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Upcoming Events

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
Apr. 25- Apr. 27	Book Fair 8 AM - 4 PM
Apr. 27	Earth Day Festival 4PM - 6:30 PM RSVP to Nikole Albright nalbright@oakfarmschool.com
May 2	Track vs. Hamilton @ Hamilton 4:30 PM

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.

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FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Oak Farm's Earth Day Festival On Friday, April 27 from 4 - 6:30 PM

Oak Farm Montessori School will celebrate Earth Day on Friday, April 27, from 4 - 6:30 PM.

By celebrating the Earth and encouraging student participation, we are fostering lifelong caretaking of this precious planet that we call "home". Dr.

Montessori believed that "the land is where our roots are. The children must be taught to feel and live in harmony with the Earth." She also stated, "There is no description, no image in any book that is capable of replacing the sight of real trees, and all of the life to be found around them in a real forest."

In some ways, every day is Earth Day at OFMS. We are fortunate to have a variety of outdoor habitats surrounding our school for observation, exploration, study, and incorporation into our program, and into the child's own habitat. The woods, wetlands, gardens, prairie, farm, and ponds are our outdoor classrooms and encourage a connection with the natural world. Studying biomes, and the plants, animals, and people that cohabitate within them, the child gains

insight into interrelated aspects of life. At Oak Farm Montessori School, recycling, conservation, and composting complete the holistic appreciation of our total interdependence, an appreciation that is necessary for our sustainability and is a part of our responsibility, as citizens of the Earth.

"I am a citizen of the cosmos and I live on the planet Earth," Maria Montessori said, as a way to underscore her conviction that children become not only "citizens of the world" but of the Earth. In her book Education and Peace Dr. Montessori wrote, "All things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity". Long before the concepts of *green* and *global warming* became popular, Montessori was deeply impressed by the harmony she discerned in the natural world, the ecology of existence that gives every living thing a meaningful function in the larger system. Every species, indeed every individual organism, contributes to the good of the whole by performing its inherent "cosmic" function.

FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

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Please join the Earth Day Celebration that will include activities such as seed planting, bark and leaf rubbings, line transects, and guided hikes in the woods by upper-elementary students. We will end the event with a potluck dinner. Please email Nicole Albright, nalbright@oakfarmschool.com, if your family plans on joining the potluck dinner.

MONTESSORI HIGH SCHOOL AT UNIVERSITY CIRCLE: OAK FARM MONTESSORI SCHOOL'S LOGICAL NEXT STEP IN MONTESSORI EDUCATION

By Judith Cunningham, Head of School

Please come on May 10 at 6 PM to hear David Kahn, the Executive Director of the North American Montessori Teachers Association, and founder of Montessori High School discuss the value to extending your child's Montessori education through high school. Joining David will be Nate McDonald, Montessori High School's principal. Together they will share the Montessori International Baccalaureate program, its academic effectiveness, and the healthy, enriched, community life making Montessori High School a carefully maturing place for young people to find their lifetime motivation of "great work."

Oak Farm has been awarded a grant from the Dekko Foundation to provide financial aid for our graduating students to attend MHS.

Childcare is available for Primary through Upper-Elementary students. The cost is \$5 per child; please RSVP to Lisa for the presentation and for childcare on or before May 8.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT HAPPENINGS

By Elizabeth Smith, Music Specialist

What is the Oak Farm Music Program?

Throughout the year, Oak Farm students learn music through a process called "Orff Schulwerk," that provides a foundation for music from Primary through Upper Elementary. This foundation is built upon the innate ability of humans to make music with our bodies, and transfer that to instruments. They sing, dance, explore rhythm with percussion instruments, and develop understanding of pitch and tone with the use of barred instruments like recorders, xylophones, and glockenspiels.

According to the American Orff Schulwerk Association website (www.aosa.org):

Orff Schulwerk is based on things children like to do: sing, chant rhymes, clap, dance, and keep a beat on anything near at hand. These instincts are directed into learning music by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later. This is the same way we all learned our language.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT HAPPENINGS

Continued from page 2

The title "Schulwerk" is an indication of the educational process taking place: Schulwerk is schooling (in music) through working, that is, through being active and creative. Composer Carl Orff and his associate Gunild Keetman evolved the basic texts for the Schulwerk as models for teachers worldwide. Now translated into eighteen languages, Orff Schulwerk is based on the traditional music and folklore of each country in which it is used. At present more than 10,000 teachers in the United States have found the Schulwerk the ideal way to present the magic of music to their students.

Orff Schulwerk is a natural fit in a Montessori environment because it is non-competitive, honors the individual, provides a means for creativity, and provides a way for children to reach their musical potential through meaningful artistic work. It develops the whole child emotionally, intellectually, and physically.

Furthermore, the students have opportunities to see and hear professional musicians throughout the year. They include the following events.

