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April 2012

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Upcoming Events

- Apr. 11 Primary Cook Day
- Apr. 11 Track @ Howe School vs. Howe & Hamilton
- Apr. 12 Coffee with the Head
8:45 AM Victorian Farmhouse
Where is Oak Farm Going and What Will It Be When It Gets There?
- Apr. 12 6 PM Presentation: *Where is Oak Farm Going and What Will It Be When It Gets There?*
- Apr. 18 In-service Day - School Closed to Students
- Apr. 19- Parent - Teacher Conferences—School
- Apr. 20 Closed to Students

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

One of our parents shared with me an article from the Indiana Grantmakers Alliance about project-based learning, a popular topic in Indiana schools.

Schools are in trouble. In Indiana, only seven out of every ten 9th-grade students will graduate from high school. Of those who do earn a diploma, many remain unprepared for “the real world”. The nation loses more than \$3.7 billion in college remediation costs each year, and businesses report that 45% of their new hires are ill equipped to handle tasks beyond the entry level.

The reasons for these shortcomings are many and varied. Near the top of the list is the fact that **students aren’t engaged during school hours**. Two out of three young people report being bored at least once every day at school. This detachment decreases motivation and ultimately prevents kids from acquiring the 21st-century skills necessary for lifelong success.

Enter project-based learning (PBL). **PBL grabs students’ attention through the use of inquiry to solve real-world issues or questions.**

Source: Indiana Grant Makers Alliance,

Education Issues in Brief: Project-Based Learning

Once again I am reminded that what is new in public education is a long standing Montessori tradition. Project-based learning is the basis of Montessori education. Learning in a Montessori classroom shifts from the classroom practices of short, isolated, teacher-centered lessons and emphasizes interdisciplinary, student-centered activities that are integrated with real world issues and practices.

This practice motivates students by engaging them in their own learning. From the early research of the third-year Primary to the Middle School, students pursue their own interests and questions and make decisions about how they will find answers and solve problems.

Montessori is dedicated to keep learning relevant and useful to students by establishing connections to life outside the classroom, addressing real world concerns, and developing real world skills that will last a lifetime.

As an example, our Upper Elementary World Changer’s Café provided an opportunity for students to select a person who inspired them and then through research, create a presentation to share with

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FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

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their parents and our community. The Montessori Model UN program that our eighth years undertake enables them to select a country, understand its position and interests on current global topics, so that they can work with Montessori students from around the world on resolutions. Students learn skills such as the ability to work well with others, make thoughtful decisions, take initiative, communicate effectively, and solve complex problems.

In our Montessori classes, project-based activities create a stronger relationship between the student and the teacher. The role of the teacher becomes that of coach, facilitator, and co-learner. Completed projects, the plans, drafts, prototypes, and in-between efforts collectively create discussion points between the student and teacher that deepens understanding while enhancing the learning process.

The parent that shared the article with me said, "Rather than limited exposure to the experiences and skills gained through PBL, the Oak Farm Montessori philosophy is more methodical, consistent, and intentional about developing what is described as 21st century skills. In my opinion, an Oak Farm Montessori education is PBL on steroids."

"Where is Oak Farm going and what will it be when it gets there?"

These questions will be answered on Thursday, April 12, 2012 at the 8:45 AM Coffee with the Head and at 6 PM in conjunction with year-end reports from the OFPO and Winter Wonderland chairs. These events are for the entire Oak Farm community and will take place in the Victorian Farmhouse. Evening childcare will be provided free of charge for any Primary through Upper-Elementary-age student beginning at 5:45 PM in the Victorian Farmhouse. Please phone or email your RSVP to Lisa for the event and for childcare before 3 PM on Tuesday, April 10. We are looking forward to seeing you there.

INFANT/TODDLER PARENT-EDUCATION TO ADDRESS REAL AND FALSE NEEDS

By Lori Zacharias, Toddler Teacher

Please join the infant and toddler staff from 6-7 PM on Tuesday, April 24, 2012 as we explore real and false needs. Is a pacifier necessary? What will help in the development of your child while you keep sanity as a parent? Parenting is not easy but the more we can educate ourselves, the better off we will be! Bring your questions to discuss regarding the parenting journey with the infant and toddler staff at Oak Farm Montessori School.

Childcare is available for any Toddler (18 mos.) through Upper-Elementary-age student with an RSVP to Lisa Rimmel by April 20. The cost is \$5 per child. Please note that child care for Toddlers is only available during an Infant/Toddler parent-education event.

SUMMER CAMP ENROLLMENT DEADLINE APPROACHES

By Kelly Elias

Don't forget to check out the summer programs available at Oak Farm this summer. We are offering programs for Toddlers through Middle School, with a variety of topics and events being discovered. **The deadline for enrolling is April 30**, which is quickly approaching. Please contact Kelly Elias at (260) 897-4270 ext. 25204 if you have any questions or need further information. The summer programs' brochure is available on our website www.oakfarm.org or you can pick up one in our main entrance at the Victorian Farmhouse.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES TO BE HELD APRIL 19-20

By Sarah Shanton-Cox, Admissions Director, Human Resources Director

All-school conferences will be held on Thursday, April 19 and Friday, April 20, 2012

Conferences on Thursday are being held 11 AM - 7 PM.

Conferences on Friday are being held 8 AM - 4 PM.

Procedure to schedule the conferences for your children:

- Call Sarah Shanton-Cox (Ext. 25200) to schedule your conferences.
- The conferences are for parents only with the exception of the Middle School. See below.
- 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.

Please make every effort to schedule your child's conference during the designated conference days so that teachers are not taking time away from their already busy teaching schedules.

Childcare

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

Childcare will be available in following locations:

Toddler: Solarium (Victorian Farmhouse)

Primary through Middle School: Multi-purpose Room (Victorian Farmhouse)

Please escort your children through the main Victorian Farmhouse entrance to drop off in the Multi-purpose Room and Solarium. For parents conferencing in the Victorian Farmhouse, you may continue down 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 Students

Middle School students are asked to attend the conference. They will help lead the conference with their parents.

School is closed to students Wednesday, April 18 through Friday, April 20 with exception to conference childcare.