

Director's Report

June 27th, 2024

Receive the children in reverence.
Educate them with love.
Send them forth in freedom.
~ Rudolf Steiner

Educational Program

End of Year Events

The end of the year always bring much excitement and tons of activity, and this year was no different. In fact, it may have been our busiest May/June ever! While it's not possible to capture here all the energy, creativity, and community that the following events helped our community feel, what follows are a few highlights.

5th Grade Pentathlon:

In May, OCS hosted its own Pentathlon for the second year in a row. Led by Upper Grades Movement Teacher, Kohtaroh Sensei, with support from Waldorf mentor teacher Ania Kubik, our 5th grade students competed in the pentathlon events in Marina del Rey at the beach under the watchful eyes of Zeus and Athena! These games celebrate the grace, skill and determination of our student athletes in the spirit of ancient Greece.

Spring Concert:

Held the last week of school on June 4th, the Spring Concert highlighted the accomplishments of our 4th and 5th grade strings students and teacher as well as the creativity and dedication of our 6th – 8th grade elective students and their teachers from the following elective classes: Leadership, Percussion, Sculpture, Theatre Games, Band, Study Skills, Photography, Visual Arts, and Gardening. The music was enlivening, the art was inspiring, and the diversity of work was impressive!

8th Grade Project Presentations:

Over the course of May, all 8th grade students shared their year-long research projects on topics of their own choosing with a crowd of fellow 8th grade students, 7th grade students, parents, teachers and community members. Presentations include a 10-15 minute oral presentation, a PowerPoint presentation, and a 3-d model. Topics ranged widely, as is fitting with our diverse student body, and included, among other topics, the following:

- Social Media's Unattainable "Perfect" Body
- The Connection between Art and Mental Health
- Racial Stereotypes: How Perceived Identifies Influence Social Treatment
- Ethics of Graffiti: Navigating the Fine Line Between Art and Crime
- Dreams
- Preserving the Planet's Diversity: The Vital Role Biodiversity Holds in the Livelihood of All Earth's Inhabitants
- From Birth to Bars: Investigating the Roots of Criminality
- Blood Clots: The Heroes and Villains of the Circulatory System

Rose and Rock Ceremonies:

The final all school events, minus TK/K, are our end of year Rose and Rock Ceremonies. In the Rose Ceremony, all classes share a gift of song, music, or poetry to honor the graduating classes. Then, 1st grade students present a red rose to one of their graduating 8th grade "buddies". Each 8th grader is called by name to the center of the gym in the stingray logo area where they accept the rose, and perhaps a hug, from their 1st grade friend. The graduating classes are acknowledged and cheered once all students have received their rose. In the Rock Ceremony, 7th graders receive a painted rock from a graduating 8th grader to symbolize the responsibility of becoming the lead class at our school.

Bell Ceremonies:

Kindergarten students rising to 1st grade participated in bell ceremonies with their teachers and classmates at the end of the year. This momentous transition from the world of kindergarten to the world of the grades is celebrated in a beautiful ceremony of rainbows and bells. A glimpse of the eagerness, pride, and perhaps nervous trepidation that the rising first graders feel can be seen in their eyes as they exit campus after their ceremonies proudly gripping the bell around their necks to show their beaming parents.

Graduation:

On June 7th, OCS graduated our 18th graduating class! Ms. Mendoza's and Mr. Bearden's 8th graders proudly and a bit tearfully reminisced on their time at OCS, that ranged from 10 years to 1 year; they sang together and spoke their final verses together; they laughed and cried watching photos of their years together; they presented their teachers with handmade pajamas created in Handwork with Ms. Christel; they thanked their parents, teachers and staff; and they presented each other for their diplomas by sharing something they appreciate about their fellow graduate. It is always a meaningful ceremony, and this year was even more so as it marked Ms. Mendoza's 14th year at OCS and her transition on to a new school.

Professional Development

- OCS Summer Institute: The OCSSI is being held the final two weeks of June with 16 participants from OCS, Mariposa, El Rio, and Little Pond Homeschooling Program. Participants experience collegiality over the course of the day as they move from coffee to morning lectures to grade level demonstrations and presentations/discussions to artistic activities, including painting and sculpting and drawing, to music, including flute, recorder and song. Lunch is another opportunity to get to know each other better and to deepen connections. A spirit of warm enthusiasm is palpable during the day as teachers deepen their understanding and practice of Waldorf Education.
- Other trainings: OCS class teachers who were unable to participate in the OCSSI this year are participating in a variety of other workshops, including the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education online training and the Sunbridge online training.
- Mentoring for 24-25: Our mentoring needs assessment for 24-25 is underway to ensure support for our teachers is in place. We are blessed with talented, committed mentors who are eager to help our teachers develop as public Waldorf educators. Match-ups will be made by August.

Parent Education and Support

- Administration has been mapping out a yearlong parent education calendar for next year to support ongoing parent understanding of public Waldorf Education. This year, an extremely helpful and crucial aspect of our parent education were our weekly "Wait Until After 8th" resources that were put together by OCS parent, Meagan Ramsey, and included in our New Parent Orientations. These sharing, coupled with parent resources through our Cyber Civics program, are invaluable tools for parents as they navigate raising children mindfully in our digital age.

Operations

Hiring

The hiring process is almost complete with four new class teacher hires in place. Our new teachers come with a variety of backgrounds and experiences, but all share an eager enthusiasm for learning more about Waldorf Education and putting it into practice with their new classes.

Hiring needs for support positions is being determined as administration is working through offers with staff.

New Parent Orientations

Two new parent orientations have been held thus far, one for TK/K with the kinder team and one for the grades with Kristy. New parents as well as current OCS parents with a sibling coming in joined and eagerly participated in these sessions. This year, we highlighted our developmental approach, especially our approach to media and included Meagan Ramsey who shared passionately, eloquently, and with humor (but not judgement) about our Wait Until After 8th grade push on smart phones. Another round of new parent orientations will be held in August for those who could not make this round or who were accepted after they were held.

Facilities

- Bathroom repairs: underway with our lighting contractor who must replace the sensor; other repairs have been completed
- Kitchen dishwasher: working with a district-approved vendor on the many months process to find, purchase and install a district-approved dishwasher in our kitchen
- Garden Work Day: Hugely successful day of planting trees and bushes in front of school and on the amphitheatre mound so our “forest” can come alive! Boulders complete the space and offer added texture and play areas. Students are thrilled with the additions! Ms. Carla is creating beautiful name tags for our new community members so children can feel ownership in caring for them.
- Inspections: Summer annual inspections of our elevators and wood chips are happening.
- Rentals: OCS will be reducing gym rental fees for the coming year to garner more interest in renting our beautiful space.

OCS Summer Camp/Summer Extended Learning Opportunity Program (ELOP)

The OCS Summer Camp program has begun this week with an average 45-50 students/week. Staff from the school year as well as OCS alumni are our camp supervisors and are meeting the children with academic practice, creative games, arts and crafts, and lots of outdoor play!