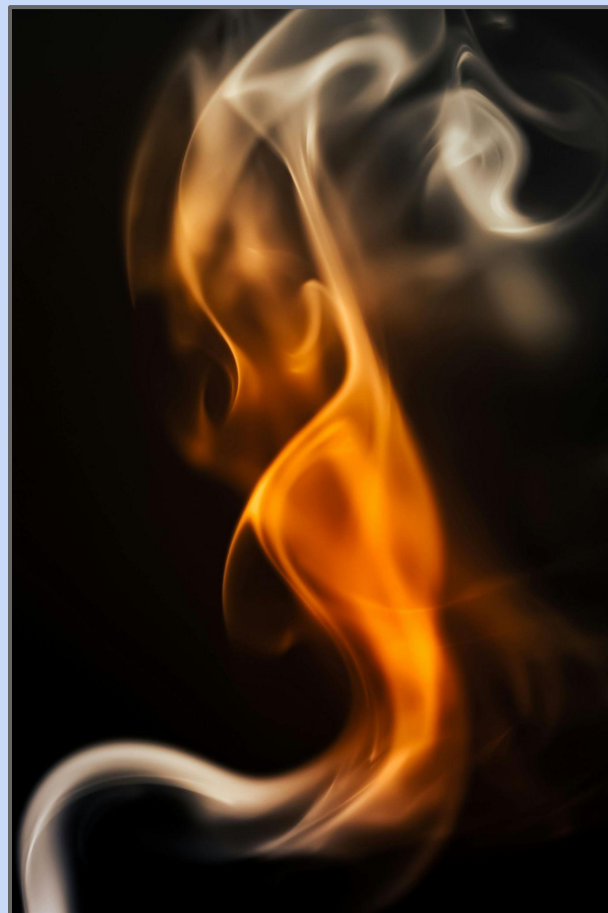
I could not help but think of the fires, storms, wars and tragedies that have taken place lately in our country and around the world. And yet from the ashes of these fires and tragedies, the best of our human nature arises. Waldorf schools are helping other Waldorf schools and people are donating money, food and resources to help people rebuild their lives. It became clear to my eyes that these deeds are like the ashes of the ceremonial fires that symbolize the good intentions of humanity. The ashes of fires and tragedy like the rising phoenix giving wings to the goodness of human beings and bringing hope for the future. We have become an extended family; a larger earth family through our love and benevolence towards each other. A larger spiritual family that crosses races and bloodlines. This imagination gave me great hope because when people gather in the spirit of love, it seems our highest angels are at work. The Mohican Indians have a saying, " – Yo mutah mutu nutah...wipi kutah". When pointing to his or her heart they would say, "This is not my heart...but your heart."

In this way the pain of the past felt redeemed for me. In humbling moments like these I understand the power of goodness and hope. It is a feeling of resilience in the soul. I thought to share this poem we use in our resilience course as a closing.

There is Friendship

"Among men and women who dare to open their heart's Secrets to one another, there lives the hope and promise of friendship. In the deepening silence they will bear with love the knowing of what one has and has not done. And in this understanding, friendship shall bring to each of them the light of the Spirit Sun. Faith in this experience of true friendship will be the foundation of the world to come."

– William Bento – July 27th 2004, Revised November 11th, 2010



The Ezra Klein Show: Our Kids Are the Least Flourishing Generation

Excerpt from: www.nytimes.com/2025/04/01/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-jonathan-haidt

In March of last year, **Jonathan Haidt**, the social psychologist, published a book called “The Anxious Generation,” which caused, let’s call it, a stir.

I always found the conversation over this book to be a little annoying because it got at one of the difficulties we’re having in parenting and in society: a tendency to instrumentalize everything into social science. Unless I can show you on a chart the way something is bad, we have almost no language for saying it’s bad.

This phenomenon is, to me, a collapse in our sense of what a good life is and what it means to flourish as a human being.



“The current technology is a giant obstacle to human development. So if you want to prepare your kid for the future, think very carefully about the technology you immerse them in.”

[READ MORE](#)

How Jonathan Haidt Won the Fight Against Smartphones in Schools

By Olivia Reingold - The Free Press - Published on 12/30/24 ([link](#))



This fall, when Suzanna Kruger walked into her biology classroom, she noticed something strange: Two dozen students were staring back at her.

“They were willing to make eye contact,” Kruger, a 55-year-old high school teacher in Seaside, Oregon, told me. “They even said hello.”

It was something she hadn’t seen since before the pandemic. “If a kid had their phone in class, I could just simply walk up to them, and they would hand it over,” Kruger said. But by the fall of 2021, when students returned from a year of distance learning, she said she had started feeling like the teacher from Charlie Brown.

“They looked at me like I was just going ‘wah, wah, wah,’” Kruger said, adding that most kids in her class were either asleep with their heads on their desks, wearing headphones, or doing a “dead-eyed scroll” through TikTok. And when she asked them to turn over their device, she said most students just “refused.”

“I’m 55, and I was like, ‘I don’t know if I can do another 10 years of this.’”

This past fall, the Seaside School District became one of the first in Oregon to ban cell phones for both middle and high schoolers, forcing kids to lock their devices in pouches near the school entrance until the end of the day. Seaside has joined thousands of schools nationwide in recently banning smartphones, as a growing body of evidence shows they’re linked to falling test scores and rising rates of teen mental illness. This January, just over two million students will return to phone-free schools as statewide bans go into effect in Virginia and South Carolina. The following month, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the second-largest in the nation, will join them.

[READ MORE](#)

Additional Resources

Keeping Tech in Check

Creating resilience in a high-tech world

brought to you by:



Foundation for Health Creation



[VIEW RECORDING](#)

On December 8th, 2024, we explored how modern technologies are affecting the physical, mental and spiritual health of our communities. Technology is influencing the way we think and experience the world and it affects our health and resilience. In this short online summit, we outline action items and strategies to counter the rising tide and prevalence of technology in our lives. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Glöckler, a well-known pediatrician, educator and researcher who has championed European legislation to change how children use technology. Session recording is available for \$25.

Growing up Healthy in a World of Digital Media

A guide for parents & caregivers of children and adolescents

by Michaela Glöckler and Richard Brinton

Here is an honest and clear digest of resources and practices to avoid the worst effects of screen technology on the young. The book will give strength to those who must make up the rules for guiding children and teens in the use of technologies. These have been touted as a great thing but have proven over time to cause behavior disorders, depression, and addiction. How do we cope? Growing up Healthy offers many ideas to help do just that - grow up healthy!

[LEARN MORE](#)



ScreenStrong Resources

ScreenStrong empowers families to prevent screen addiction and reclaim their kids from problematic screen use (social media, video games, and pornography). Our solutions are not screen-free; rather they replace toxic screen use with healthy activities, life skill development, and family connections.

The result? **Strong kids. Strong families.**

[LEARN MORE](#)

