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Upcoming Events

Nov. 10	Picture Orders Due
Nov. 13	Infant and Toddler Classrooms Closed
Nov. 14	Parent Fall Fun Night
Nov. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee with the Head 8:45 AM Victorian Farmhouse All School Parent Education 6-7 PM Victorian Farmhouse Oak Farm's Vision, Values, and Principles RSVP for event and childcare to Kelly. (Prepayment for childcare due on or before November 17.)
Nov. 24	Grandparent's Day

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

FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Do You Want a Gifted or Hardworking Child?

Educator and author Dr. Jim Taylor asks this question of parents. As a writer and speaker in the psychology of performance in business, parenting, and sport, Jim Taylor combines parent education with an understanding of popular culture, sport psychology, and educator training. One of the popular myths in our culture, he explains, is that giftedness ensures that children will be successful.

How many times have you heard Tiger Woods was born to play golf or Sarah Chang was destined to be a brilliant violinist? Well, let me clear something up: No one is born to do anything, certainly not to swing a golf club or play a violin. The only thing that can be reasonably said is that some children are born with certain abilities that can help them excel at a particular activity. However, giftedness is no guarantee of success; the world is full of gifted failures. Yet so many parents hope beyond hope that their children are gifted.

Jim points out that children may also believe the myth of giftedness.

Whenever I speak to children, I ask them whether they would rather be gifted or hardworking. With almost complete unanimity, children say they would rather be gifted. When you're gifted, they say, everything is easy. Yet parents and children don't realize that giftedness can be as much a cross to bear as, well, a gift.

The challenge for gifted children is that success came at an early age with little effort; therefore, they did not experience the ownership of their success. For children to connect their outcomes with their efforts, they need to experience the ownership of their success. Their internal message is: I can do well without effort. The advantage of Montessori is that the child learns not that "things come easy", but that success leads to new challenges and learning experiences. Children are able to take pride in the fruit of their labor and move on to the excitement of new challenges rather than leaning back and waiting for their classmates to catch up with them.

Gifted children in traditional education encounter problems as they grow up because they experience early success and little or no failure.

These children get straight A's, compete above their age group in their sport, or take advanced classes in the performing arts. But sooner or later they reach a level where everyone is gifted (e.g., the better universities, the U.S. Olympic Training Center, or Julliard.). Wherever they go, there will be students more gifted. At this point, giftedness isn't what makes these children special, because they're all gifted. And their giftedness isn't what ultimately determines who becomes truly successful. What separates those children who are simply gifted from those who are gifted and successful is whether they possess the skills to maximize their gifts. Because everything comes so easily to them,

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LETTER FROM JUDITH

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many never learn the skills—hard work, persistence, patience, perseverance, and discipline—that will enable them to become truly successful.

But at Oak Farm we constantly challenge them, providing an environment that encourages their desire to learn more.

While giftedness can be a burden, it is also a gift. At Oak Farm Montessori School, giftedness is a wonderful opportunity for children to accomplish great things. Students who excel are challenged with advanced work so that they connect their effort with their success.

Contrary to what many parents think, giftedness is actually overrated as a contributor to success. Dr. Anders Ericsson, a professor at Florida State University, has studied expert performance in sports, music, mathematics, and other activities. He found that so-called innate ability was unnecessary to predict who would become most successful. The single greatest predictor of who would become successful was how many hours they devoted to the activity. In a nutshell, the more they practiced, the better they were. Hard work means children putting in the necessary time, sticking with it when it's not always fun, and persevering in the face of setbacks and failures, and developing all of the skills necessary to become successful.

The bottom line is that the difference between being gifted and being successful is hard work. Whether the student is swinging a golf club, playing a violin, or analyzing a math problem, the successful student is the one that devotes time and effort to the task and learns from both success and failure. At Oak Farm, our teachers are trained to assess each child and to provide just the right fit between each child's ability, interest, and learning. Because we understand individual differences and value strengths as well as weaknesses, we adjust lessons for each child's success. While we are accountable to Montessori, national, and state standards, we have the flexibility to be creative. In the Oak Farm environment, focus, effort, and perseverance are learned whether a child is considered "gifted" or not. In the Oak Farm environment each child becomes "gifted" in his or her own way.

