Upcoming Events...

- Thurs April 20 - Research Night in the 6-9 Classroom 6:00pm
- Thurs April 27 - History Fair 9-12 Classroom
- Sat April 29 - Open House for perspective new families 1:00-3:00pm
- Fri May 5 - Special Person’s Day 1:30-3:00
- Fri May 5 - Spring Music Concert 6:30-7:30pm
- Mon May 15 - Muffin Monday
- Thurs May 18 - Sat May 20 - Senior Trip
- Mon May 29 - Memorial Day  - No School

A Huge Thank You

Saturday April 1st was certainly no April Fool’s Day for all of us at Oak Grove. What a fun and successful Country Nights Gala we had! I want to thank everyone who helped to make this event the success that it was. I am happy to report that we met our needed financial goal. I am happier to report that the feedback I have received from those who went was that it was a very fun evening!

It takes so much work and commitment from so many people to put this event together and I am grateful to our community for understanding the importance of this evening. For all of you who attended, thank you!! Spread the word to friends and family that it is a fun night and to put it on the calendar early for next year!! We will have next year’s gala date soon.

And a special thank you to

HORIZONS

We are so grateful for you hospitality and your amazing team!
Spring is here and it’s a busy time of the year around the Grove... 🌞 🌟 🌟

This time of the year is always a buzz of activity! Right before the break the 9-12 students served lunch to their parents and presented their latest Literary Circle projects. (I am sorry I was away at a conference for that, as I always enjoy this special day). The 6-9 students will showcase their research projects tonight. The 9-12 students will present their research projects next week at the History Fair. The greenhouse will soon be in full swing, led by Audrey and the 3-6 kids. (the chickens are helping prepare the garden now!)

We will see a lot of Derek around the building in the next two weeks, as the kids all prepare for the Spring Music Concert. For those of you who remember years ago when Derek created and directed his show Winterium, this concert will be the continuation of that wonderful production, as winter turns into spring. The concert will be Friday May 5th at 6:30. I hope you all can join us for this wonderful evening!

2017 Summer Camps at Oak Grove

- Robyn and Audrey are offering 5 different weeks of summer camp - Weaving, Art, Puppets and more.
- Willa is offering 4 weeks of different camps - Book Making, Music with Derek, and more.
- Hannah is offering 3 different weeks of camps - Clay, Cooking and Mosaics.

Sign up soon. Pick up a flyer in the lobby or click on the link on the OGMS home page. Summer Camp at Oak Grove is the perfect balance of fun and learning all in a relaxed setting. Come and see how magical it is here in the summer.

There are full day and half day options. Sign up for one week or for all five! Invite your friends and neighbors to join. The campers are not required to be enrolled in OGMS during the academic year.

Registration forms are due into the office by May 1st
End of the Year • Change • Transitions • How We Can Help Our Children

As I sit here in my office writing this, I am grinning a little bit listening to the roar coming from down the hall. The excitement is building for tonight’s Research Night. The students practiced their presentations in front of the kids in the Upper Elementary Class. They had time to put finishing touches on their projects, and on top of all that, Derek was here today! Needless to say, the volume is high and the excitement is contagious. This is a good reminder to me of not only how the end of the year brings energy, anticipation and enthusiasm, it also brings anxiety and change and unease for our children. As parents, we need to be aware of this smorgasbord of emotions that our children are feeling. As parents, we typically have a lot on our plates too at this time of the year. We are well-meaning, caring and loving parents. We are not perfect, sometimes forgetful and often very busy. Here is a little list of reminders for all of us that will help us all feel more joy and less frustration during the next stretch.

- The Basics - Enough sleep, healthy diet, calm and consistent bedtime
- Let them Help - and take the time to show them how - helping in the kitchen, washing the car, setting the table
- Consistently Consistent - unrushed, regular routines - when there is a change in the routine coming, take the time to explain it
- Grace and Courtesy - teach and model the way you want your child to act

In the safety of the family, our children have the perfect place to observe and practice. For any life skill to be mastered fully, it must be lived. Children learn what they live. Our children must consistently witness and practice each skill. Whether that skill is a tangible task or an ability to emotionally and socially navigate a situation, the skill must be observed and practiced. By living an experience every day, it sets a pattern for a default response.

The famous Stanford University Marshmallow Test

I am attaching an article on a subject of The Ability to Delay Gratification. We want our children to have a strong sense of capability. We want our children to have the patience and the passion to continue to practice skills. We want our children to have a sense of adventure. We want our children to have the ability to make tough decisions. Developing the ability to delay gratification helps to make all of these things possible.

Executive functioning and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions and juggle multiple tasks successfully. The brain needs this set of skills to filter distractions, to set goals, to control impulses and to prioritize. Among these learned skills is the ability to delay gratification, i.e., to curb immediate gratification in the interest of a greater future benefit. It is said that the ability to delay gratification in early life, is a key indicator of later success in life. Strategic, courageous decision-making requires this essential skill. I hope you find the following article interesting. Many children are cautious, but all children are natural explorers. Resist the urge to constantly warn your children to be careful, but instead show them how to approach a situation with common sense and safety. Help to facilitate adventure. Weigh the pros and cons with your child while maintaining wonder.
Delayed Gratification: Helping Children to Build Self-Discipline and Autonomy

by Chip DeLorenzo, M.Ed.

