

January 2, 2012

In this issue:

Letter from Judith	1-3
Folk Dance Club Forming	3
Winter Wonderland Save the Date!	4
Ski Trip Information	5
Ski Trip Sign-up Form	6

Volume 5, Issue 18

Upcoming Events

Jan. 1	Monthly Tuition Installment Due
Jan. 2	Re-enrollment for 2012-2013 Begins
Jan. 2	Open Enrollment Begins
Jan. 5	7th Grade Basketball vs. Fairfield 5 PM @ Howe School
Jan. 12	7th Grade Basketball vs. Fremont 5 PM @ Howe School
Jan. 13	Infant and Toddler Classrooms Closed
Jan. 16	Parent Education - Dr. Stephen Hughes, Pediatric Neuropsychologist 6:30 - 8 PM Victorian Farmhouse RSVP to Lisa for Event and Child care

January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

Headlines from Oak Farm Montessori School

Our mission is to provide a Montessori environment that inspires children to reach their potential through meaningful work.
502 Lemper Road Avilla, IN 46710 www.oakfarm.org (260) 897-4270

FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Monday, January 16, 6:30 PM: Meet Montessori Parent and Noted Pediatric Neuropsychologist, Dr. Steven Hughes

Everyday we see how Montessori education benefits our students. With the development of motor coordination, critical thinking, independence, and interdependence, our students flourish. Research has shown that such critical brain development is fostered by the interaction of the Montessori environment.

Dr. Steven Hughes, pediatric neuropsychologist and Montessori parent, has studied how Montessori education fosters specific brain functions that greatly aid cognitive development. On Monday, January 16 at 6:30 PM, Dr. Hughes will share how he sees Montessori as “the original brain-based method of learning”.

Dr. Hughes completed his PhD in clinical psychology at the University of Minnesota and his post-doctoral fellowship in pediatric neuropsychology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, where he joined the faculty of the Division of Pediatric Clinical Neurosciences in 2001.

In the following article by Mark Anderson found in *Public School Montessorian*, Hughes’ message is simple: Montessori children are good at doing things.

But underlying that simple statement is a deep neurological understanding of why it’s true. Montessori children are motivated learners and effective hands-on participants in their world, Hughes says, largely because of Montessori’s curriculum—a curriculum that precisely triggers brain functions that are the building blocks of learning and personality.

When the stakeholders in America’s schools recognize that linkage they’ll help move Montessori closer to the educational mainstream and into the lives of more children, he [Hughes] hopes.

“This educational approach just makes so much sense from a cognitive developmental standpoint,” Hughes says. “I spend an inordinate amount of time thinking about brain development, and I’ll tell you, Montessori is the original brain-based method of learning.”

Observing his daughter’s early experience in Montessori, Dr Hughes identified the precise ways that Montessori activities match developmental steps.

FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Continued from page 1

The more he looked, the more he recognized that each Montessori lesson prompts neurological activity that builds cognition and stirs the intellectual confidence, joy and curiosity that children feel as those capabilities grow.

For instance, the act of reading relies on three separate areas of brain activity —“nuggets” Hughes calls them. The brain apprehends visual symbols, decodes the sound of those symbols and assigns them each meaning.

When children use Montessori’s familiar sandpaper letters and moveable alphabets—looking at the letter and its shape, tracing it with their fingers, speaking its sound — they’re putting each of those nuggets to work and establishing neurological networks that coordinate the activities.

With repetition, those functions grow stronger and faster and eventually enable reading and more complex activities.

“We’ve come up with very good ways to remediate a child with a reading disorder,” says Hughes, whose research and clinical work focused on children with disabilities. “Those remediations are strikingly similar to Montessori. This is a way of reading development that’s really strong, really good, and Montessori kids have been doing it for a hundred years.”

Hands-on learning is another of Montessori’s developmental insights, Hughes says. The brain area that links to our hands is by far the brain’s largest component — indicating that we’re designed to explore and acquire intelligence through hands-on learning.

Montessori’s emphasis on very early hands-on activities in the practical life curriculum creates a crucial opportunity for each child, Hughes says.

“You look at practical life and it looks like its about wiping down tables, cutting up celery. They look like chores until you look at them from a developmental perspective.”

From that perspective practical life emerges as the foundation for success at all the activities that follow.

“We learn simple tasks such as motor movements and sequences and we store those in our brain as templates,” Hughes says. Those templates grow secure and multiply, giving the child a jumping off point for each new developmental step.

“Montessori gives children a rich, rich opportunity to develop the inherent skills of laying down templates for activities. Those come in a way, a sequence that’s never available in a conventional school environment.”

If Hughes’ developmental antennae gave him an early indication of Montessori’s value, his experience as parent and citizen helped him appreciate the moral life that grows in the Montessori environment— maybe Montessori’s most important contribution, he believes.

“Children come out of Montessori environment understanding there’s a richness and diversity to human culture and there’s also a sameness. We all want love, we have families, we care about people, we don’t want to live on a barren plant and we need to respect everyone’s pursuit of those things. That’s a basic but critical lesson of socialization, and it’s something children get very well in Montessori.”

FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Continued from page 2

Like Dr. Hughes, Maria Montessori was a scientist before she was an educator. She didn't guess at the materials she created; she observed, modified them based on her observations, and then observed some more. She let the children teach her rather than pushing her own ideas on them.

At Oak Farm, to ensure that your child continues to have the finest possible educational opportunities, we review research and academic success stories so that we can stay current, and through professional development activities, share this knowledge with our teachers so that they can implement what is best for your children in their classroom.

