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Upcoming Events

- Oct. 15 Victorian Farmhouse Parent Education “At Home with Montessori” 6-7 PM
RSVP for event and childcare to Kelly. (Prepayment for childcare due on or before October 13.)
- Oct. 16 Infant and Toddler Classrooms Closed **11:45 AM Dismissal for All Students** (Half-day accreditation in-service for staff)
- Oct. 21 Picture Day: Infants, Toddlers, Primary 1, Middle School
- Oct. 22 Picture Day: Primary 2, Primary 4, Lower and Upper Elementary

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

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www.oakfarm.org

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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

Education is a Journey, but are we on the right track?

At Oak Farm Montessori School we strive to provide an education that will carry your child to the world she will enter as an adult. Your child will not only love learning, but she will also be culturally aware and have a global understanding of her world.

But what about her peers who are attending other schools? The prestigious consulting firm McKinsey recently published “The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America’s Schools.” Much of the following was summarized by award winning author Thomas Friedman in a New York Times editorial.

In the 1950s and 1960s the US was the world leader in K-12 education, and as a result of our education programs we were also the leading economic power. In the 1970s and ‘80s our education programs began deteriorating and other economies began to close the economic and education gap.

Today we have fallen behind in both per capita high school graduates and their quality.

Friedman reports, “In the 2006 Program for International Student Assessment that measured the applied learning and problem-solving skills of 15-year-olds in 30 industrialized countries, the U.S. ranked 25th out of the 30 in math and 24th in science. That put our aver-

age youth on par with those from Portugal and the Slovak Republic, rather than with students in countries that are more relevant competitors for service-sector and high-value jobs, like Canada, the Netherlands, Korea, and Australia.”

US fourth-graders are on a par with a country like Singapore. But high school students really lag, which means that “the longer American children are in school, the worse they perform compared to their international peers,” said McKinsey.

There are millions of students in modern suburban schools “who don’t realize how far behind they are,” said Matt Miller, one of the authors of the McKinsey report. “They are being prepared for \$12-an-hour jobs — not \$40 to \$50 an hour.”

As the world continues to grow more flat thanks to technology, our students will be competing for leadership roles in all walks of life against students from around the globe. That is the world our children will be entering.

I share this information with you not as a predictor of doom, but as a predictor of success. At Oak Farm we understand the challenges your child will face, and we are working hard as your partner to help ensure that your child will become a global citizen that is up to the challenges she or he will confront.

“AT HOME WITH MONTESSORI”: A PARENT EDUCATION EVENT SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 15

By Bonnie Schultz

On Thursday, October 15th, the Infant, Toddler and Primary teachers are planning and looking forward to an important time with you—the parents of students in the Victorian Farmhouse. We are eager to tour through the home, showing you how it is possible to apply Montessori principles there. You can create spaces in your home that support your child's development just as we do in the classroom.

Our meeting will take place in the gym. We plan to start promptly at 6 PM and make every minute count.

Admission to all parent-education events is free, we do ask that you RSVP to Kelly so that we know how many participants to expect. We will follow the time format below:

5:45 – 5:55 PM Drop off children (toddler through elementary-age students) for childcare at the Victorian Farmhouse.

Prepayment for childcare (\$5/child) must be made to Kelly on or before October 13th.

6:00– 7:00 PM Parent education event in the Victorian Farmhouse gym.

7:00– 7:15 PM Pick up children from childcare.

PARENT AND TEACHER CONFERENCES SCHEDULED FOR OCT. 28-29

By Sarah Shanton-Cox

All school conferences will be held on Wednesday, October 28 and Thursday, October 29 from 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM.

Scheduling Procedure

Call Sarah Shanton-Cox (Ext. 25200) to schedule your conferences.

The conferences are for parents only EXCEPT at the Middle School where students will participate.

Every attempt will be made to schedule sequential conferences for parents with more than one child.

The conferences will be held in the student's normal classroom.

Childcare

Childcare services will be provided for the length of individual conferences only. For example: if you have 2 children and, therefore, 2 conferences to attend, your children may participate in the childcare service for the length of those 2 conferences only. Please let Sarah know if you need this service.

