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Upcoming Events

Sept. 22	Parent Education Event 6-7 PM Upper Elem. Dialogue in Green Farmhouse
Sept. 24	Soccer: Westview Boys, AWAY, 5 PM
Sept. 28	Soccer: Garrett, HOME, 5 PM
Sept. 29	Soccer: Prairie Heights, HOME, 5 PM
Sept. 29	Parent Education Event 6-7 PM Lower Elem. Dialogue in the Red Barn RSVP for event and childcare to Patty/ Kelly. (Prepayment for childcare due on or before September 25.)
Oct. 1	Monthly tuition due

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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FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Parenting = Teaching

Through our children, we parents and teachers are the architects of the future of humanity. As we go about our daily lives in the presence of children, we are constantly teaching through our own words, thoughts, and behavior. It is unfortunate that education is too often narrowly defined as the teaching of math, language, sciences, and the arts, because the most important subjects to be mastered are how to be happy, how to be a good friend, how to express care through thoughtfulness and good manners, how to identify a problem and work hard to solve it. Education is not about memorizing facts. It is our shared responsibility to help our children develop a love of learning and an ability to make intelligent and responsible choices. We must help our children learn to concentrate and focus and to do their best to complete a task for self-satisfaction rather than to please someone else. As those skills are developed, learning math, language, sciences, and the arts follow suit on a parallel plane.

Once again I would like to quote Thomas Friedman, author of *The World is Flat*. He defines the qualities required for our children to be successful in the global market place they will enter. They include:

1. **Learning How to Learn:** "That is an ability every worker should cultivate in an age when parts or all of many jobs are constantly going to be exposed to digitization, automation or out sourcing. . . In such a world, it is not only what you know but how you learn that will set you apart."
2. **Critical Thinking:** Our children are inundated with

data. Our responsibility as educators is teaching them "to navigate and sift through the lies from the facts." That requires students to think critically and to differentiate information and wisdom.

3. **Passion and Curiosity:** Students with passion and curiosity to discover are self-motivators and self-educators. They will always be able to learn. "Work matters but curiosity matters more."
4. **Right Brain:** While the right and left sides of the brain work in concert, the right side takes care of context, empathy, creativity and synthesis. "We need to focus education on developing the right brains skills such as forging relationships rather than executing transactions, tackling novel challenges rather than solving routine problems and synthesizing the big picture rather than analyzing a single component."

It is interesting that all of these are the underlying principles of Montessori education, and that is why our most recent *Journey and Discovery* parent workshop was so important. It shared with parents the Oak Farm Montessori learning experience—in those few hours they could feel the impact the experience makes on their child. One parent summed it up beautifully as he shared his feelings. "This was magical. I now understand the value of Oak Farm to my child, and the importance of her continuing here."

We invite you to partner with us in the education of your child through two events in September. On Tuesday, September 22, we will be hosting an Upper Elementary Dialogue in the Green Farmhouse. This event is designed to answer questions such as:

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LETTER FROM JUDITH

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- Why and how is Upper Elementary different from Lower Elementary?
- How do we teach reading or math or science?
- How is writing integrated in the curriculum?
- How is anthropology taught?
- What about homework?
- How are critical thinking, creativity, and love of learning fostered?

On Tuesday, September 29, Lower Elementary teachers will host a Lower Elementary Dialogue in the Red Barn. This event is designed to help parents understand the rationale behind the Lower Elementary program.

Both events will be held from 6-7 PM with childcare available at the Victorian Farmhouse (\$5 per participant prepaid to Kelly/Patty). Please reserve your place for these important events by calling Kelly/Patty at 260-897-4270.

Finally, I would like to make you aware of two educational events being offered locally. The Fort Wayne Philharmonic will be presenting a series of three, hour-long concerts designed specifically for families and youth, the first will be offered on Saturday, October 24. You can find more information at <http://www.fwphil.org/education.asp?s=101>. On Friday, November 13, Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods* (a national best seller), will be the guest speaker at ACRES Land Trust's annual meeting. The following link will provide more information about this event. <http://www.acreslandtrust.org/clientimages/44551/annualdinner2009forcomingevents.pdf>

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 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!

