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**Upcoming Events**

Mar. 1	Monthly Tuition Installment Due
Mar. 1	Primary's Bring-Your-Parents-to-School Day
Mar. 7	OFPO Meeting 8:30-10:30 AM Victorian Farmhouse
Mar. 8	Parent Education Event : Dr. Joe Dunn 7 PM Victorian Farmhouse RSVP to Lisa for Event and Childcare
Mar. 9	Infant and Toddler Classrooms Closed
Mar. 13	Middle School Graduate Panel <i>Transitioning to High School</i> 6 - 7:30 PM Middle School RSVP to Lisa for Event and Childcare

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	27	28	29	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	31

# 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](http://www.oakfarm.org)

(260) 897-4270

## FROM JUDITH CUNNINGHAM, HEAD OF SCHOOL

### What Is a Healthy Family?

When I was growing up, a “healthy” family ate nutritious food at regular family dinners. In today’s world, that definition has expanded to include the physical and emotional dimensions of exercise and communication. On March 8 at 7 PM, Dr. Joe Dunn will present: *What is a Healthy Family? A Psychologist’s Perspective Based on 30 Years of Working with Kids, Teachers, and Families*. The presentation and discussion will take place in the Victorian Farmhouse.

Suzanna Smith, associate professor, University of Florida contributed a series of articles on this topic. She defines the characteristics of strong families as having:

- Commitment to each other;
- Physical, spiritual, and emotional wellness;
- Effective family communication;
- Appreciation of all family members;
- Meaningful and sufficient time together;
- Effective strategies to deal with stress.

Such qualities create a sense of connectedness and belonging. From that safe center, families can work

through problems and manage the stresses of life and individual members can develop their own potential and personality.

All of this sounds so logical and reasonable. Why is it such hard work? Come hear what Dr. Dunn shares from his 30 years of experience about how healthy families build and sustain themselves.

Childcare will be provided for any Primary-through-Middle School-age student beginning at 6:45 PM in the Victorian Farmhouse. The cost is \$5 per child; please RSVP to Lisa for the presentation and for childcare on or before March 6.

### From Bonnie Schultz (for the Primary Faculty)

**Primary Parents** are encouraged to attend the all-school parenting presentation on March 8 given by Dunn and Associates.

We will **not** hold the March 15 Primary Education Event that is listed on your annual calendar. This will give you only one Parent Education event to attend this month.

Let’s join together to learn from the knowledge and experience that this group brings us! We look forward to the participation of Primary parents at this event.

## YOU'RE INVITED!

Hello Parents,

We are more than half way through the year and a lot of great things have happened here at Oak Farm. To make each and every event a success there are people who work behind the scenes to make everything go smoothly. We would like to invite all parents to our next Oak Farm Parent Organization meeting. It will be held on March 7 after morning carline in the multi-purpose room at the Victorian Farmhouse. It will last until 10:30 AM. If you have ever thought about being a representative or just want to see how much fun we have, please come check out the meeting.

See you there,

Terri Clark, OFPO President

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## CROSSING THE BRIDGE. . . TO CREATE A FARM COMMUNITY

**By Elizabeth Smith-Meyer, Middle School Teacher**

While learning themselves, the middle-school students continue to prepare their “barn” stations. These stations are being designed to invite students from the lower campus to the farm so that they can learn about our animals. Currently we are preparing stations on pigs, both the sow and the piglets; herd animals, such as sheep, goats, donkeys, and alpacas; and the chickens, including the newly hatched chicks. This experience is teaching the students how to analyze their audience in terms of activities, how to help younger students understand, and how to ensure a productive time is had for all—including the animals. Some of the activities will include collecting eggs, feeling the difference in wool, and learning how to act around farm animals. On Friday, our first group of Primary students will visit, so we are continuing to practice this week to make sure their first middle-school farm experience will be memorable and enjoyable.



**Citizen the alpaca trains Elijah the student how to use a halter.**



**Maddie and Gracie pose as students while Noah, Elijah, Reid, and Hope explain about alpacas.**

## LOWER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS RECOUNT VISIT TO SUGAR BUSH

### By Students of Lower Elementary 2



Reed uses a “push and lean” to drill a hole in the tree.

*Students from Lower Elementary recently took a field trip to Sugar Bush Maple Syrup Farm owned by the Yoder family in Huntertown, IN and used by Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center for outdoor education. In addition to the article below, the class created a book of trip photos with captions written by the children.*

Mr. Yoder and his family have been living on the Sugar Bush farm for a very long time. Carol from Merry Lea told us how we can get hurt by the fire. We wore our snow pants, gloves, hats, and coats because it was February and it was cold. We worked together to pull a log. When we were pulling as a team, it was so easy. We had to scrape bark off maple trees before we drilled a hole in it. We used a brace and bit to take the sap from the tree. You have to be very careful. You have to put the brace and bit on your body and turn. We made a hole until we saw white wood. When we saw white wood, we got a hammer and hit the spile into the tree. We used a spile to get the sap out of the tree. We drilled a spile by poking a hole into a twig. We stuffed a piece of metal into the twig to make the hole. It looked like a straw.



Ellie samples newly-tapped sap.

The sun was out but the maple sap was still cold like ice. We saw the sap drip out of the tree. The sap froze while it was in the bucket. We learned that the Native Americans used to get maple syrup. They made wooden buckets because they didn't have metal in the olden days. The Native Americans also took a piece of bark and used it as a slide. The slide led from the tree to the bucket. Tom from Merry Lea had to use a hammer to get the ice out of the sap bucket. The ice froze above the sap in the bucket. He got the ice out of the bucket so that they could reach the sap by taking a hammer and hitting the ice. Then they took the ice and threw it on the forest floor.

First they poured the sap into another bucket. Then we took it to the evaporator house and boiled it. The evaporator is a machine that boils the sap into syrup. It must be 219 degrees to turn the sap into syrup. There is a fire below the evaporator. It takes a lot of wood. If you skimmed your clothes on it, they might burn. The fire is on one end and the other side has no fire. You need to wear gloves to protect your hands. They need lots and lots of wood to keep the fire going. We used a large hand-saw to cut the wood. There can only be two people on the handsaw trying to cut wood. While we were cutting, we sang "Pull, pull! Never push! Cookies from the sugar bush." There was a lot of wood to keep the nine fires going. They also used an ax to cut the wood.



Duncan checks to make sure the bucket of sap has thawed.

In the history area we learned that Native Americans used wooden troughs with sap in them. They put hot stones in because they wanted to boil the sap in the trough. They also showed us a big, black kettle used for boiling sap. The Europeans used it when making syrup. It took 40 gallon milk jugs of sap to make just one gallon of maple syrup! Some of the syrup they showed us was made of corn syrup. They can bottle the maple syrup in a jug, jar, or tin. They used many different shape bottles for the maple syrup. We had maple syrup on pancakes for lunch. Our lunch was very, very, good. It was like an outdoor cafeteria.



Students enjoy pancakes and maple syrup for lunch.

Thank you Sugar Bush!