SCHOOL PORTRAITS HAVE ARRIVED!

By Kelly Elias

We are excited to announce that your child will be bringing his/her school pictures home early this week. This year we used a new photographer and a new company, and with that, a new system of ordering pictures. As many of you discovered, order forms were not sent home prior to your child's scheduled picture day. This week your child will bring home an order form along with proofs of the poses that were taken of him/her. **Please disregard the deadline of Tuesday, November 3rd.** We have spoken with Creative Images and they have extended our deadline to Tuesday, November 10th. The steps you will need to take for ordering are as follows:

1. Pick your favorite expression.
2. Pick your favorite background.
3. Pick portraits and products that you would like to order.
4. Turn in your proof sheets and orders to your child's classroom teacher by **Tuesday, November 10th.**

We also have a sample of a hand-drawn European portrait in the main entrance of the Victorian Farmhouse that you may want to check out. This option is available for your favorite pose if you wish. We will be returning the European sample on November 10th, so please take a moment to drop in and see this beautiful portrait.

All orders will be picked up by FedEx by noon on November 10th. If you have any questions regarding this process or regarding the deadline please don't hesitate to contact Kelly at 260-897-4270 extension 25204.

GRANDPARENTS DAY INVITATION IN THE MAIL

The following invitation was sent to grandparents on Thursday, October 29.

You are cordially invited to Oak Farm Montessori School's annual

Grandparent's Day

Tuesday November 24, 2009

8:45 a.m.	Welcome by Head of School and Coffee in the Victorian Farmhouse
9:15 a.m.	Classroom Visit 1
10:00 a.m.	Classroom Visit 2 – Please arrive at this time if you have only one grandchild to visit. Coffee will be served again at 10:45.
10:45 a.m.	Coffee in the Victorian Farmhouse Multipurpose Room
11:00 a.m.	Music Program in the Victorian Farmhouse Recreation Room
11:30 a.m.	Closing

Important Notes:

This event is for grandparents of Primary, Elementary, and Middle School students.

If you have a grandchild in Elementary or Middle School only, please go directly to your grandchild's building to start your day. Coffee will be served again at 10:45 prior to the musical performance.

Driveway #2 – Lower Elementary located in the Red Barn.

Upper Elementary located in the Green Farmhouse.

Driveway #3 – Middle School located in the Brick House.

A bus will be available to shuttle you from building to building if needed.

Please feel free to call Sarah Shanton-Cox with any questions at (260) 897-4270 ext. 25200 or send an email to sshanton@oakfarmschool.com.

We look forward to seeing you!

CATALOG ITEMS SUPPORT YOUNG CHILDREN AT HOME

By Nancy Hathaway

In conjunction with our recent "At Home with Montessori" parent education event, Oak Farm is once again offering to families, friends, and faculty, Montessori Services' *For Small Hands* catalog. Our school receives a 15% merchandise credit on all items ordered. The catalog was sent home with students on Tuesday, October 27. If you did not receive a catalog and would like one, please email Nancy Hathaway at nhathaway@oakfarmschool.com.

The items in the catalog are designed to encourage and support young children at home. This family-resource catalog contains many age-appropriate, child-sized items that encourage order, concentration, coordination, independence, creativity, and problem solving. And this year the catalog contains over two hundred items under \$10!

Feel welcome to share the catalog with, and make copies of the order form for, family, friends, and neighbors.

The order forms and payments are due (please make checks payable to Oak Farm School) **on or before Friday, November 6, 2009**. This date ensures us of a before-winter-break delivery.

Please know this is not a fundraiser! The 15% merchandise credit we receive from our sales will go to a general project to benefit Oak Farm parents and families.

Thank you for all you do for your children and Oak Farm.