

November 23, 2009

Volume 3, Issue 13

November 2009

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Upcoming Events

Nov. 24	Grandparent's Day 11:45 AM Dismissal for All Students (Half-day accreditation in-service for staff)
Nov. 25- Nov. 27	Thanksgiving Break School Closed
Dec. 1	Monthly Tuition Due
Dec. 11	Infant and Toddler Classrooms Closed 11:45 AM Dismissal for All Students (Half-day accreditation in-service for staff)

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					

Headlines from Oak Farm Montessori School

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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

Giving Thanks

Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday with many beautiful layers. It is a time to pause and come together with family; it is a time to express gratitude for that which we have, and it is a time to remember our history.

Unfortunately, for too many of us, the history lessons that linked Thanksgiving with the Pilgrims were inaccurate. Thanksgiving did not originate with the Pilgrims. Thanksgiving originated with Native American groups throughout the Americas. The Pueblo, Cherokee, Creek, and many others, organized annual festivals with ceremonial dances, communal feasts, and other celebrations of thanks for a successful harvest for centuries before the arrival of Europeans in North America. Actually, the Pilgrims were not even the first Europeans to "give thanks" on North American shores in 1621, but this is not about getting our dates right.

This is about acknowledging the source of our bounty and connecting with it. Just as we connect with our friends and family, we should use Thanksgiving to reconnect us with the earth. Some of us may be lucky enough to eat fresh squash grown in our own garden or selected from a nearby farm. As you enjoy the squash, the recently harvested potatoes, the carrots, the stuffing, and the turkey or ham or venison displayed on your table take time to thank Mother Earth for the bounties she provides. At the same time, help us protect and sustain her for the generations that will follow.

From all of us at Oak Farm Montessori, we wish you a very

Happy Thanksgiving.

Your Help, Please

If you have not completed the Oak Farm Montessori survey (sent to you via email), please take five minutes to complete it. Your feedback is very much appreciated. This survey will only be available until Friday, don't miss the opportunity to share your thoughts and suggestions.

As part of Oak Farm Montessori's commitment to achieving excellence in education we have asked Kinetic Marketing Communications to conduct a survey. The purpose of this survey is two-fold. First, Oak Farm wants to know what we are doing well and what we can do to better to serve you and your family. Second, we would like to know how to reach families like yours, which will enable the continued growth and success of the school.

Your child's education and development is of utmost importance to Oak Farm, so please be open and honest in your communication. Your responses are completely anonymous, as your name will never be associated with your survey responses. If you have any questions regarding the survey please contact Michelle Alonzo at 260-482-4800. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Please let me know your thoughts on this approach.

NEW STAFF PROFILE: LISA HAVER, PRIMARY 4 TEACHER



Lisa Haver was raised in Hicksville, Ohio but is currently living in Hamilton, Indiana for the year. After high school, Lisa received her cosmetology license before deciding to go back to school for education. She graduated with an Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education from Defiance College. Lisa then moved to Columbus, Ohio to pursue her love for Montessori. She trained at Columbus Montessori Education Center and received her AMS certification in Early Childhood. This is Lisa's fourth year teaching and her second year in a Montessori classroom.

Lisa enjoys reading, spending time with her family and planning her wedding in June!

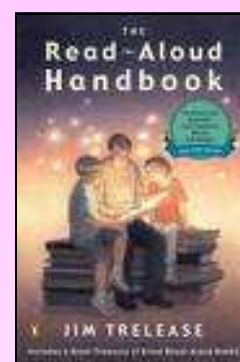
PRIMARY LIBRARY AS A WORK CHOICE

By Sara Gensic, Librarian

After about 25 minutes of observing a five-year-old Primary student thoroughly enjoy book after book in an organized and independent manner, I gently reminded him that it was time to choose one to check-out, thus allowing other friends to visit the library upon his return to class. He quickly responded, "But there are so many awesome ones!" I heartily agree. Eventually, he was successful in choosing one book to check-out. This was a typical experience for Primary Library on Monday morning. Students usually arrive promptly at 9 AM and devour books for two-hours. It really is fun to watch and it makes me hopeful, as a librarian, for students' future love of books and the ideas they hold.

The idea for Primary Library as a work choice began over a year ago. With proper preparation, Primary students are able to begin using the library independently as soon as they can recognize their name. Students select, check-out, and return books independently. Older children are always willing to help the younger ones use the book scanner, which can be a bit tricky. While many more Primary students are able to use the library on a weekly basis, one aspect is still missing from the experience, a regular time for reading aloud to the students.

