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Upcoming Events

Apr. 17 Golf vs. Fremont (Away) 4:30 PM
 Apr. 18 In-service Day - School Closed to Students
 Apr. 19- Parent - Teacher Conferences—School
 Apr. 20 Closed to Students
 Apr. 20 Golf vs. Garrett @ Cobblestone 5 PM
 Apr. 23 Golf vs. Central Noble @ Cobblestone 5 PM
 Apr. 24 Infant/Toddler Parent Education Event
 "Real and False Needs"
 Victorian Farmhouse 6 -7 PM
 RSVP to Lisa Rimmel

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	1	2	3	4	5

Headlines from Oak Farm Montessori School

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

502 Lemper Road Avilla, IN 46710

www.oakfarm.org

(260) 897-4270

FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Is the Amount of Time Students Spend in School the Key Variable?

Many people believe that the U.S. is considerably behind other countries on classroom time, which results in lower academic learning. However, the Center for Public Education released a survey showing this to be erroneous. Some countries have a longer school year than the U.S., but daily seat time in classrooms is less, so things even out. Here are the classroom hours per year, according to data from the OECD and World Data on Education:

- Finland: 608 hours (elementary), 777 hours (middle), 856 hours (high)
- Korea: 612 hours (elementary), 867 (middle), 1,020 (high)
- India: 800 hours (elementary), 1,000 (middle)
- Japan: 868 (middle)
- China: 900 hours (elementary), 1,000 (middle)
- US Average: 900 hours (elementary), 990 hours (secondary)
- France: 926 hours (elementary)
- Italy: 1,001 (middle), 1,089 (high)

Finland and Korea have among the highest student achievement in the world; France is average, and Italy on the low side. The authors write, "[T]he relationship between time and student learning is not about the amount of time spent in school. Rather, it is how effectively that time is used... Providing extra time is only useful if that time is used wisely."

Their recommendations to policymakers considering extra instructional time:

- Determine how effectively school time is currently being used – for example, the quality of curriculum standards and teaching;
- Explore scheduling alternatives that use existing time – for example, a year-round calendar to offset summer learning loss;
- If considering block scheduling, look at the research – it's mixed, with the 4x4 block schedule producing the least gains;
- Low-cost options like four-day weeks (with longer school days) can help;
- Logistics can be challenging but are solvable – for example, childcare for year-round scheduling with longer vacations during the year and a shorter summer vacation.

FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Continued from page 1

The above information is from "Time in School: How Does the U.S. Compare" by Jim Hull and Mandy Newport, The Center for Public Education, December 2011, spotted in PEN Weekly NewsBlast, Jan. 6, 2012; the full study is available at <http://bit.ly/tofmZw>

At Oak Farm Montessori we make classroom time count. The focus of our teachers is to guide and engage the student so that regardless of the activity, learning is taking place and a love of learning is being developed. At the same time, we are always studying ways to better benefit the students, through review of teaching practices, academic studies and research. Our commitment to your child is to strive to provide the finest possible Montessori education, and to prepare him or her for the next stage of his/her academic career.

UPPER-ELEMENTARY STUDENTS REACH OUT TO HELP STUDENTS IN UGANDA

By Heather Miller, Art Specialist

WHAT: Upper Elementary Art Show and Sale: To Benefit HALO homes in Uganda

WHEN: MAY 12, 2012 5 - 8 PM

WHERE: 3402 Fairfield Avenue, Fort Wayne, IN (The old Casa D'Angelo restaurant located at the corner of Fairfield and Kinsmoor.) This space is being renovated and transformed into a new creative area for northeast Indiana.

Come out to see the first phase of this amazing project!

Oak Farm Montessori School students are building a relationship with the HALO foundation to develop awareness and communication between two distant cultures. HALO is an organization that provides shelter, food, and also art therapy to orphans around the world. Along with that mission, HALO strives to provide philanthropic opportunities for students in the United States.

This past school year, Oak Farm students in Upper Elementary created art that was traded with students living in HALO homes in Africa. Pieces of canvas, approximately 24" in diameter, were cut into circles to represent eternal friendship. Students from Oak Farm divided the canvases in half, putting great thought into the shape of the dividing line and taking time to develop a composition that also carries meaning. After completion, the canvases were sent to Africa where students there worked to paint the second half of the piece. There, each student was given total freedom with his/her own design. The completed paintings were returned to Oak Farm, along with personal letters written by the Ugandan students explaining their experiences of daily life.

The finished pieces will be on display in a new gallery space located in Fort Wayne for one night only, May 12, and given away as a gift of thanks to those patrons who choose to support the HALO foundation with a donation.



