June 5, 2018

News from the Grove
OUR NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Events...
• Tuesday June 12th 6:30pm 9-12 Graduation Ceremony
• Wednesday June 13th 6:30pm 6-9 Graduation Ceremony
• Thursday June 14th 1:00pm 3-6 Graduation Ceremony
• Friday June 15th - Last Day of School. Early dismissal 12:30pm. Pot luck lunch under the pavilion 12:30-2:00pm NO AFTER CARE
• PLEASE NOTE - Friday June 15th 2:00pm - School building will be locked - all staff meeting.
• Mon June 18th - first day of OGMS Summer Camp

...and just as quickly, the school year comes to an end.

The end of each school year provides us time to celebrate and recognize. It also allows us opportunity to look back on the year, highlighting the lessons we have learned and begin to develop the plans for the possibilities that lie ahead. This year has been an entire year of reflection, dissection, analysis and review. This year marked the long awaited completion of our ten year accreditation with Connecticut Association of Independent Schools. The process has highlighted our strengths and helps us to define our next steps.

I appreciate everyone’s support and patience throughout this entire last year. The support that I have felt has been incredible. I am grateful to everyone who has given their time and resources. The generosity and good will in every gesture, every gift, and in every hour had added up to the success of this year. A true reflection that the whole is only as strong as all of its parts!

And soon we can all slow down the pace a bit, take a moment or two, and catch our breath! I wish you all a peaceful summer filled with joy and adventure. Be grateful. Be present.

It’s Beginning to Look A Lot Like Summer!

The entire Oak Grove community is invited and encouraged to attend all three graduation ceremonies. Help us celebrate our students who have completed a Montessori cycle. All three ceremonies are very special and fun!
**How Lucky Are We??!!!**

I have been doing a lot of reflecting on how lucky we are to have the teachers and the staff that we have at Oak Grove. I attend many meetings throughout Connecticut and New England and I hear many stories of high employee turnover rates and how best to recruit and retain teachers and support staff. I feel that our community is blessed with depth of experience, talent, commitment and skill. I hope that we all realize how unique and special this is.

We have two Montessori trained and certified teachers in each classroom (the standard and requirement is only to have one trained and certified teacher in each classroom). We have a Learning Specialist who is not only training in her specialty, but is Montessori trained and certified as well, with years of experience in the Montessori classroom. We have support staff who have devoted much of their careers to Oak Grove and supporting our community. We have a director of our Aftercare Program who is a certified elementary teacher, as well as creative, patient and energetic.

We have all become spoiled! (myself included!). The dedication and the time and care that our teachers and staff put into the students and the community is amazing. I hope we all can take a moment and reflect on how important these staff members are in the lives of our children and our families.

[https://www.classy.org/campaign/thank-a-teacher/c184993](https://www.classy.org/campaign/thank-a-teacher/c184993)

Please click on the link above and show your support and appreciation for the teachers and the staff at Oak Grove. Your continued support and celebration of our staff strengthens the spirit of our community by demonstrating your appreciation.

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**Barbara McClintock Visits Oak Grove Montessori School**

Last week we had the honor of having Barbara McClintock spend two days observing in our classrooms and working with some students. Barbara is an award-winning children’s book author and illustrator. Her books have won five New York Times Best Books awards, a New York Times Notable Book citation, a Boston Globe/Horn Book Honor award, two Time Magazine Best Books, a Golden Kite Award, two Parent Choice awards, and numerous other awards, recommended/best book lists and starred reviews. She is known for her amazing use of color and her ability to mix a feeling of timelessness with contemporary issues through wit and humor. She lives in Windham Center. Barbara has recently started a new project on the early years of Maria Montessori’s personal life and how those years impacted her life’s work. We look forward to continuing to support Barbara in this project!
A Wonderfully Busy Spring!

A successful and eventful Senior Trip to Boston and Provincetown. The perfect combination of city culture and outdoor exploring!

We can’t wait to hear all about their adventures next year in Middle School!

- Special Person’s Day
- Annual Plant Sale (a huge thank you to Dana Ozimek and Joshua Cleaver)
- Spring Music Concert

Civil Engineer, Beth Gnazzo visits the Lower Elementary Classroom

How Everyday Things Work
American Friends of Kenya and Oak Grove Montessori School

For those of you who are wondering what all the piles of fabric, bags, sewing machines, and sundry supplies are in our lobby, they are the result of a wonderful effort between the Lower Elementary Class at Oak Grove and the nonprofit organization American Friends of Kenya. American Friends of Kenya began as an informal effort to support a Kenyan couple living in Connecticut who wanted to help build schools and community libraries in Kenya. Over the years the effort has grown into a truly grassroots effort and a labor of love and compassion. Today, they send regular shipments of books, library materials, school supplies and medical supplies to help children in several different provinces of Kenya. Yearly teams of volunteers, from all over the world, go to Kenya to assist when shipments arrive. Over the years Oak Grove has donated many pallets worth of supplies, old computers, and furniture to American Friends of Kenya.

AFK receive many donations of layettes for new born babies and their moms. These donated layettes come in plastic bags. The new plastic ban in Kenya does not allow these layettes to be donated. So, AFK reached out to Oak Grove and so many of our parents and students went right to work!! Over 250 tote bags have been created, either through generous donations of bags or through sewing of bags from donated fabric. The bags have then been repacked and are ready to be picked up and sent to Kenya!

I would like to thank Willa for her hard work in making this happen. Willa not only put the team of parent helpers and students together, but also turned this amazing project into her third year student’s final project of the year. They studied Kenya and the people of Kenya, including the geographic area, the climate, the animals and the culture. The Lower Elementary graduating students will be presenting their project at the graduation ceremony next week.

A special thanks to Sherry D’Alessandro, Shannon Polhemus, Alex Wilkinson, and a mystery sewer, for their hours of hard work, organization and sewing talents. I would also like to thank Graham Kolar, who approached the company that he works for, Proxair, presented the project that Oak Grove is working on, resulting in a large donation of nylon bags! Thank you. What a great example of how a small group of people, coming together for a common cause, can have a lasting impact.

Learning about African drums from Peter Leeds