We hope to see you on January 16 at the Victorian Farmhouse to hear how the Montessori Method holds a proven place in creating neural pathways that facilitate cognitive development. Feel free to bring friends whose children can benefit from an Oak Farm education. This event will help them appreciate and understand the value.

Please RSVP to Lisa by 3:30 PM on or before Wednesday, January 11 for this event and/or child care. (Child care is available for Primary through elementary-aged Oak Farm students and will be held in the Victorian Farmhouse at a cost of \$5 per child. Child care payment should be sent to Lisa by January 13.) If you have any questions you can reach Lisa at (260) 897-4270 or lrimmel@oakfarmschool.com

CALLING ALL FOLK DANCERS. . . OAK FARM FOLK DANCE CLUB TO BEGIN 6TH SEASON ON JANUARY 31

By Kim Green, PE Specialist

Dear Oak Farm Families;

We will be starting **Folk Dance Club** after-school, for **2nd – 8th grade students, on Tuesdays from 3:30–4:30 PM**. We will learn an assortment of dances from all over the world.

There is a \$25 fee to be a part of the folk dance club. T-shirts are optional and will be available for purchase.

Please contact me to sign up or if you have any questions.

I hope to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Kim Green & Elizabeth Smith

kgreen@oakfarmschool.com

(260)897-4270 ext. 25208

SAVE THE DATE !

Winter Wonderland Gala presents

“Midnight in Paris”

Oak Farm Montessori School and the Parent Organization are pleased to announce our 5th annual Winter Wonderland Gala and Auction.

THIS IS GOING TO BE OUR MOST EXCITING WONDERLAND EVER!

Please Save the Date and Plan to Join Us

Saturday, February 18, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.

Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Automobile Museum - Auburn, Indiana

This event will be our largest and most exciting event of the year and we invite you to share the evening with your fellow members of the Oak Farm Montessori community.

There will be fun music by End Times Spasm Band, great food and beverages, and of course a cross section of wonderful auction items to bid on from area merchants and priceless art made by our students.

Why?

It is not important that you bid, but it is important that you attend and share the event. Each year our Winter Wonderland helps underwrite many of the school's programs and the chance to bond and interact with other parents, teachers and staff helps to build and reinforce our community.

How you can help.

Please consider asking your friends and family to join you for this special evening.

Please also consider helping with the following:

Ask your company or one you do business with for a Sponsorship Donation or an auction item. No donation is too small! We would love for every family to submit an item for auction.

Each family will receive a solicitation letter that will be sent home. Please check your child's book bag. Our goal is for every family to submit one item for auction.

Donation Request Forms and Sponsorship Letters are available in the office of the Victorian Farmhouse.

You can volunteer to help the Parent Organization Winter Wonderland Committee or request a Sponsorship or Donation Request form by emailing Jillian Chaulk at <mailto:jillchaulk@gmail.com> Volunteers are always appreciated.

We Look Forward to Seeing Your Family and Meeting Your Friends on February 18, 2012!

Formal invitation will follow.

WANTED: FITNESS EQUIPMENT FOR USE AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Oak Farm Middle School is looking for some fitness equipment for the students to use in personal fitness. A treadmill and/or elliptical are needed for the fitness room. Please contact Andrea Deihl by phone (260) 897-4270 or email adeihl@oakfarmschool.com

OAK FARM SKI CLUB 2012

SWISS VALLEY

What: Oak Farm's 4th Annual Ski Club Trip

Where: Swiss Valley, a small but great ski resort close to home

When: January 28, 2012 (Saturday) 9 AM-10 PM



Who: All students, family, and friends of Oak Farm Montessori School. Any student in 6th grade and below needs an adult chaperone.

How to Sign Up: Just fill out the sign-up form on the next page and return with payment to Andrea Deihl. Please make checks payable to Oak Farm Montessori School. Form and money are due no later than **Tuesday, January 20.**

Transportation: The bus will not be available this year. Carpooling is welcomed and recommended. Please fill out the carpool section of the form if you are willing to have riders or if you would like to ride with another family. We will try to match someone up with you who may live close to you or wishes to leave around the same time.

Day-of-Trip Info: Check-in time is 9 AM. Andrea Deihl will have lift tickets and rentals cards in the main entrance/ lobby area.

Cost:

	Lift Tickets	Ski Rentals	Snowboard Rentals
Adults	\$30.00	\$17.00	\$21.00
Children 6-12	\$20.00	\$17.00	\$21.00
Children 5 & Under	Free w/ paid adult	\$17.00	\$21.00
Helmet Rental - \$5.00 per person group helmet rental rates.			

Oak Farm Ski Club Sign Up Form



Last Name of Family: _____

Contact number of person attending: (mobile) _____

Names of Participants	Adult	Lift Ticket	Ski Rental	Snowboard Rental	Sub Total
	Child (6-12)				
	Child Under 5				
Example: Andrea Deihl	Adult	\$30.00	\$17.00		\$47.00
Total					

Make checks payable to Oak Farm Montessori School

Transportation: Please check all that apply.

_____ driving as a family

_____ would like to carpool with another family

_____ # of seats available

_____ # of seats needed

_____ will meet group at Swiss Valley at 9AM

IMPORTANT – ALL SKIERS MUST KNOW THEIR HEIGHT, WEIGHT, AGE, AND SHOE SIZE UPON ARRIVAL