Childcare will be available in following locations:

Toddler: Solarium (Victorian Farmhouse)

Primary: Primary 3 Classroom

Lower and Upper Elementary: Victorian Farmhouse Recreation Room and Multi-purpose Room

For parents of Primary students, please escort your child to the Primary 3 entrance using the porch, then enter through the main Victorian Farmhouse entrance and continue through the hallway to your child's classroom. Chairs will be available outside each classroom for those of you arriving early and needing a place to sit and wait.

Middle School

Middle School students will help lead the conference with their parents.

School is closed to students on October 28th, 29th and 30th with exception of conference childcare. Enjoy your fall break!

PRIMARY I STUDENTS ASSIST IN GARDEN

By Elizabeth Green

Thanks to Nola Katinsky and her long hours spent launching Oak Farm's community garden this past summer, we now have the opportunity to reap the harvest. Each Thursday morning, Stacy Hambrook gathers several students from each primary classroom to help her collect the fruits and vegetables that are ripe and ready to harvest. The produce is then taken to Jill for use in our school lunch program.

After the first group's visit to the garden in late August, the students in our class quickly realized that this was something they didn't want to miss! As our day begins in the classroom each Thursday, 2-3 students are invited to don their jackets, gardening gloves, and mud boots and join Stacy and the other primary gardeners for a refreshing morning outdoors. One never knows just what treasures will be ready that day. The garden visit could include picking tomatoes from the vine or corn from the stalk, digging up carrots and potatoes or harvesting any of the many other fruits and vegetables planted by Nola and her crew in the late spring.

The students especially enjoy sharing with the chickens some of the garden gems that may have fallen to the ground and cannot be utilized. They always return to the classroom excited to give the "Garden Report" for that day, and sometimes we're even able to taste test unusual things like the double carrot found by Cameron.

Thank you to Nola for preparing and tending the garden so carefully and to Stacy for sharing this weekly garden time with our students.



Cameron harvests a big carrot.



The class examines the "double carrot" and then has a taste test. Yum!

DELAYS AND CLOSINGS

This time of year fog could potentially make driving conditions hazardous and cause school to be delayed. As stated in the Parent Handbook, notice of school closings or delays will be broadcast on the following radio and TV stations: WOWO (1190 AM, Fort Wayne), WMEE (97.3 FM, Fort Wayne), and Fort Wayne television stations 15, 21 and 33. Parents will also be notified of a school delay or closing via the SafTNet AlertNow service.

- Decisions to delay or to close school will be made the evening before (when possible) or by 6 AM the morning of the delay.
- Delays are in effect from 8:30 AM; school begins at 10:30 AM in all classrooms during a two hour delay. Before care is not offered when there is a school delay.
- School is closed to all half-day students in the event of a delay.
- The lunch program is cancelled in the event of a delay.
- Parents will be called only once for each delay or closing and should monitor the radio or TV for updates after receiving a call from the SafTNet AlertNow service.
- Parents should use their own discretion when driving in adverse weather conditions. If the school is open and you are uncomfortable driving, do not bring your child to school.

BRAIN GYM® OFFERED AT THE VICTORIAN FARMHOUSE

By Kim Green and Nefy Hathaway, PE Specialists

Since the 1980s, the field of Education Kinesiology—the study of movement and its relationship to learning—has touched people of all ages and cultures. Brain Gym® demonstrates that, when the neuron pathways for movement are fired, they activate and connect the whole brain in synergistic ways necessary for growth and change.

The success of the Brain Gym® program can be attributed to its effective movements, and balances, as well as to its addressing the physical skills of learning.

To learn more about Brain Gym® go to www.braingym.com

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.

We live in **Waterloo**, and we can make the drive back and forth every day, but feel guilty about it! Let's carpool in order to reduce the imprint we have on the environment. We have one in Primary (all day) and one in Upper...Contact Brandy at depriestb@trine.edu or 260-243-1245.

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.

