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**Upcoming Events**

Sept. 29	Soccer: Prairie Heights, HOME, 5 PM
Sept. 29	Parent Education Event 6-7 PM Lower Elem. Dialogue in the Red
Oct. 1	Monthly tuition due
Oct. 2	Infant and Toddler Classrooms Closed
Oct. 3	Fall Picnic 11:30 AM - 2 PM Victorian Farmhouse North & East Lawn
Oct. 5	Middle School Parents' Tea 3:30-4:30 PM Brick House
	Soccer: Central Noble MS, HOME 5PM (final game of the season)

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

502 Lemper Road Avilla, JN 46710

[www.oakfarm.org](http://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

#### Cursive Is Not Just Communication

You may have heard on the news or read an article by Tom Breen of the Associated Press about the controversy over the inability of many students to write their name in cursive. The problem is twofold:

1. In many schools cursive penmanship may only be taught in third grade. Without additional opportunities for supervised practice the necessary motor skills do not properly develop.
2. Cursive doesn't get quite the emphasis it did years ago, primarily because of all the technology skills schools now teach reported Jane Roberts, assistant superintendent for elementary education in Kanawha County (West Virginia) schools.

Here's the bottom line: cursive is declining as students are doing more and more work on computers, including writing. "Text messaging, e-mail, and word processing have replaced handwriting outside the classroom," said Cheryl Jeffers, a professor at Marshall University's College of Education and Human Services, and she worries they'll replace it entirely before long. "I am not sure students have a sense of any reason why they should vest their time and effort in writing a message out manually when it can be sent electronically in seconds."

At the same time Professor Jeffers sees cursive writing as a lifelong skill, one she fears could become lost to the culture, making many historic records hard to decipher and robbing people of "a gift."

"That fear is not new," said Kathleen Wright, national product manager for handwriting at Zaner-Bloser, a Columbus, Ohio-based company that produces a variety of instructional material for schools. "Interestingly, these same conversations occurred with the advent of the typewriter," Ms. Wright continued.

At Oak Farm Montessori School, our children are introduced to cursive writing as soon as they are ready to learn the sounds and shapes of the alphabet. They practice cursive for all handwriting exercises in the primary classrooms so that by the time they enter lower elementary their hand is strong enough to use cursive for all writing activities. Cursive writing is more than a communication tool. It is an important skill that helps teach children fine muscle control and hand-eye coordination.

Vanderbilt University professor Steve Graham cites multiple studies showing that sloppy writing routinely leads to lower grades, even in papers with the same wording as those written in a neater hand. Graham argues that fears over the decline of handwriting in general and cursive in particular are distractions from the goal of improving students' overall writing skills. The important thing is to have students who are proficient enough to focus on their ideas and the composition of their writing rather than how they form the letters.

At Oak Farm Montessori School we understand the development of children and, therefore, we present concepts and skills that match students' developmental ability to

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## LETTER FROM JUDITH

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learn and to enjoy. Through this process, our ongoing goal is to ensure that your child develops to his or her potential. We also strive to instill a love of learning that will help propel your child through life.

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## OAK FARM PARENT ORGANIZATION (OFPO) IN ACTION

### Attention Parents: JOIN US IF YOU CAN!

The OFPO has a volunteer team that meets in the Victorian Farmhouse on Tuesday mornings to help out the hard working Oak Farm staff with some of their ongoing materials needs. We will begin meeting again this Tuesday, September 29th. This team will complete simple works such as: laminating, coping, cutting, and some small office and library tasks. This is a great way to make a small time investment that has a huge pay back. Not only are we helping cut down the teachers to-do lists, but we have the opportunity to get to know some more Oak Farm parents.

If this is a team that you would be interested in joining please contact Kelly Strong by phone 260-750-9197 or email [storngs2@mchsi.com](mailto:storngs2@mchsi.com) for further information.

### Many Thanks!

Amy Jun, Ankita Gupta, and Rosie Sitko made up the Oak Farm Parent Organization team that demonstrated our appreciation for Oak Farm Montessori School staff. They provided snacks for the staff to enjoy during their in-service meetings on September 18th. Thanks to Amy, Ankita, and Rosie for their work and organization. Thanks to the wonderful Oak Farm staff for all they do to help our children grow. If any parent is interested in joining (or leading) this team to show appreciation to the staff for future in-services, please email Heather Barth and Jackie Henry at [ofpovolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:ofpovolunteer@gmail.com), or leave a message with Kelly or Patty at the school office.

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## H1N1 FLU CONCERNS

*The following information was provided by:*

*K. Galaviz RN, BSN Parkview Noble Community Health Improvement Program  
Dr. G. Warrener Noble County Health Officer*

“There is a new and very different flu virus spreading worldwide. This virus may cause more illness or more severe illness than usual” according to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There are simple steps that everyone can take to help protect against the flu. Please discuss these with your entire family.

- Wash your hands often and/or use hand sanitizer
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoid contact with ill persons

**Flu-like symptoms include the following:** fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, body aches, extreme tiredness, occasional vomiting and/or diarrhea.

### **If you think you have the flu:**

- Stay at home
- Avoid close contact with others and do not go to school or work until you are fever free without the use of fever reducing medications for 24 hours.

These guidelines are subject to change depending on the latest CDC recommendations.

### **Helpful online resources:**

[www.fighttheflu.org](http://www.fighttheflu.org)

[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)

[www.in.gov/flu](http://www.in.gov/flu)

## PLAN TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL FALL PICNIC

By Jackie Henry

Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 3rd, from 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM and plan to join us (on the north and east lawn of the Victorian Farmhouse) for our annual celebration of the season and of our Oak Farm Montessori School community. It is a relaxing opportunity for all of our students, faculty, parents, and grandparents to share a day of fun and fellowship.

