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Upcoming Events

- May 14 Infant and Toddler Classrooms Closed
- May 19 Arts Festival 3:30 - 6 PM
Community Arts Center on Green Dr.
- May 27 Student and Faculty Picnic
Last Day of School for Infants and Toddlers
- May 28 Last Day of School for Primary, Elementary
and Middle School Students

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					

Headlines from Oak Farm Montessori School

502 Lemper Road Avilla, IN 46710

www.oakfarm.org

260-897-4270

Our mission is to provide a Montessori environment that inspires children to reach their potential through meaningful work.

FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

We Too Are The Winners

At Oak Farm Montessori School, education of character is considered equally as important as academic education. As young children, Montessori students learn to take care of themselves, their environment, and each other through activities such as cooking, cleaning, building, gardening, moving gracefully, speaking politely, being considerate and helpful, and contributing to society through work in the community. Development of a child's personality and social behavior forms the foundation for future academic enterprise. Children who have that foundation value the importance of working and collaborating on projects as they move up in their elementary and middle school years.

Grace and courtesy lessons are a daily part of our Montessori curriculum. As the children learn manners and respect for the environment and for others, they also develop a sense of community and an eagerness to learn.

Academic achievement alone does not prepare one for life. Montessori's unique focus on the development of each person as a complete human being provides a strong foundation for success in all areas of life. The most common attributes associated with students of Montessori are an interest in learning, the ability to get along well with others, the capacity to think creatively, and the ability to express thoughts clearly and logically when writing and speaking.

These characteristics of Montessori students were re-

cently highlighted in the media when Cincinnati's Clark Montessori School was chosen as one of three finalists in the Race to the Top High School Commencement Challenge. Although Clark was not ultimately selected, the students wrote on their website, "We are very honored to have been chosen as one of the three model high schools in America. That step alone is enormous and still unbelievable. We were all in this together—working on essays, creating videos, being flexible and spreading the word. This accomplishment speaks volumes about our students, staff, philosophy and community." Clark students then proceeded to congratulate the school that was selected. Clark's collective acknowledgement of others' efforts and their sincere congratulations to the selected school represents one of the underlying values of a Montessori education: appreciation of one's efforts and respect for the efforts of others—and recognizing that effort and achievement are all learning experiences on which to build.

Marta Donahoe, founder and program coordinator of Clark Montessori Junior and High School, said: "Just after getting the news from the White House, the seniors called Kalamazoo and Denver to congratulate them. They cheered and clapped over the speaker phone. Then we all gave each other a big group Montessori hug. Just as happens with all our big collaborative Montessori projects—we finish strong and realize we have fallen in love with each other."

At Oak Farm, your children are learning so much more than the traditional "Three R's". They are also learning Respect, Resolve, and Responsibility.

OAK FARM PARENT ORGANIZATION (OFPO) IN ACTION

Members of the Oak Farm Montessori School Community,

Please help me acknowledge the very hard and successful work of the founding team of OFPO Representatives. These Oak Farm parents have donated hours of time and talent to start a Parent Organization at our school.

In November 2006, Lorene Dekko Salsbury, the school's founder, came to me and asked me to start a Parent Organization. She said a parent organization at an independent school like OFMS must be supportive of the school and connected with the school's own vision. It must be a trusting place for parents to be involved in positive ways. In that one brief conversation, Lorene made it clear that she wanted the organization to be positive and supportive.

By the fall of 2007, the following OFPO Representatives were in place: **Kim Davidson** and **Nicole Albright** (Fund Development), **Abigail Leoffler** (Events), **Lana Marcioni** (Secretary/Treasurer), and **Joni Deitsch** and **Rachel Schiedler** (Volunteer Coordinating). **Tom Leedy** (an Oak Farm parent and expert in non-profit organizations) and **Judith Cunningham** (Head of School) were also pivotal as we brainstormed and built the foundation of the Oak Farm Parent Organization. During monthly meetings that were sometimes quite lengthy, we developed the OFPO Mission Statement, Core Values, and Areas of Impact. Although Fund Development had previously been started, the OFPO brought it to a new level both in the Annual Fund and by adding the Winter Wonderland and Silent Auction. Community-building began to take place in a way it hadn't before through the hosting of several events. More parents were able to volunteer in the classrooms and on the school grounds, because volunteers and school needs began to be connected.

I am honored to have gotten to work with this team. My friendships with them now run deep, and we have a great sense of respect for each other. This team pulled together and supported each other in amazing ways. I cannot thank them enough for joining me in this adventure, which Lorene placed before us. I feel really good about the work we accomplished, and I think Lorene would agree.

To Kim, Nicole, Abigail, Lana, Joni, and Rachel:
Thank you for all your hard work and expertise. Our term for serving on the OFPO Representative team is now over. May you always look back and feel a sense of accomplishment and know your efforts are greatly appreciated. You are each very special to me!

Fondly,
Belinda Burton (OFPO President, 2007-2010)

CONSTRUCTION BEGINNING ON SCHOOL CAMPUS

By **Lauren Moyer, CFO**

As you may have heard, we have spent the last six months working on designs for an animal barn and maintenance building on the middle school campus as well as an addition to the Green Farmhouse. These projects have been finalized and construction will begin soon. All of these projects are expected to be done in time for the beginning of next school year.



Middle School Animal Barn and Maintenance Building



Green Farmhouse (with the addition)

PLAN TO ATTEND AN AFTERNOON WITH THE ARTS MAY 19

Oak Farm Montessori School is proud to host its third *Afternoon With The Arts* event on Wednesday, May 19th, from 3:30 - 6 PM at the Oak Farm Community Arts Center on Green Drive. (Turn left onto Lemper Road from any Oak Farm driveway. Turn left onto SR 8 towards Avilla. Turn left onto Green drive at the Marathon station. The OF Community Arts building is the first blue building on the left side of the road.) Plan on stopping by after dismissal to view the broad range of art projects, listen to student groups demonstrate their musical talents, and share in your child's enthusiasm for his or her accomplishments in the arts. Musical performances will begin at 4 PM and continue throughout the afternoon. The Arts Festival runs through 6 PM.

