Upcoming Dates...

- Fri May 22 - 1:15pm - 3 Grandparents/Special Person Day
- Mon May 25 - Memorial Day  No School
- Mon June 15  6:00pm - 9-12 classroom graduation and senior project presentations
- Tues June 16  6:00pm - 6-9 classroom graduation
- Wed June 17  1:00pm - 3-6 classroom graduation ceremony
- Wed June 17  End of the Year BBQ and celebration - 4:00pm
- Sun June 21 - Father's Day
- Mon June 29 - Summer Camp at Oak Grove begins

Some thoughts...

The seniors have returned from their trip to DC, today is the second to last pizza lunch of the school year, and graduation planning is in full swing. Spring is a busy and very happy time at Oak Grove each year. There is a buzz of activity and a general excitement in the air. Last year I was a parent of a 6th year graduate and it was a whirl wind of emotions and a blur of emotions and excitement. So, here we are a year later. As a parent, I supported my senior through her 6th year spring here at Oak Grove, with senior trip and senior projects and a million other big and small events and I experienced more emotions then I even knew I had. Then we made it through summer, and yes, we made it through that dreaded first day at a new school. Please be reminded that my daughter had been here for 9 years. When I dropped her at the bus stop (yes, she took the bus on the first day!), I was excited for her. She was calm and at ease, and I knew that she would be fine. Actually, I knew that she would be so much more than fine.

It is interesting to me, because one year earlier, she was not fine. She was struggling in many ways during her 5th grade year here. There were some social struggles, there were body image issues, and there was a lack of confidence. One year later, I drop that same girl at the bus stop without one single question of how her transition will go.

Is this goin' anywhere? That is what my husband would say if he read these past two paragraphs! Yes it is. One year ago I was submerged in the experience. Today, I am one step removed. And that slight separation has made me respect, even more, the full benefit of the three year cycle and the absolute clarity and understanding of how important this cycle is. The 6th year is the culminating year of the elementary program. This is the "show me" stage. The third year in the upper elementary class gives the child the opportunity to be a leader and share what they have learned with the younger children. It is in this year that the child is given the keys to the universe, and all the academic lessons to enable them to make a successful transition to middle school and beyond. The 6th year child is well adjusted socially and emotionally. These three years have given them the freedom to develop as a unique individual. They have experienced the challenges and rewards of working with a group of other children of different ages and have seen their skills and talents put to use in many different ways. The 6th year student has developed proficiency in all areas of academics and looks forward to new academic challenges beyond elementary school. They are respectful and trusting of adults. Above all, they are flexible and adaptable. This culminating year helps the child to easily assimilate into the new academic and social situations of middle school and beyond. The benefit of having a mixed age group in the same room cannot be stressed enough. Research has shown us that ages 3 and 4, grades 1 and 2, grades 4 and 5, and grades 7 and 8 are years of academic and intellectual explosion. It was Dr. Montessori who observed that in the 6 year olds, the 9 year olds, and 12 year olds, (the ages of the third year in each classroom), their great work was social and emotional. It is this work that lays the foundation for the next
academic explosion. Dr. Montessori was also clear to conclude that unless the social and emotional growth was addressed directly and effectively, rather than suppressed, academic growth could slow and suffer.

That third year of the three year cycle is huge. The leadership of the older children has a remarkable impact on the health of the entire classroom, allowing the oldest children in each cycle to stand tall with confidence during an uncertain time, while internalizing the academic work of the first two years by sharing knowledge and expertise with the younger students. The third years internalize and consolidate the academic skills they have acquired from the two prior years, exploding into the next three year cycle.

The research clearly shows the success and the undeniable impact that the full three year cycle has on the child. For me, what I remember the most, is the sense of pride my daughter left here with. There are many things that each of our 6th years accomplish in their final year at Oak Grove, but summiting the senior project mountain, including the public presentation at graduation, is an accomplishment at a new and higher level for the child. In her final year at Oak Grove, my daughter transformed into a completely different version of herself. She left here with a strong sense of who she is. She was excited and ready to meet the challenges that she would face around her next corner. As parents, we are constantly proud of our children. What the three year completed cycled allows for, is an immeasurable value placed on the child’s own sense of pride. The 6th years graduate on June 15th at 6:00pm. I encourage you all to come and celebrate with the graduates. It is a very powerful evening and the perfect reminder of the brilliance of Dr. Montessori.

For the third year in a row, Oak Grove Montessori School is a recipient of the Connecticut GreenCircle Award.

This award is in recognition for the school’s dedicated work and focus on environmental issues and practical applications that respect and care for the environment. A heartfelt thank you to Lidia Howard for her tireless work and assistance through this process. And a huge thank you to our entire community for understanding and supporting all of the efforts and different way we all care for the environment.

News from the 6-9 classroom

We’ve been so happy that spring is here! We’re spending lots of time in our outdoor classroom observing the plants and animals in our environment. Our bird feeders have been attracting a wonderful assortment of beautiful birds, and of course the occasional squirrel. There’s been a rabbit visiting our garden from time to time as well.

Our garden is flourishing. We’ve harvested spinach and miner’s lettuce twice already, and now we have radishes, cress, and lettuce coming up. At this point, the children have really taken over care of the garden. They uncover the beds in the morning, do all the planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting themselves, and cover the beds back up at the end of the day. Our farmer friend, Bryan, has been impressed by how much progress the children have made this year in terms of farming skills.

Visits to the vernal pond have been exciting because so much is happening so fast. We observed the prehistoric looking skunk cabbage flowers, and were surprised to see them replaced by large, powerful leaves the following week. Fiddleheads are unfurling, and leaves are filling up the treetops. The pond itself has been most exciting with lots of frogs to search for. They blend right in with the dead leaves and branches where they hide. We wondered if some of the frogs we saw could be the same ones we released last spring after watching their metamorphosis in our classroom tank.
News from the 9-12 Classroom

The 9-12 classroom continues to be as busy as ever. We are loving the beautiful spring weather and the opportunities this affords us to go outside.

(From left- completing a 550 piece puzzle, a successful Saturday dugout canoe work day, Rachael teaching her class how to make puppets as part of her senior project)

The Seniors went on their Senior Trip last week, thanks to everyone’s fabulous participation in the pizza lunch fundraiser. They had an outstanding time, but we will leave it to them to tell you about it. Please be on the lookout for their poster in the lobby chronicling their trip. They are also finishing their senior projects, and getting ready to turn them into power points for the graduation ceremony.

We have recently introduced puzzles into our classroom, as alternative work choices. They are very popular, and are taking over. They offer an opportunity to work on problem solving strategies, and teamwork.

The canoe is making great progress. The class attempted to weigh it, and it now weighs approximately 570 lbs. It was approximately 2400 lbs when we started. We are going to practice lifting it for the launch, which is coming at the end of May. We will keep everyone posted about when and where we will launch.

News from the 3-6 Classroom

Spring is here and we are dirty and happy!!!

We are excited to have our turn with Derek and work with him all week! We will show off our musical talents at Grandparents/Special Person Day!

June 8th we are taking our spring field trip to the Lutz Museum!!