



# Oakland Steiner School Newsletter

May 18, 2011

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## School Calendar

### Friday, May 20

Pentathlon (Grade 5)  
Ann Arbor

### Saturday, May 21

Board Meeting  
9 am – 12 pm

### Friday, May 27

Reports Day  
**NO SCHOOL**

### Monday, May 30

Memorial Day  
**NO SCHOOL**

### Wednesday, June 8

Graduation-Parent Tea  
9 am – 11 am  
In-school 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
Graduation  
11 am

### Thursday, June 9

Last day of School  
Rainbow Bridge Ceremony-  
TBD  
School ends at 12:30 pm  
End of School Picnic  
12:30 – 2:30 pm  
No Aftercare

### Friday, June 10

8<sup>th</sup> Graduation  
6 pm

### June 13 – 15

Faculty Meetings  
9 am – 3 pm

## **WANT TO GET YOUR KIDS INTO COLLEGE? LET THEM PLAY**

*Erika Christakis, MEd, MPH, is an early childhood teacher and former preschool director. Nicholas Christakis, MD, PhD, is a professor of medicine and sociology at Harvard University. Together, they serve as Masters of Pforzheimer House, one of the undergraduate residential houses at Harvard College.*

Every day where we work, we see our young students struggling with the transition from home to school. They're all wonderful kids, but some can't share easily or listen in a group.

Some have impulse control problems and have trouble keeping their hands to themselves; others don't always see that actions have consequences; a few suffer terribly from separation anxiety.

We're not talking about preschool children. These are Harvard undergraduate students whom we teach and advise. They all know how to work, but some of them haven't learned how to play.

Parents, educators, psychologists, neuroscientists, and politicians generally fall into one of two camps when it comes to preparing very young children for school: play-based or skills-based.

These two kinds of curricula are often pitted against one another as a zero-sum game: If you want to protect your daughter's childhood, so the argument goes, choose a play-based program; but if you want her to get into Harvard, you'd better make sure you're brushing up on the ABC flashcards every night before bed.

We think it is quite the reverse. Or, in any case, if you want your child to succeed in college, the play-based curriculum is the way to go.

In fact, we wonder why play is not encouraged in educational periods later in the developmental life of young people -- giving kids more practice as they get closer to the ages of our students.

Why do this? One of the best predictors of school success is the ability to control impulses. Children who can control their impulse to be the center of the universe, and -- relatedly -- who can assume the perspective of another person, are better equipped to learn.

Psychologists call this the "theory of mind": the ability to recognize that our own ideas, beliefs, and desires are distinct from those of the people around us. When a four-year-old destroys someone's carefully constructed block castle or a 20-year-old belligerently monopolizes the class discussion on a routine basis, we might conclude that they are unaware of the feelings of the people around them.

The beauty of a play-based curriculum is that very young children can routinely observe and learn from others' emotions and experiences. Skills-based curricula, on the other hand, are sometimes derisively known as "drill and kill" programs because most teachers understand that young children can't learn meaningfully in the social isolation required for such an approach.

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How do these approaches look different in a classroom? Preschoolers in both kinds of programs might learn about hibernating squirrels, for example, but in the skills-based program, the child could be asked to fill out a worksheet, counting (or guessing) the number of nuts in a basket and coloring the squirrel's fur.

In a play-based curriculum, by contrast, a child might hear stories about squirrels and be asked why a squirrel accumulates nuts or has fur. The child might then collaborate with peers in the construction of a squirrel habitat, learning not only about number sense, measurement, and other principles needed for engineering, but also about how to listen to, and express, ideas.

The child filling out the worksheet is engaged in a more one-dimensional task, but the child in the play-based program interacts meaningfully with peers, materials, and ideas.

Programs centered around constructive, teacher-moderated play are very effective. For instance, one randomized, controlled trial had 4- and 5-year-olds engage in make-believe play with adults and found substantial and durable gains in the ability of children to show self-control and to delay gratification. Countless other studies support the association between dramatic play and self-regulation.