Please bring a picnic lunch, including beverages, for your entire family to enjoy during the picnic. You will also want to bring chairs and/or blankets for your family to use while eating lunch and during the rest of the afternoon.

The day will begin with a musical performance by some of the children led by Stacy Hambrook, followed by lunch and time for all who attend to visit with old friends while making new ones.

We look forward to seeing you on what should be a day of sharing and fun!

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## GREAT PUMPKIN TRADITION CONTINUES AT THE ANNUAL FALL PICNIC

By Jackie Henry

The Fall Picnic is upon us bringing with it a chance for each of us to gather together to celebrate and kick off the beginning of the new school year. Heather Miller started a wonderful tradition that incorporates creativity along with family involvement. In continuing with that tradition, each Oak Farm family is invited to decorate a pumpkin, gourd, or any other fruit or vegetable which will then be on display at the Fall Picnic.

Let your creative juices flow freely as you and your child use materials such as paints, felt, dried noodles, feathers, glitter, fabric, sticks, or even small vegetables to create an unusual pumpkin masterpiece.

As this is a voluntary effort, all materials, including the pumpkins are your responsibility. All decorating is to be completed at home. Please affix your child's name and classroom to his/her creation.

Finished creations may be dropped off on the NORTH side of the Victorian Farmhouse on Thursday, October, 1st and Friday, October, 2nd.

You are encouraged to spend an evening with your child, a pumpkin and your imaginations. Make something fun to add to our annual Fall Picnic.

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## CARPOOL FORUM

Please submit information you would like included in or removed from the forum to Laura [lpounds@oakfarmschool.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:gretchenfruchey@gmail.com) or 414-4331.

## UPCOMING PARENT EDUCATION (EVENING EVENTS) CALENDAR

Please mark your calendar for the following parent-education events. Admission to all parent-education events is free, we do ask that you RSVP to Kelly/Patty so that we know how many participants to expect. Each event (except the Middle School's) will follow the time format below:

- 5:45 – 5:55 PM Drop off children (toddler through elementary age) for childcare at the Victorian Farmhouse. Prepayment for childcare (\$5/child) must be made to Patty/Kelly at least two business days prior to the event.  
6:00– 7:00 PM Parent education event in appropriate classroom  
7:00– 7:15 PM Pick up children from childcare.

Tuesday, September 29th Lower Elementary Dialogue for parents of students in the Red Barn  
Monday, October 5th Middle School Parents' Tea 3:30 - 4:30 PM, childcare will not be available  
Thursday, October 15th "Montessori In the Home" for parents of students in the Victorian Farmhouse

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## MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HOST PARENTS' TEA

On October 5, 2009, from 3:30-4:30 PM, John Meiser will host a Parents' Tea at the Middle School. John will be able to answer questions, deal with concerns, and talk about the upcoming year. He will also be discussing what Maria Montessori meant when she referred to the "Erdkinder" model of education for adolescents. He will give a short Power-Point presentation, outlining what this means and the path the middle school is taking to accomplish this extraordinary conception.

John also wants to share the vision of the middle-school staff in creating global citizens. In the past our students have attended the annual Montessori Model United Nations. However, we now hope to expand this experience so that it is even more meaningful with real-world applications. With the help of Dominican Republic United Nations Ambassador Francis Lorenzo, we are exploring the opportunity to research, prepare, and participate in a mission trip next spring to the Dominican Republic. This is the first time the Middle School has been able to offer such a unique opportunity for our students and parents, and we are hopeful all will benefit from such a program.

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### Victorian Farmhouse Parent Education Night "At Home with Montessori"

Thursday, October 15, 2009  
6:00-7:00PM

Child care (for toddler through elementary-age students)  
provided from 5:45-7:15 PM for \$5/child.

Please RVSP by October 13<sup>th</sup> to Kelly!  
260-897-4270 ext. 25204

or

[keliias@oakfarmschool.com](mailto:keliias@oakfarmschool.com)

## ART HAPPENINGS

By Heather Miller, Art Specialist



**Aleksander, Sage, and Tristan carefully pluck thorny weeds which were used to build this representation of a deer.**



**Braelynn, Paige, and Rachel work together to attach a long string of leaves.**



**Nolan gets down and dirty as he creates a mud sculpture.**

The Oak Farm Arts Center is abuzz with students exploring and expanding their creativity. With a space that lends itself to making messes and experimenting with unusual materials, students jumped right in to another productive year in the art room!

Lower Elementary students were particularly excited about art this year as they, for the first time, share the art space in the Arts Center on Green Drive.

As a first project, Middle School students painted paper suits, transforming themselves into living sculptures.

Our first artist of focus for this school year is Andy Goldsworthy, a naturalist who creates installations in outdoor settings all over the world. Based in Scotland, Andy uses natural materials such as leaves, rocks, ice, feathers, and grasses to create installations in streams, forests, and other outdoor locations. The students were fascinated to learn that Andy seldom uses tools to create his work and during a film presentation of his work, all were surprised to see him nibble an icicle with his teeth while creating his sculpture! Middle School students recently came up with their own interpretations of Andy Goldsworthy's work as they set out to work along the path that connects the campus to the Arts Center.

Lower and Upper Elementary students are also learning about Goldsworthy. Students at this level painted and decorated sticks, turning them into colorful mobiles. Their work is currently on display in the trees outside of the Arts Center. Stop by to see how the trees look before and after the leaves fall for the season.



**Elementary mobiles on display**



**Alex blends into the background with his camouflaged suit.**



**Halferty erases this intrusive man-made element by covering the metal pole with mud, leaves, and flowers.**



**Alex places flowers to build a beautiful image.**