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 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 22nd	Upper Elementary Dialogue for parents of students in the Green Farmhouse
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

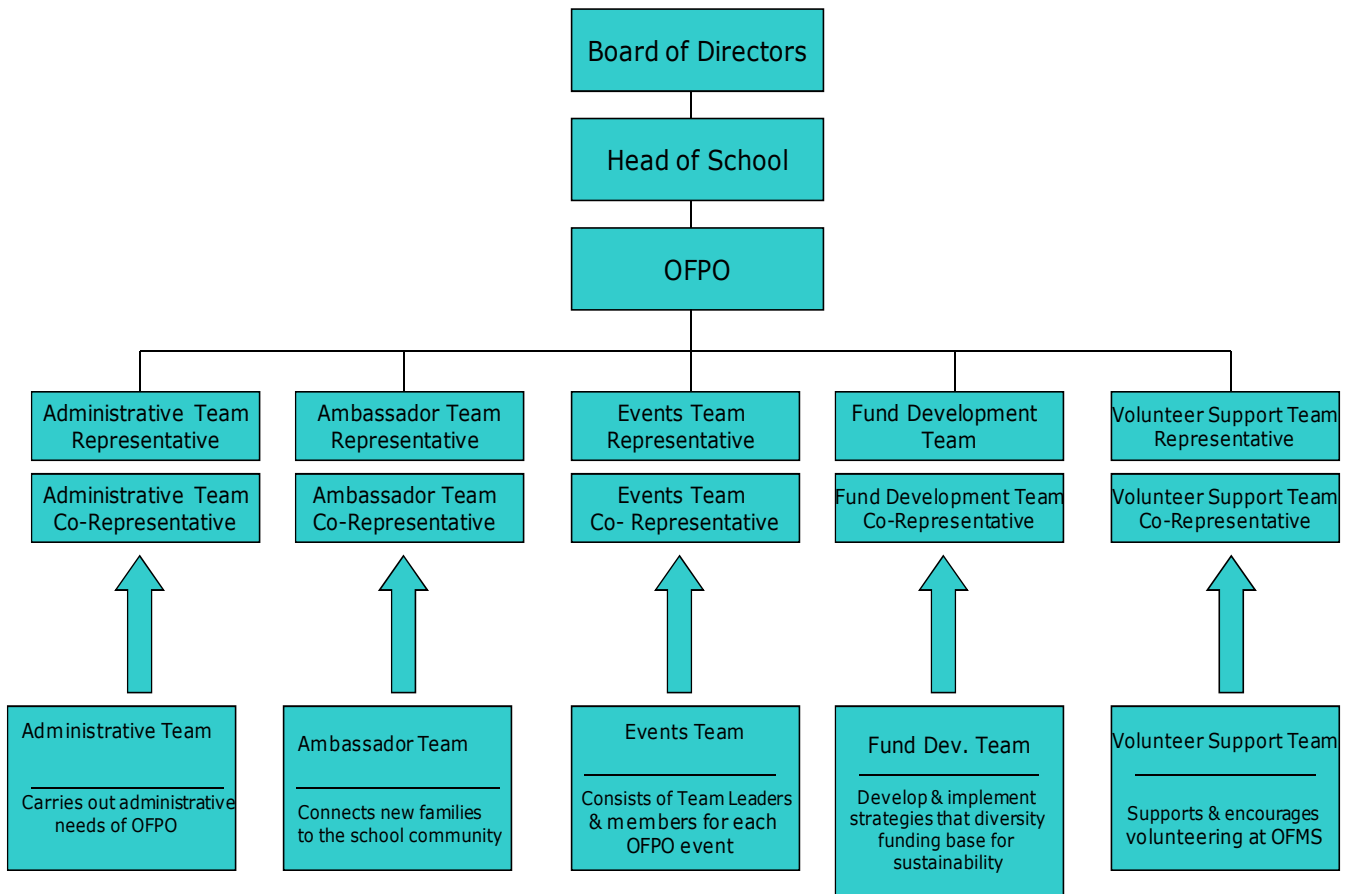
OAK FARM PARENT ORGANIZATION (OFPO) IN ACTION

Oak Farm Parent Organization Kick-Off
By Belinda Burton

The Oak Farm Parent Organization (OFPO) Kick-Off held Thursday, September 17, 2009, was a great success. New parents as well as those who have had children at Oak Farm Montessori School for many years attended this social and informative event. More than forty parents were in attendance enjoying delicious food and getting to know each other better. Participants got to know others from their home communities and met parents of their children's classmates. Attendees even discovered fun aspects of each other's lives like favorite vacation spots!

After the time of community building, a brief informative meeting highlighted the progress made in the Oak Farm Parent Organization in the last year. A special thanks to Tom Leedy who explained the OFPO organizational structure and chart which was developed by Natalie Axel. (Tom has been an active member of the Oak Farm Parent Organization for two year proving that dads can be involved in OFPO too! He has helped develop a mission statement, core values, and areas of impact. This year Tom guided the OFPO to a more mature organizational structure which better reflects its purposes.)

