

Odyssey Day School Newsletter

OCTOBER 2008



From the desk of *Lori Conway*

Dear Parents,

Although my tenure as Head has been short, and I have no prior experiences with the opening of school at Odyssey, I will nonetheless proclaim the past month to be a splendid start to the year. So many things are going well, and I find myself feeling more at home and more a part of the fabric of the school community than I ever thought possible in so few weeks.

There are many people to whom I could devote this letter, many people I could thank, many people I could credit with helping me settle in and learn the ropes...and they all know who they are. Instead, I've decided to thank the children, and I hope you will share this with your own if they are old enough, because they deserve to know what a difference they make in my daily life at school.

I've worked in many different schools, all of them special and memorable in their own ways. I know that in time, I will come to understand and appreciate every single one of the qualities unique to Odyssey that make it precious and worthy of our stewardship. But it has not taken me any time at all to recognize what I consider, in the context of my own professional experience, to be one of the most extraordinary aspects of this school—the student body. I have honestly never worked at a school with kids as sweet, as kind, as polite, as respectful, as warm, as happy, and as engaged as your children. I have never had as many hugs, as many smiles, as many cheerful greetings each day as I get from your boys and girls.

Parents, you are doing something very, very right, and if I ever figure out exactly what it is, I will write a best seller about it and put all of your names in the acknowledgments! Odyssey is filled with children, not angels, so I am not saying everything is always perfect. Of course not. But your children are enjoying their childhoods. They are in no apparent rush to grow up. They are not consumed by materialism, pop culture, or the epidemic pressures that so many kids are buckling under in today's society. They do not seem hurried, frazzled, overly structured, or unimaginative. Every time I enter a classroom, I see children who are in-the-moment, learning through play, taking care of each other, acquiring knowledge in cooperative ways, challenging themselves intellectually, responding to challenge, respecting adults, respecting each other, and respecting themselves. How amazing. How uplifting.

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ Oct 2: Coffee with the Head
- ◆ Oct. 3: Family Potluck Supper
- ◆ Oct. 13: Columbus Day, school closed
- ◆ Oct. 30: Secondary School Information Night

Kid News



“The little world of childhood with its familiar surroundings is a model of the greater world. The more intensively the family has stamped its character upon the child, the more it will tend to feel and see its earlier miniature world again in the bigger world of adult life.”
-Carl Jung

“It is never too late to be what you might have been.” George Eliot

One of my jobs as the new Head of School will be to market the school so that it can grow. But how do I market wholesomeness? How do I leverage the way parents and teachers—“as partners”—are raising well-adjusted, grounded boys and girls who will one day become well-adjusted, grounded men and women? There is no curriculum for that. There is no line item in the budget for character development. It is organic and systemic and sometimes serendipitous...and probably a lot of other fancy words that currently escape me, but apply equally. The paradox is clear: It becomes increasingly complex to explain something that is profoundly simple. Your kids are just such *good kids*.

I have written this reflection as a way of saying thank you to the students of Odyssey, not just for the warm welcome I received in early September and ever since, but for being the kind of children I can adore...often to find joy and comfort in my small role in their development into caring adults, and sometimes to ponder wistfully, in quiet moments of my own choosing.

Preschool News

Have you heard the news??!! The Preschool has a new fleet of shiny red trikes, thanks to the incredible success of last year's first annual Dance-A-Thon fundraiser. What pageantry we all experienced in our first All School Meeting a few weeks ago when last year's student body co-Presidents, Anna Cuevas and Molly Warncke, presented the new tricycles before the school. We were then all treated to the performance of four children from Kerry's class riding them in one grand loop around the gym and out the door. Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to all involved!

Elementary School News

From Brian Carpenter:

Hello everyone. It has been very exciting to have the opportunity to join the wonderful atmosphere of a family that we have here at the Odyssey Day School. I would like to thank everyone who has taken a moment of their time to help me feel welcome as a new member of the community. As many of you have already noticed, I've decided to take a slightly less than traditional approach with the physical education classes this year. I come from a background of fifteen years as an outdoor and experiential educator, and, though I have played more than my fair share of competitive games as a kid, I have learned to teach my students the value of the group and the strengths of the individual. For this reason, I will not be teaching “gym” or “PE” class this year. I will instead be the leader of our new Odyssey Explorers Club. The purpose of this club is to help your child to be active and to grow physically, to help them to learn to appreciate the strengths of both the group and the individual, to learn the skills necessary to work effectively as a group, and to accomplish all of these goals in a cooperative and non-competitive way that focuses on having FUN!!! I hope that this letter may have answered any questions that you have about our new club. If it has not, then please feel free to stop in and see me at the school. My desk is by the door to the gym and I welcome visitors and questions at any time. Thank you!