“You waited until the night before to get your project done, and now you want me to drive to the store to get the materials you need?”

“You’re not going anywhere until your room is cleaned. You were supposed to do it three days ago.”

“I asked you 20 minutes ago to get your things together for school!”

Wouldn’t it have been so much easier if they had just done it right away and gotten it over with? There would have been much less hassle and emotional energy used. You and I can see that as adults because we have learned (and some of us are still learning) the benefits of delayed gratification. The good news is that procrastination is not an inherited trait. It is a learned life skill that can be taught, and is one of the greatest indicators of success for children. In 1972, a Stanford research project was published, that has become known as the Marshmallow Experiment. In this experiment, the researchers put a child in a room with a single marshmallow. The children were told that if they would wait until the researcher returned to eat the first marshmallow that they would be rewarded with a second marshmallow. Many of the children ate the first marshmallow soon after the researcher left the room, and a few were able to wait patiently until research came back with the second marshmallow. I’m sure this was quite fun to witness.

What made the experiment so well known, however, was the results of tracking the participants in the study for over 40 years. The results of the research are quite remarkable. The children that were able to exhibit the willingness to wait for the second marshmallow were more successful in a broad array of measures, including higher SAT scores, lower levels of substance abuse, stronger social skills (as reported by their parents), better physical health and stress management, as well as a variety of other life measures. In short, the ability to delay gratification proved to be a significant factor, across the board, in how successful these participants were in their lives.

While it may be that some children have a greater inclination towards self-discipline, most of people learn self-discipline through experience. Those experiences come from the child’s environment and their experiences in that environment. A home or school environment that provides a consistency and predictability allows children to trust the outcomes of their choices builds a sense of confidence in children that empowers them make decisions for themselves based on what they know will happen and when. (University of Rochester study on the effect of reliable and unreliable experiences can be found here: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23063236). Take for example a child whose routine is to finish his homework before watching television at night, and bed time is at 8:30 a.m. And, each night, when he is finished with his homework his parents allow him to turn on the TV until bed time. However, when he doesn’t finish his homework, he is not allowed to turn on the TV. If this routine is predictable, what decisions might this boy make in regards to delaying gratification and finishing his homework after school? What might happen if his parents become more arbitrary in allowing him to watch TV, sometimes when his homework is done, and sometimes when it isn’t?
Developing Delayed Gratification

- Develop routines that allow children to experience both the logical positive and negative consequences of their choices, without rescuing them or bailing them out or punishing them. The example of the television after homework is a sound example. Another one, is the child who procrastinates in getting dressed in the morning. A routine could be set up where the child's clothes are picked out the night before, and the parent simply lets the child know if they are not dressed before leaving for school that the parents will simply put the clothes in a bag and the child can change at school or in the car (if there is time). As kids get older, the consequences of their decisions are often played out with their peers or outside the home. Let's say an older child is responsible for their laundry. If they forget to do their laundry, consider putting your own feelings of potential embarrassment aside, and allow your child to wear dirty clothes.

- One of the most powerful ways to create an environment of mutual respect and develop the ability to delay gratification is to involve children and adolescents in creating routines and solving problems. Brainstorm ideas together, and then choose what might work best together, and commit to reviewing the decisions at a later date to see if they are working. If the solutions aren't working, then you can just make adjustments when you review the decisions.

When involving children in decision making be sure to avoid the two biggest pitfalls – not stating your needs and not allowing them to state their needs. It is OK to say, “That won’t work for me, and here’s why.” And, it’s also OK for them to say, “That won’t work for me, and here’s why.” As long as you have decided to revisit your mutual decision in the near future, it’s OK for both adults and children to make mistakes in their decision making. You can always alter or change your decision when you revisit your plan in the near future! In this way, children learn decision making skills and parents learn to trust their children more – and when children feel trusted and involved they feel better, and when they feel better the do better.

- Avoid reminding and nagging. Nagging and reminding only create power struggles, and it creates a cycle of dependency or rebellion. Instead ask open ended questions, like, “What will happen if you don’t finish your homework before 8:30 p.m.? OK, I’m sure you’ll figure it out.” Or, “What’s your plan to do your laundry. OK.” When it’s time to follow through, simply do so without nagging. For instance, if your child said she would finish cleaning her room before she went to her friend’s house, don’t remind her when you see the time to leave approaching. When it’s time for her to leave, simply let her know that she needs to call her friend to let her know that she will be late, because she has to finish cleaning her room. If arguing ensues, simply respond by calmly saying something like, “Please let me know when you are finished so I can check your work.”

- Take a look at places that you find yourself bossing your children and expecting them to respond to your requests. When you see those areas or situations, talk to your child or children about those rough spots and ask for their help in finding a solution and/or routine to help solve the problem. Not only are children (and adults) more willing to cooperate when they have been included in the problem-solving, but they are more willing to do what is expected if they have advanced warning and can plan for what is coming.