Oak Farm Montessori School OFPO Organizational Chart



The new Leadership Teams were then introduced:

- Administrative Team:** Belinda Burton, Joni Deitsch, and Lana Marchioni
- Ambassador Team:** Angie Becker and Tish Teel
- Events Team:** Abigail Loeffler and Amy Dankert
- Fund Development Team:** Kim Davidson and Kerri Axel
- Volunteer Support Team:** Heather Barth and Jackie Henry

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OAK FARM PARENT ORGANIZATION (OFPO) IN ACTION

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Finally, volunteer opportunities were offered to those having interest. Tom Leedy shared the importance of volunteerism especially at private schools, like Oak Farm Montessori School. He pointed out that most people are willing to help out, but usually wait until asked. The time and effort taken to complete the volunteer form on the Oak Farm Montessori School website is appreciated. The staff and OFPO Leadership Team then know areas of specific interest, which allows volunteers to be matched with their interests. (Of course, volunteers are always welcome before being asked!)

The following individuals worked hard to make the first OFPO Kick-Off a success. A big “thanks” goes to Abigail Loeffler who worked very hard to offer yet another wonderful event. Thanks to Joni Dietsch, Lana Marchioni, and Amy Dankert for helping with details, and to all the Leadership Team, Patty Fulk, and Ben Bollinger for help with planning and set-up. Community is team work, and it definitely happened at the Kick-Off! Thanks!

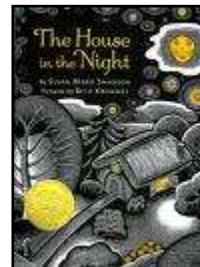
PICTURE BOOKS ARE FOR ALL AGES

By Sara Gensic, Librarian

“Read it again, please!” These might be my favorite words. I love hearing my children say them and I remember saying them myself as a child. My mother always had great picture books to read to me and for various reasons, certain books just seemed to draw me in as a child. Some of my fondest memories include Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are* and *Andrew Henry’s Meadow*, by Doris Burn. These are the books that caused my imagination to soar. What book did this for you? If you can’t remember, or don’t think you have a favorite picture book, might I suggest the following:

For children in the Victorian Farmhouse

A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni
The House in the Night by Susan Marie Swanson
Subway Ride by Heather Lynn Miller (OFMS Art Specialist)



For children in Lower Elementary or Upper Elementary

The Paper Crane by Molly Bang
The Little Match Girl by Hans Christian Anderson



For children in Upper Elementary or Middle School –

The Golden Flower by Nina Jaffe
Miz Berlin Walks by Jane Yolen



According to Lee Galda, Professor of Literacy Education at New York University,

Picture books offer a unique opportunity for children to develop visual literacy because they are able to return to the visual images in books to explore, reflect, and critique those images. As children explore illustrations and develop the ability to read images, they will attain deeper meanings from literature and an awareness of how visual images are used in their own meaning making.

When working with non-readers, consider taking a “picture walk. Ask questions about the cover and flip through the illustrations page by page before reading the text. Children have the opportunity to predict and discuss the pictures before the text is added in. With older children, the opposite might be helpful. After completely reading the text, go back through and show the illustrations. Both methods build visual literacy skills and critical thinking abilities. Regardless of the method you choose to share picture books, the most important point is that you DO share them. Picture books are for everyone, regardless of age.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN PRIMARY 1?

By Elizabeth Green



Bella greets the new butterfly before she releases it into the garden.

As a parent I'm sure you've wondered at some point, "What DOES my child do all day at school?" This is not an uncommon question especially from parents of first-year students in Primary. When you ask your child, "How was school today?" you might very well hear, "Good." Or the question "What did you do at school today?" might elicit the response, "Nothing".

While this can be frustrating to a parent who genuinely wants to know about his child's day, it is important to understand that for the very young child, it can be difficult to put into words what actually happens at school. He may or may not have the verbal skills needed to describe the work he's done at school. Consider asking more pointed questions like, "Who did you eat lunch with today?" or "Did you visit the chickens today?" or "Did you have any new lessons?"

While we review classroom guidelines and procedures with all students, we focus intently on helping the new students acclimate to the environment and learn how things are done in Primary 1. The first year students are enjoying many new lessons from all areas of the environment, some of which include: Spooning and Pouring Water, the Pink Tower and Brown Stair, the Number Rods and Spindle Boxes, Sandpaper Letters and Sound Games, and the Map of the World. In addition, they have been introduced to P. E. which requires a long walk to the other end of the building. The older students are

very eager to escort their younger friends on this walk to and from P.E. to make sure they arrive safely.

Compliments of Bella, we also have had a myriad of chrysalises brought in recently which has given us the opportunity to observe the emerging butterflies unfold their wings and ready themselves for the big world. Lessons on the life cycle of a butterfly have been discussed in great detail!

Please be patient with your child as he learns what school is about and how things are done. We invite you to observe one morning or schedule a time to have lunch with your child. This will give you a bird's eye view of what your child and his classmates do at school.

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.

Please remember to take your pumpkins home with you as you leave the picnic.