Through play, children learn to take turns, delay gratification, negotiate conflicts, solve problems, share goals, acquire flexibility, and live with disappointment. By allowing children to imagine walking in another person's shoes, imaginative play also seeds the development of empathy, a key ingredient for intellectual and social-emotional success.

The real "readiness" skills that make for an academically successful kindergartener or college student have as much to do with emotional intelligence as they do with academic preparation. Kindergartners need to know not just sight words and lower case letters, but how to search for meaning. The same is true of 18-year-olds.

As admissions officers at selective colleges like to say, an entire freshman class could be filled with students with perfect grades and test scores. But academic achievement in college requires readiness skills that transcend mere book learning. It requires the ability to engage actively with people and ideas. In short, it requires a deep connection with the world.

For a five year-old, this connection begins and ends with the creating, questioning, imitating, dreaming, and sharing that characterize play. When we deny young children play, we are denying them the right to understand the world. By the time they get to college, we will have denied them the opportunity to fix the world too.

*The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of Erika and Nicholas Christakis. This article originally appeared on CNN*



Rudolf Steiner Meditation

*The world draws me out; intuition centers me.*



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## **Welcome**

We have 3 new students to introduce and welcome to Mrs. Kadlitz's **Star Class**.

### **Julianna Fossi**

Dolphine Dauvergne & Stephen Fossi

### **Matias Trautmann**

Carla Gallini & Jan Trautmann

### **Sascha Panian**

Martina & Asher Panian

Please take a moment and welcome the Fossi family and our current families siblings to our school community.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Pentathlon**

**May your ideals give you grace and beauty,  
May the warmth of hearts give you strength of limb.**

**May your bodies carry you,  
As the earth carries the stag,  
As the sea carries the dolphin,  
As the winds carry the eagle.**

**A blessing of the Athletes.**

**LET THE GAMES BEGIN!**

The pentathlon day includes a beautiful ceremony, conducted with a mood of reverence, a parade of the athletes, lighting of the torch, competition in five Greek gymnastic exercises (running, jumping, wrestling, discus and javelin) and singing as well as the awards at the end of the day. Have fun 5<sup>th</sup> grade! The great "Hail" for our athletes as they depart for the games will be Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm.

## **Grade 5 Class Play: Perseus**

All are welcome!

Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am

Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm

## **Administrative Assistant**

We have an opening for a part time, hourly Administrative Assistant beginning June 2011

For more information and to submit resume please, contact Martina at [martinap@oaklandsteiner.org](mailto:martinap@oaklandsteiner.org).

## **Enrollment Corner**

### **Introductory Tour**

The May 17<sup>th</sup> Introductory Tour was attended by five families. Denise McCauley and Marko Smith were the supporting faculty available to provide pedagogical answers to questions from the parents. Shannon Wolf provided support as a Buddy Parent. This was the last tour for this school year. Private tours are offered by appointment through the end of the school year and through the summer. If you have acquaintances that have an interest in our school please have them contact me.

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### **Summer Camp**

Summer Camp will be offered for children 3 to 6 years of age for three weeks: June 27 – July 1, July 11 – 15, and July 18 – 22. Applications received by May 20<sup>th</sup> are eligible for a \$15.00 discount. Applications are available in the front office. Please see me if you have any questions about our Summer Camp program.

### **Tea Cart Needed**

I am looking for a Tea Cart on Wheels to use for the Introductory Tours, the abbreviated Introductory Tours, the Parent Orientations and other meetings I conduct as the Enrollment Coordinator. If you have one or know of someone who has one to donate to the school, please contact me. Thank you very much.

Toni Kovach  
Enrollment Coordinator

### **Kroger Community Rewards Participants: It's Time to Re-Enroll!**

Please remember, everyone must re-enroll every year. It's easy to re-enroll in Kroger Community Rewards. Visit [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com), click on "Michigan" and click "Enroll." All participants must create a valid online account at Kroger.com and must sign up online to participate. Shoppers can no longer scan an organization's barcode at the registers or service desk. The code for Oakland Steiner School is #83192.