Occasionally, an impromptu read-aloud takes place during the Library time; unfortunately, this does not happen enough. If you would consider reading-aloud to a group of Primary children on Monday mornings, please contact me. It would be wonderful to have this as an option on a regular-basis for those students who choose to visit the library. I can be reached most easily by email, sgensic@oakfarmschool.com. Or, feel free to leave a voice message for me at (260) 897-4279 ext. 25220. I hope you will consider this worthwhile opportunity.



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TRE**

Available at the
Vic. House
Library

Jim Trelease originally self-published this book in 1979. It has since become a best-selling resource for parents and teachers throughout the world.

The handbook is organized into two sections. In the first section, Trelease presents the research behind the importance of reading aloud. He believes that reading-aloud is the single most beneficial thing one can do to encourage a child's academic success.

The second section is a list of good read-alouds. It is organized by age and Trelease includes reasons to support his choices.

TODDLER 2 CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES THE FALL SEASON

By Beth Hager



Fall is here

Fall is here

It is really a good name it's clear

For the leaves fall all around town

They fall on your feet

They fall on your crown

They fall all around the ground

Fall has been the first season the toddlers have experienced sensorial work, from raking the leaves into a pile, to throwing them in the air and feeling the leaves fall on their heads. The toddler classes have enjoyed going for walks in the woods. While they walked down the path they felt crunching beneath their feet from the leaves on the ground. The leaves remaining on the maple trees turned to red, orange, and yellow. The air during the fall had a distinct smell.

Watching their faces during those moments were memories we will treasure. Now we are waiting for the next season to arrive to see the dancing in their eyes.

NOTES FROM THE CHEF

By Jill Hoffelder

(2/12 cups cubed raw chicken breast was inadvertently omitted from the recipe published in the November 17 issue of the newsletter. A corrected version of the recipe appears below.)

Escarole & Rice Soup with Chicken

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive-oil	2½ cups cubed raw chicken breast
1 small onion, chopped	1 14-ounce can whole tomatoes, drained, seeded and chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced	¼ teaspoon salt
1 head escarole, thinly sliced	Freshly ground pepper to taste
7 cups reduced-sodium chicken stock, divided	2 tablespoons grated Asiago or Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup brown rice	

1. Heat oil in stock pot over medium-heat. Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring, until golden, 2 to 3 minutes. Add escarole and 1 cup broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

2. Stir in the remaining 6 cups broth and bring to a simmer. Add rice and simmer, covered for 10 minutes. Add chicken and tomatoes and cook, covered, until the rice is tender and the chicken is no longer pink inside, about 5 minutes longer. Season with salt and pepper. Ladle into bowls and top with cheese.

A THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

By Elizabeth Smith-Meyer

The middle school students are celebrating Thanksgiving today thanks to the efforts of Zan, our catering manager; four students; and a parent volunteer. Saving the turkey for Thanksgiving, the students are preparing baked pork chops, mashed potatoes, corn, and rolls for their classmates. Everyone at the middle school will gather for the feast at 11:30 before preparation for the drumming performance begins this afternoon.

The students will use the afternoon to prepare for their performance on Grandparents' Day on Tuesday. They have been learning different songs and patterns with Ketu, our African drumming specialist, during the year's first two quarters. Drumming has been a special meeting twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays with an extended drumming option following both sessions for those students who want to continue their studies, and the students feel ready to showcase their new skills before the school and our guests.

Options such as extended drumming have been an added choice for students this year. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons the students have had the choice to follow their interests by choosing different classes. These classes have included cooking with Jill, our Oak Farm chef; drumming with Ketu; athletics with John; animal care with Pat; earthen oven with John; virtual yearbook with John; or study hall.

Rehearsals for our winter plays have begun. This year the 6th-year students are performing an original play based on their Classical Greek study dealing with the myths of Greek heroes such as Perseus, Jason, and Hercules. The 7th and 8th years are also performing an original play based on the trial of Christopher Columbus. The performances will be on Thursday, December 17 at 5:30, and everyone is invited.

We look forward to the Thanksgiving break, spending more time with families and friends, and wish a safe and epicurean holiday for all.

CARPOOL FORUM

Please submit information you would like included in or removed from the forum to Laura lpounds@oakfarmschool.com by 9 AM on Mondays.

I'm looking for an Oak Farm Middle School family that drives through **Waterloo and Auburn** who would be willing to pick-up my brother near the Auburn Wal-Mart and take him to school and drop him back off in Waterloo, five days a week. If interested please contact Natasha at 260-5 70-3096, just leave a message and I will get back with you. Thanks very much.

Looking for a half-day carpool family on the **north side of Fort Wayne**. I live in Woodmont off of Dupont Road and have two little ones attending half-day—one in Primary and one in Toddler (3 days a week). I am available to drive home everyday if anyone would be willing to drive mornings. Please contact me if you are interested. Thanks so much! Gretchen Fruchey gretchenfruchey@gmail.com or 414-4331.