Oak Farm Students In the Spotlight at FAME Festival

In March, the Oak Farm Upper Elementary Choir and Folk Dancers performed at the Grand Wayne Center during the Fort Wayne FAME Festival. Seven students ranging from Lower Elementary through Middle School met after school each Tuesday for the 8 weeks prior to FAME to share in folk dancing. They performed dances such as Pata-Pata from South Africa, Chilili from Bolivia, a traditional American folk dance called Alabama Gal, and the Chinese Ribbon Dance. Twenty-two students from Upper Elementary came out to show our school colors at FAME, performing original arrangements of "Don't Stop Believing" by Journey, "Seasons of Love" from the musical Rent, "Man in the Mirror," by Michael Jackson, and "Wavin' Flag," as sung by Young Artists for Haiti.

Musical Visitors Inspire Oak Farm Students

On April 10, a visit from the Canterbury High School Jazz Band, Directed by Akira Murotani (trumpet player for the Fort Wayne Philharmonic), inspired Oak Farm students with a chronological demonstration of the history of jazz band music, starting with the classic 1920s tune "All of Me", then moving to "Basin Street Blues", demonstrating New Orleans style jazz. That was followed by jazz-fusion music from the '50s and '60s with jazz great, Herbie Hancock's "Cantaloupe Island." The '70s and '80s were also represented with "Earth, Wind and Fire Dance Mix Medley" and "The Final Countdown." The performance showed off the talents of the 12 students in the band with many solos, which included instruments such as trumpet, trombone, clarinet, alto saxophone, guitars, bass guitar, keyboards, vibraphone, and drum kit.



The first week of May will bring a visit from the Fort Wayne Taiko Drummers to give Oak Farm students a hands-on experience with traditional Japanese drumming. Taiko instructors will give workshops May 1 - 2 during elementary and middle-school music classes, with an all-school performance in the gym held on May 3.

Festival of the Arts Scheduled for May 16

As the year draws to a close, spring gives the inspiration of new growth to parallel the growth of our students, and we invite the Oak Farm School community to join us for our annual celebratory Festival of the Arts on Wednesday, May 16 at the Oak Farm Arts Center on Green Drive in Avilla. Elementary and middle-school student artwork will be on display, and choral ensemble performances and Orff-Schulwerk demonstrations will begin at 3:30 and end at 4:30 PM. The Art Gallery will open at 3:00 for guests to peruse the student artwork.

THE ABSORBENT MIND AND SENSITIVE PERIODS

By Falen Pope, Infant Teacher

Maria Montessori spoke of the child as having an absorbent mind. The absorbent mind is a sponge, soaking up everything around and eventually refining the absorption of information. The two stages of the absorbent mind are the unconscious absorbent mind and the conscious absorbent mind. The unconscious absorbent mind includes the time of the spiritual embryo when the child is acquiring basic human skills. The spiritual embryo begins at birth. The infant is born with complete potential that will develop in relation to his environment. This spiritual or mental development begins even before the child has control of his movements.

During this stage, the child is completely dependent on the adults around him to provide an appropriate environment for development. The adults around the child must have respect for the development the child is going through and not construct the child, but allow the child to construct himself. To do this the adult must allow for freedom of movement, individual effort, and independence from the adult. This period includes an incarnation of the environment. This is a time when the child has no filters. The child absorbs everything around him. At this time, the child's strongest drive is for independence.

This is the time for the sensitive periods for movement, order, and language. Sensitive periods are windows of time when certain areas of development can be most fruitful. These sensitive periods are critical for normal development. Montessori believed the child would choose activities and experiences that would encourage growth during these sensitive periods.

The sensitive period for movement includes acquiring the proper skills, moving from random to purposeful. The child discovers that the hand is the tool of the mind. The child also learns movements that allow him to move his whole body away, such as crawling and walking, taking him out of a state of helplessness.



The beginning of the sensitive period for order is when the child seeks out order in the environment. He seeks an external order dealing with spatial, temporal, sensory, social, and natural aspects. He also seeks an internal order in how his body connects with the external order and how his body parts connect with each other. Towards the end of this sensitive period, he refines this sense of order by making order. He is able to perform more complex activities and is interested in truth and reality and social graces.

The sensitive period for language moves the child from silence to speaking. The child quickly develops auditory, visual, and motor abilities relating to language. During the second half of this period the child goes from just speaking to actually putting a thought process behind his words. He is much more influenced by adults and begins to use language as a means of socialization.

The child is incredibly intelligent from birth and we must treat him as such. He is not born with a predetermined aim. The child must find it himself. He brings no abilities with him, yet he is born with the potential for any ability. If the child is prevented from absorbing during each sensitive period, his potential will be lost. The future of the child is formed in these first few years. Helping the infant's life to unfold at this age will help him develop his personal capacities later.



**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.**