Upcoming dates...

- Sat April 25th 10am - 2pm Dugout Canoe Work/Fun Day
- Thu - Sat May 7-9 Senior Trip to Washington DC
- Sun May 10 - Mother’s Day
- Fri May 22 - Grandparents and Special Person Day - details to follow
- Mon May 25 - Memorial Day No School
- Mon June 15 6:00pm - 9-12 classroom graduation ceremony and senior project presentations
- Tues June 16th 6:00pm - 6-9 classroom graduation ceremony
- Wed June 17th 1:00pm - 3-6 classroom graduation ceremony
- Wed June 17th Last day of school
- End of the Year BBQ and celebration - 4:00pm
- Sun June 21 - Father’s Day

A Few Thoughts and Reflections...

So often, important components of the Montessori approach, developed over a hundred years ago, are proven to be equally beneficial today in a modern context. One of these benefits is the advantage of integrating arts into other components of the curriculum. This year we made a big adjustment in this area and moved to a truly authentic Montessori approach by creating a Unified Program of the Arts here at Oak Grove. In this authentic approach all forms of fine art, design, creativity, movement, performance and music are integrated as a means of learning and expressing in all areas of the curriculum.

I am thrilled with how successful this first year has been as we navigated through these needed changes to create this authentic approach. The hard work and commitment from our teachers has been a testament to their understanding of the importance of this integration. I cannot thank them enough for their added effort. Their deep appreciation for the arts as a means to further explore and express ideas and gain knowledge has been clearly showcased this school year.

In addition to this integrated program of the arts, we have also been able to offer some amazing experiential learning opportunities throughout the year for our students. The excitement and the joy from the students has been contagious. Here are a few examples of some of the experiential opportunities the children have had this year and outcomes of the in-classroom work:

An outside classroom for a day on the Willimantic River and Johnnie Walker’s riverboat adventure, Plimouth Plantation (the dugout canoe project was born out of this field trip!), Riverview Farm, a day at the Kerri Art Gallery and Studio, Tommy James-Dr. Seuss reading show, Dulcimer making with Backyard Music, Gardening with Brian O'Hara, greenhouse work with Audrey, Bird Night, Geography Night, Folklore Puppets, ECSU Alice in Wonderland, Sturbridge Village, Earth Day at the DEEP with special guest, renowned Botanist, Joe Simcox, afternoons for a week with Derek, studying a specific music topic (the 3-6 class will have their week in May!), and so many incredible art and music projects that have been created and showcased in the building throughout the year - including the three amazing items created by each room for the auction!
Continued...

It is so clear to me now why Maria Montessori designed the program this way. The math manipulatives, language, science and cultural lessons all can be followed up with work that uses art. I have seen art, music and movement integrated in such an amazing and organic way! Thank you all for supporting our decision to integrate this program and to develop it further throughout this year. Again, a huge thank you to all our staff and teachers for an incredible effort and appreciation!

News from the Upper Elementary Room

As we reflect on what the 9-12 classroom has been up to in the past couple weeks it occurred to us that we have done so much!

Let’s start with the geography fair. The 9-12 class spent three months studying Asian countries, and becoming personal experts, all building to an evening of food, and presentations the Thursday before April Vacation. The students were articulate, informative, and proud of their work, as they should have been.

Then we returned from vacation to a field trip to Old Sturbridge Village on Monday. This was another outstanding experience. We spent the morning transplanted back in time to a 1830 New England kitchen, where we were asked to cook a meal on the hearth in an authentic way. The meal took 3 hours to prepare, and we (the adults) will never take our modern luxuries for granted again! The mid-day meal would have been their largest meal of the day at the time, so this was a very authentic experience, except they would have worked even harder for their meal, because they could not buy chickens or carrots at Stop & Shop! We made roasted chickens, stuffing, carrots, mashed potatoes, bread, and cake. Each group also spent some time making butter or whipped cream, both of which were painstaking tasks in 1830, and exhausted the kids quickly. We sat down at 12:30 to eat the meal we had worked so hard for together, but were not allowed to dig in, until we understood the table manners and rules of an 1830 family dinner. We learned that you eat with your silverware in both hands, and only use your fork for stabilization and balance, but otherwise eat off your knife with the blade facing away from you. This was interesting to try and imitate and the class did a commendable job, eating the meal in this unfamiliar way.

The afternoon of the OSV field trip was spent having rainy adventures within the village. The 6th year girls did a program on Anti-Slavery and had to go around convincing villages to sign their abolition petition. The 5th and 4th years learned about westward expansion and weighed the pros and cons of moving out west in the 1830’s. All in all we went home wet, happy, smarter, and VERY full!

This weekend is our Log Work Party, and we are madly getting ready for it. We will turn the log again today, and prepare it for the work we hope to get done on Saturday. We hope to see you all there; it is supposed to be a beautiful day outside!
Bird Night! An amazing showcase of the hard work of each 6-9 student. Each child chose a type of bird to study and to research. This day and evening event gave the students the opportunity to present their knowledge and their projects. The creativity was flowing!!

Thanks to the arranging and the amazing support from Lidia Howard, a group of students from the 6-9 classroom had the once in a life time opportunity to spend Earth Day at the DEEP in Hartford. They had the privilege of hearing Joe Simcox, the famous world known Botanical Explorer. Joe travels the world studying and researching and searching for edible plants. What an inspiring day. How lucky are we?!?! Thank you Lidia.
News From the Primary Classroom

Welcome back! I hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable vacation. In our class it was clear to see everybody was happy to be back, teachers included! Thanks to everyone for supporting our shark study. We learned a lot about them and had great fun. I have, again, rotated some of the materials in the classroom and the children have been very busy exploring it all. We are currently learning all about Rabbits.

The spring conferences are completed and it was wonderful to watch each child so enthusiastically present materials to their parents! I hope everyone got a good sense of their child’s true joy in their learning process. The materials are beautiful and fun to use. They engage the child in a way only Dr. Montessori could have imagined.

The countdown to the end of this school year has begun and we still have another field trip to plan. I will get everyone the details within a week or so. This field trip will be to the Lutz children’s museum. Happy Spring!!!

Robyn and Audrey