Community News

Faculty & Staff News

I am pleased to announce that we have four new members of the staff to welcome: 1) Fernanda Bevilacqua is our new Spanish teacher. 2) Joining our After School program is Jill DeVenuto. 3) Assisting in the Preschool is Debbie Loguidice. 4) Our own Annie Orlando, daughter of Karen, is back!

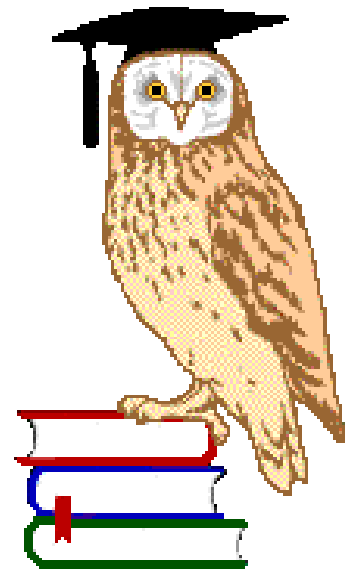
We bid goodbye to Jennifer Carr, who needs more time to pursue her education.

Congratulations to our two teachers who have just gotten hitched: Kim MacDonald (formerly Glionna) and Brian Carpenter. Best wishes to both of you from all of us at Odyssey!

And finally, we offer condolences to Karen Bailey, whose mother passed away on September 24th.

For Parents

- ✚ With cold and flu season around the corner, we are always looking for names to add to our “sub list” so that we have people to call upon to help with class coverage on short notice. If you know anyone with teaching experience who would like to be considered for subbing, please let me know.
- ✚ Many thanks to the Schwartz family for donating a couch to the Grade 1-2 classroom. Pat is very excited, as are all of her students! Thanks also to Allen Roycroft and his friend, Shawn Gannon, who volunteered to retrieve the couch and bring it to Odyssey.
- ✚ We are still looking for donations of comfy upholstered chairs for the Elementary Library. If you have any of this type of furniture you are looking to get rid of, please think of ODS.
- ✚ The Fire Trailer is coming! The Fire Trailer is coming! Yes, on November 6, Odyssey will be visited by Fire Chief Mike Sullivan and his notorious Fire Trailer. Students will have the opportunity to learn about fire safety and what to do if a fire breaks out while you are inside a building. I have never witnessed this spectacle before, but word has it that I will be treated to the escape artist-like talents of some of our students and faculty as they escape out of the Fire Trailer. Stay tuned for reports from the front lines next month!
- ✚ A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board outside my office for the annual Family Potluck Supper. If you plan on attending and bringing a dish, please sign up.
- ✚ Thanks to all who volunteered for various committees on Back-to-School Night.
- ✚ ODS spirit items and clothing have been ordered and will arrive soon.



***“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change.”
Charles Darwin***



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***“Parents and
teachers as
partners”***

We're on the Web!
www.odysseydayschool.org

From O.P.A.

Thank you to Anne Marie Viglione, mother of Jacqui and Maddie Jutras, for discussing the Odyssey Parents Association on Back-to-School Night. I was so pleased to see the number of names on the sign-up sheet in the lobby at the conclusion of the evening, and will be passing them along to Annie Barr. Meetings will begin soon, and I look forward to helping parents plan social events, and even more so, to attending them!

From the Board of Directors

From Linda King: “The Head Support and Evaluation Committee is hard at work establishing agreed-upon goals for Lori, submitted both by the Committee and by Lori. They will be meeting throughout the year to track progress and lend support where needed. But they can’t effectively do their job without help from the entire ODS community. Lori and the Committee need your input and feedback. Sometime in the next few weeks we’ll be distributing surveys to everyone—staff, parents, students and Directors—to assess where we are and where we want to go. Watch for it—your opinion counts!”



I've never known anyone yet who doesn't suffer a certain restlessness when autumn rolls around... We're all eight years old again and anything is possible.
- Sue Grafton