OAK FARM PARENT ORGANIZATION (OFPO) IN ACTION

Email Address Correction

If you would be interested in joining the volunteer team that meets in the Victorian Farmhouse on Tuesday mornings to help out with ongoing classroom materials needs, please contact Kelly Strong by phone 260-750-9197 or email strongs2@mchsi.com for further information. (Kelly's email address was mistyped in last week's newsletter.)

REMINDER: please remember to pick up your pumpkin creations from the Victorian Farmhouse lawn sometime this week.

SHARING OUR GREEN

By Nola Katinsky, Sustainability Expert

Fall is here with cooler weather, gardens being put down for the winter, and leaves falling everywhere. Before you put all that yard waste in with the garbage, let's think about composting. If all you have are leaves to rake, you can make a pile for composted leaf mulch. If you have weeds, grass clippings, fallen branches, and other yard waste, you can set up an open pile for yard waste or use some outdoor bins that you either make yourself or buy from the garden center. Or, you can always bag it up and bring it in to Oak Farm. Along with the clean brown bags and newspapers which we use for classroom pet bedding and bedding for the classroom worm bins; we are happy to accept your chemical-free lawn and garden waste.

A pile of leaves will slowly break down—first to a mulch and eventually to a crumbly compost. Compost comes together most effectively when it is made in layers. A thick layer of brown yard waste should be followed by a thinner layer of green yard waste and kitchen scraps topped with another layer of brown yard waste. Mix it up and dampen it with the hose or a watering can. If you choose to start composting at home, by adding scraps from your kitchen you can boost the speed your pile will break down. Save a big yogurt, detergent, or ice cream tub with a lid or buy a compost crock from the garden center to put your kitchen compost into. You can empty your kitchen compost everyday, or keep it in the fridge or freezer until it is more convenient. Make a stockpile of brown materials—fallen leaves, straw, sawdust. Then you are always ready to add layers when you have green weeds and kitchen scraps.

Listed below you will find the many things from your home and yard to be added to your compost pile (not the trashcan) which will give you a wonderful source for healthy, organic fertilizer for your yard, flower beds, and garden.

1. Fruits and vegetables—all parts
2. Coffee grounds, coffee filters, and tea bags (NO staples, just pull off or cut off the tops)
3. Grains—baked goods, pasta, flour, cereals (hot and cold), crackers
4. Egg shells (no problem with rate of decomposition in either tumbler or outdoor bin systems)
5. Pond weeds, algae, agar-agar, and sea weed
6. Mulch, straw, and sawdust
7. Mushrooms, mycelium, and molds
8. Shredded or torn newspaper, cardboard, and parchment paper (another option for brown materials when leaves and straw are scarce)
9. Water is an essential addition, you want the compost to be as wet as a damp sponge. When the weather is warm, the compost needs thorough watering two or three times a week.
10. Herbicide and pesticide free yard waste—fallen leaves, weeds, garden trimmings, flower bed thinnings, grass clippings, hedge trimmings
11. FOR CLOSED TUMBLERS ONLY: small amounts of dairy, fish/fish bones/fish skins, oil/fat, it is okay to compost most food scraps from most non-meat dishes in the closed composters. We put out a lot of lunch scraps from the kitchen. (If you put this rich, smelly stuff in the open bins the free ranging neighborhood dogs, raccoons, and opossums come for dinner and it gets out of hand.)

The following things SHOULD NOT go into the compost for health and safety reasons:

1. Mammal and fowl meat, bones, blood
2. Used kleenex and toilet paper
3. Cat and dog feces
4. Cattle and pig manure

With the outdoor bins, we layer manure and bedding from the chickens, sheep, rabbits and guinea pigs, classroom birds and small rodents in with the kitchen scraps, garden, and yard waste. Manure is a great compost booster but it has to come from the right animals for us to use it safely. In general, if it is manure from rodents, bats, and birds, it is safe to compost for your vegetable garden. Also, if it is manure from an antibiotic-free vegetarian/grass eating mammal (horses, sheep, alpacas, llamas, goats), you can put it in your compost and use on your vegetable garden.