Students in Uganda complete canvases that were first painted by students at Oak Farm



UGANDA

Continued from page 2

Young artists at Oak Farm recently enjoyed a visit by the HALO representative for Uganda, Dani Walker. Walker works with homes in two major cities in Uganda. The HALO home for girls is located in the city of Kampala, Uganda; a city with a population of about 1.5 million. The Bucasa home houses the boys and the girls live in the Mango home. Both homes are surrounded by high, concrete walls built to keep out thieves who like to snatch everything from toys left outdoors to clothing hung out to dry.

Walker shared photos and videos of the orphans she works with, allowing our students to make deeper connections with their new friends. During her visit, Walker shared stories of her motorcycle-taxi rides to work each morning and showed clips of the Ugandan students break-dancing on the dirt playground. Our students quickly connected with the children from Africa and now refer to many of them by their first names. This is exactly the kind of connection we were hoping for, we want to show our students that art can be used to communicate and make a real difference in the world.

The art being sold on May 12 was created by students learning to care for one another who hope to make a significant and direct impact on others. The money raised will go directly to the HALO foundation where it will be used to purchase rainwater collection tanks and water filters, allowing students at both the Bucasa and Mango homes to have a convenient, clean water supply. Oak Farm students are also enthusiastic to purchase toys, games, and playground equipment so the Ugandan children can add a little more fun into their lives.

Please come out to support Oak Farm students as they work to make an impact on the lives of students in Uganda.

CROSSING THE BRIDGE . . . DISTRIBUTING FLOWERS, RECITING SHAKESPEARE

By Desi, Simran, and Elizabeth Smith-Meyer

Last Friday afternoon, Desiree and Simran, two middle-school students; Jill Hoffelder, and Lisa Rimmel went to Sacred Heart Nursing Home in Avilla, IN and gave out flowers to all the residents. The flowers were left over from the volunteer recognition at a recent Coffee with the Head. "Many of the residents had huge smiles on their faces and couldn't stop thanking us," Desi said afterwards. "We felt really happy and were grateful we were able to put a smile on their faces," Simran added. "We think it would be a great thing to do more often."



**Titania (Desi) gives orders to her fairies
Mustardseed (Gracie), Cobweb (Hope),
and Peaseblossom (Caleb).**

In literature class, to celebrate National Poetry Month and the Bard's birthday, all middle-school students are reading a play by Shakespeare. They selected to read either *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Hamlet*. For each class, the students choose a character per scene, prepare those lines to recite in class, and also bring a picture of what their impressions of that character is in that particular scene. We're also creating our own artwork of our impressions of Puck and Bottom-turned-into-a-donkey and watching different film interpretations of each play. Through all of these activities, many are finding out that Shakespeare is more accessible than they thought. In fact, the 8th years are trying to envision an end-of-the-year play inhabited with Shakespearean characters.



**Book Fair & Earth Day
Festival Schedule**
Friday, April 27th

Drop off potluck items in the Vic.
House Kitchen 8 to 9 am

Visit the Book Fair in the Vic.
House Library 8 to 4

Enjoy Earth Day Activities
4 to 4:45

Enjoy the potluck and visit the
Book Fair 5 to 6:30



***Book Fair and Earth Day Festival
Combine Efforts***

Are you 'hungry' for a new book or ready to play some Earth Day 'games'? Join us Friday, April 27th for the Oak Farm Book Fair and Earth Day potluck celebration.

Summer's Stories will be on hand Wednesday through Friday from 8am – 4pm highlighting picture books, chapter books and novels sure to delight children and adults of all ages.

The book fair will culminate Friday after school with activities led by Upper Elementary TreeKeepers; bark rubbing, seed planting and nature walks.

Come support the Oak Farm libraries, enjoy Earth Day and bring your appetite! Jill's cookbook, *More from Jill's Kitchen*, will be available for pre-order at the book fair. Don't miss out! RSVP to Nikole at nalbright@oakfarmschool.com by Tuesday, April 24th.

Join the Potluck

To end the festivities, bring your family's favorite dish to share, as Jill will be on the grill serving BBQ chicken. Please drop off your well-labeled potluck items in the kitchen at the Vic. House Friday morning, or during morning carline. We will have volunteers posted at carline to take your items. No need to go home first. Simply come and relax, have a look at the books, enjoy Earth Day, and connect with others at this Oak Farm community event.

**Don't miss out! RSVP to Nikole at
nalbright@oakfarmschool.com by
Tuesday, April 24th.**