News from the Grove
OUR NEWSLETTER
August 2018

Upcoming Events...
• Mon August 27th 5:30 pm - 3-6 Classroom orientation for all families in the 3-6 classroom - childcare provided
• Wed August 29th - FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!
• Thurs August 30th at 8:30am - Muffin Meet and Greet in the lobby with the Head of School
• Mon Sept 3rd - Labor Day No School
• Wed Sept 5th at 5:30pm 6-9 Classroom orientation - childcare provided
• Wed Sept 5th at 6:15pm 9-12 Classroom orientation - childcare provided
• Sun Sept 16th - Celebrate Mansfield Day and Parade - noon to 4:00pm
• Tues Sept 18th at 5:30pm - Let’s Get Together - casual Q and A with the Head of School
• Thurs Sept 20th at 5:30pm Board of Trustees sponsored family BBQ and potluck dinner (rain date Friday Sept 21)
• Fri Sept 21st - First Pizza Lunch

Every Summer Has a Story...

Every summer does have a unique story and I hope that your story has a few cherished memories and moments of joy! We still have a few precious moments left of summer, but as we know, August tends to fly right on by and before we know it, the leaves are changing colors and we are settling back into the school year.

Summer has been great here at the Grove! We enjoyed five wonderful weeks of (hot) summer camp. The campers made some great summer memories!

Although we try very hard to slow things down here for the summer and allow ourselves to rest and catch a breath too, the summer to do list is always long! We make quite a mess here all summer, and now we are in the ‘putting it all back together’ stage! We have completed many driveway improvements, the security window treatments have been installed, playground maintenance and landscaping is close to an end, the floors are being done right now (and then we can put the building back together!), a ton of organizing, cleaning out and getting ready for the new school year! We are excited to welcome you all back!
and the survey says...

Every spring we send out an anonymous parent survey. The questions cover all areas of school education quality, before and after school programming, office and administration, culture, communication and facilities. We are so grateful for the feedback that we receive. It is nice to hear all the things that are working well for the parents. As well, it is so important for us to hear the areas that we need to take a closer look at. Here are some of the highlighted areas of interest that came out of this year’s survey:

**Communication** - the surveys revealed both a gratitude for how the office and the teachers communicate with families, as well as a desire to have more communication. So... we will continue to use email and parent pockets and the Communication Corner by Cindy’s office to communicate. In addition, we will be launching a push notification app at the beginning of the school year that will be used for quick reminders. We will be also launching a Facebook page to spread the word about upcoming events and to share information about Oak Grove and about Montessori. I also encourage everyone to talk with your child’s teacher about the best way to communicate. Your teachers will start that conversation with you all at the orientation evenings. We have also resurrected the Oak Grove Instagram!

**Enrollment Process** - there seems to be some confusion about our enrollment process here at Oak Grove. The full policy is stated on page 15 of the Parent Handbook. Returning students are given priority for the following school year until April 1st of the school year preceding fall admission. After returning students, siblings of current students or siblings of former Oak Grove students, children from other Montessori schools and staff children are given next priority.

**Community Social Events** - again, there was a mixed reaction to the question about community social events. We know that we can never meet everyone’s expectations in this area. We try to offer a diverse array of social opportunities. We send out the *Save the Dates* in the summer (and post it on the website) so families can make sure to keep open their calendars for the events they would be interested in attending. Some of the events are solely for socializing, some are educational and some are for both socializing and fundraising. The events that we have been doing consistently over the years are: classroom orientations, Muffin Mondays, Let’s Get Together, Hibernation Festival, Parent Education Evenings, Family Morning in Classrooms, Music Concerts, Families Moving Up Night, Pancake Breakfast, Annual Gala and Auction, Special Person’s Day, Family Winter Event, Board of Trustees Fall Parent Social. We also encourage families to participate in Celebrate Mansfield Day and the Willimantic Downtown Country Fair. This year we will be adding to that: Board of Trustees sponsored BBQ and potluck family dinner on September 20th. Also, there are some classroom specific events that are in the plans.

**Parking Lot** - There were a few concerns about parking lot safety. We agree. This summer we have repainted the parking spaces lines, added painted cross walks and added arrows to show the required traffic direction. At drop off time and pick up time, things can get congested in the parking lot. Please drive slowly and be aware. Please *always* have your child in reach and in your control as you enter the building and leave the building. Please always use the sidewalks and do not cut through the parking lot.

Safety needs to be all of our number one priority.
**Staying after school with your children on the playground** - I was very happy to read in many surveys an outpour of gratitude for parents being able to stay after school with their children on the playground. It was clear in the surveys that parents understand and appreciate that this is a privilege. It is a wonderful opportunity to allow your children to play after school with their friends. It is also a great opportunity for parents to get to know each other.

In order for this to remain a privilege and opportunity, I remind you all how important it is for the parents to be **actively** watching their children. The parent is responsible for the safety and the behavior of your child. It can become very challenging for our amazing aftercare staff to navigate situations that involve children who are not in their care. If a child is not being properly supervised and/or the child is creating a difficult situation for the aftercare program, the staff has the authority to ask you and your child/ren to leave. All children on the playground must follow the playground rules at all times (this includes not allowing your children behind the building, in the corn field, or in the parking lot unattended). If you are going to stay after school with your child, please ask your child to use the bathroom before leaving the building and to make sure that they have all of their belongings. The staff that is in the building after school is in meetings, working and cleaning and cannot spend time opening the door for students that are not in the aftercare program.

Staying after school is so wonderful for both the parents and the children. Please do your part to help ensure that this privilege will always be an option!!

**Suggestion Box** - When you return to school for the new year, you will see a suggestion box in the lobby. We encourage you to leave notes in the box throughout the year with any other thoughts or ideas that you may have.

The surveys contained many other suggestions as well as positive comments and we appreciate the thought and care that went into responding to them. If your concern was not addressed here, please let me know. I tried to include the areas of interest that came through on multiple surveys. Thank you again for taking the time to complete the survey. We will do it all again next spring!!

**Here's to a wonderful new year!**

The first day of school will be here before we blink an eye. Enjoy the final stretch of summer! Please take a moment to look over the *Save the Dates* and mark your calendar now for all the wonderful events throughout the school year!

The floors will be done by Monday August 13th and we will be here to answer emails and phone calls. Get us all of those pesky forms when you can, the earlier the better! Thank you!