### **Scrip Cards**

Everyone please check the list of Scrip available and help deplete the stock we have before summer. Also, let me know if there is anything you would like me to order to get you through the summer.

### **Gnome Home**

Remember to check out the awesome sales!

### **Lost and Found**

There will be a table in front of the office with all the found items, please take home anything that belongs to you. The items will be out till May 26<sup>th</sup> and then anything left will be donated to charity.

### **Graduation Parent Tea**

Please join us for a morning tea in honor of the eighth grade parents on Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:00 am. It's a wonderful time to hear the graduating parents reminisce about their days at OSS. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please contact the Parent Council or Janalee with any questions.

### **Serenade to Music**

Our own Mrs. McCauley is singing in the spring concert by the **Community Chorus of Detroit** with Conductor Joseph Baldwin and guest artists from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance: Saturday, May 21 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, May 22 at 4:00 pm. The concert will be held at the

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Detroit Waldorf School 2555 Burns, Detroit, MI 48214. Purchase tickets online at [www.communitychorusofdetroit.com](http://www.communitychorusofdetroit.com), general admission, \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door. The music is truly beautiful!

## **Spring Lyre Concert**

Our Educational Support teacher Barbara Patterson will be part of a lyre concert on Saturday, June 11, 2011, 3 pm at The Christian Community Church, 1320 Camden (at Wanda) in Ferndale. The program will feature music from Baroque to Modern periods and will also include young students who work with Nancy Carpenter at The Detroit Waldorf School and students of Mary Lynn Channer. In addition to the lyres, an alto recorder and a bowed psaltery will join the lyres for a few pieces. The concert is suitable for children so we have included a family price for attendance. Single admission is \$12; \$20 for a family of four (additional members are \$3. each) Questions? Please ask Barbara Patterson.

## **Yearbook**

Payment for the yearbook is due May 26<sup>th</sup>. Please bring your order form with \$23.00 payment to the office. While you are there you can see the paper version of the OSS 2010 – 2011 yearbook cover!

## **Newsletter Article Submissions**

If you wish to send an article for the newsletter, please send it by email if possible. Send it to [janalees@oaklandsteiner.org](mailto:janalees@oaklandsteiner.org) and put "newsletter" in the message line. Submit by noon, Tuesday, May 31<sup>st</sup> to be in the next newsletter. Thank you!



## Personal and Parent-to-Parent



### **Summer Day Care Needed**

We are looking for summer day care for the charming and always cooperative Nathan (age 9) and Katie Coleman (age 7). We pay a good wage, are flexible, and pay mileage for outings. If you are interested or know of a referral, please call Ann @ 248 709-2332.



### **HELLO**

We (Shana and Matt Henry) are back from Australia to stay and are living and working year round at a summer camp in Almont, Michigan. Right away when looking toward the summer, I contacted a few loved friends from the OSS community to find counselors and nannies to help care for our girls this summer. Mary Eddy and Genevieve Kukurugya-Rabaut will be counselors here for the whole summer. Ashley Faase, Makenzie Sehi, and Jasmine Brown will each spend a few weeks with Jacinta (6) and Genevieve (4) here at the camp. I just wanted to express my thanks to OSS for educating in such a way that Matt and I can

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be confident that these young people will be an amazing asset to the camp, by virtue of their upbringing and schooling.

On a separate note, Skyline is also a retreat center, just 35 minutes northeast of OSS, just off of Rochester Road, located on 156 beautiful and pristine acres. Matt and I actually met here 15 years ago, so it is quite a special return to the U.S.A. There are so many lovely places to be in this camp, my most recent favorite is the labyrinth spiraling around the pines and bird watching out my window with the girls. Come out for a visit and a hike someday or check out the website if camp or retreats interest you. Matt, my husband, is the Executive Director and I am the Program Director. Shana Henry at 248-830-5655, email [shana@campskyline.org](mailto:shana@campskyline.org) or check out the website at [www.campskyline.org](http://www.campskyline.org).