Parents of Primary students please note: Primary classes will be presenting Musik Garten selections at the Arts Festival on May 19. If you plan to have your child participate he/she must be with a parent at the Community Arts Center at 4 PM. Parents and their Primary-age children will gather at the stage area for the performance led by Stacy Hambrook. We hope everyone can participate!

SUMMER CAMP UPDATE

By Kelly Elias

We take great pleasure in announcing this year's summer camp schedule. Thank you for your overwhelming response to our summer-camp options; we are offering more camps this summer than we did last summer! Here is a breakdown of the camps that will be held:

Toddler Camps

June 7 - 11 Movement and Exploration
June 14 - 18 Transportation
June 21 - 25 Jungle Animals and Their Habitat
June 28 - July 2 Farm Animals and the Land They Live On
July 12 - 16 The Garden and All Its Tiny Insects

Primary Camps

All Primary-level camps offered are being held.

Lower Elementary Camps

June 14 - 18 Drama
June 21 - 25 Invention
August 2 - 6 Jump Start

Elementary - Middle School Camps

June 7 - 11 Puppetry (AM only)
June 7 - 11 Exploring Media (PM only)

Camps not listed above have been cancelled due to lack of enrollment. If you registered your child for a camp that has been cancelled, watch for a refund check in the mail.

We are still accepting registrations for the camps listed above. Summer camp information and registration forms are available on our website www.oakfarm.org. Please contact Kelly at 260-897-4270 or email [kelias@oakfarmschool.com](mailto:k Elias@oakfarmschool.com) for additional information.

BOX TOPS / LABELS DEADLINE APPROACHING

By Tish Teel, Box Top/Label Coordinator

As you may know, Box Tops collected from General Mills products have an expiration date. The next submission deadline is June 1st so please submit any Box Tops lingering in your junk drawer by Friday, May 21st. The school recently received a check for \$253 from General Mills! I currently have about \$120 worth of Box Tops to send in before the June 1st deadline. Thank you for your help collecting Box Tops.

Campbell's Soup is currently offering 2,000 bonus points for any school submitting 500 UPCs before June 1st. I currently have 277 UPCs (counted personally by me!) to submit. If you have any soup cans in your cabinet, please gently remove the UPC only and send it in to school by May 21st. And, don't forget, you may also submit Tyson Project A+ labels at the same time. The collection box is located in the lobby of the Victorian Farmhouse.

Please continue to collect Box Tops, Campbell's UPCs and Tyson Project A+ labels all summer long. Please contact Tish Teel at pmtee@yahoo.com with any questions.

OBSERVATION

By Falen Latendresse, Infant Teacher

The following is the seventh article in the "Creating Connections" series. Regrettably, the entire article did not get printed in the May 4th issue of "Headlines from Oak Farm Montessori School." The article appears below in its entirety.

"Children have so much to teach us about their needs and interests if we only take the time to pay attention." –
Tim Seldin *How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way*

The most fundamental concept of the Montessori Method is observation. It is the concept that the method is built upon. Sue Kennedy, Infant-Toddler Teacher Instructor, stresses the three most important words in Montessori as being observe, observe, and observe¹. Observation is so important because it tells us where each individual child is in his process of development. "Through observation we can learn not only how to meet a child's needs, but also what we need to stop doing for them. We become aware of the obstacles to their development."²

Susan Tracy, in her article, "First Observe," states, "Observation, in the scientific sense, is the act of taking notice of particular phenomena as they occur in the course of nature. We select one portion of reality, at a particular moment, to record. An effort must be made not to change the reality that has been observed in the recording through preconceptions, judgments or evaluations."³

Observation isn't just something that Montessori teachers do; it is also something that you can do at home. The most important part of observation is recording. If we don't record what we observe, it is quickly forgotten. Keep a small notebook around that you can easily access. You can also keep index cards in each room of the house to jot down a quick observation that you might make. In your child's most frequented rooms (living room, bedroom) have a quiet, comfortable place where you are out of the way that you might be able to sit for some length of time while you record your observation.

There are three levels of observation. The first is objective observation. This is where you should start. Objective observation is formal observation and includes only facts. The second is subjective observation. This is the inferences or conclusions made after reviewing an objective observation. The third, and most difficult, is constant observation. This occurs when the first two levels have been mastered.

There are many types of formal observation. The following are a few that you might find easy to use. The anecdotal record is written as soon as possible after observing an event. The anecdotal record remains objective while written in a narrative form. A specimen record is written while observing. Give yourself an allotted time period to sit and write down everything you are observing or choose a specific skill that you would like to observe and record what relates to that skill as you observe it. Another helpful type of observation that is much simpler, but can be very effective over a long period of observation, is time sampling. In time sampling, record how many times and at what time your child exhibits a certain behavior.

When you start observing, start small. Set a goal to observe 10 minutes a day for three days a week. When that becomes easy, take more time and observe more often. As you become more skilled at the process, the easier it will become and the more you will learn about your child.

¹Sue Kennedy, "Observation Techniques: The Process of Becoming More Aware," *Infants and Toddlers* Vol. 9 No. 4.

²Paula Polk Lillard and Lynn Lillard Jessen, *Montessori From the Start* (Schocken Books, 2003)

³Susan Tracy, "First Observe," *Infants and Toddlers* Vol. 2 No. 3.