

A Newsletter for Parents and Friends of Fox River Country Day School



Fall Festival – An Afternoon of Fun, Family and Friends

Guests at this year's Fall Festival were greeted with scarecrows made by our creative preschool students, pumpkins, mums, and corn stalks as they made their way down the road toward the event area. In spite of a brisk, cool day, attendance was strong and steady as FRCDS faculty and staff manned events and activities to provide families with a fun day of shared time on our beautiful, wooded campus.

Friendly witches, a scruffy faced pirate, calm Mother Earth, a woodland troll, and a bug-loving mad scientist greeted visitors along the FRCDS nature trail system. Amid the glorious hues of fall leaves, each stop provided students with a fun lesson about nature and the environment. Parents were overheard commenting on the beauty of the trails and expressing amazement at how pristine and pure our woodland settings are.

Back by popular demand was the Mad Science booth where kids were actively engaged in the mysteries of electricity, gravity and the big hit this year... slime! "Mom, I got slime!" was the reaction of one child as she left the booth and ran to show her mom the mysterious, purple concoction in a little plastic tub.

Campus naturalist, Michael Raczyla, led a variety of fun events such as log bowling and wooden cookie/Frisbee toss, but the most epic event by far was the Tug O' Wars between students and parents where the battles were fierce and fun at the same time. Using only logs, stumps, and other natural props to create fun games gave children young and old a chance to step back in time. Their joy was uninhibited and exuberant, proving that you don't need electricity to have fun.

New this year was a Jack O'Lantern contest featuring about 15 carved pumpkins that were on display for all to see. Everything from scary spiders, to funny faces, to a pumpkin featuring the FRCDS logo greeted attendees on their way to the Halloween Hikes. Awards were issued to participants at assembly on the Monday after Fall Festival.

Perhaps the biggest new hit this year was the Cake Walk where participants could buy a \$1 ticket for a chance to walk the Cake Walk circle while music played. When the music stopped, numbers corresponding to the circles were drawn and winners were led to a table laden with an assortment of more than 50 cakes, pies, brownies, and treats of every sort and variety

to select from. Children were clamoring to get their tickets and have their chance to take home a favorite treat.

Other booths included Oak Tree Sponsorship, a 50/50 raffle for the Grade 8 trip to Costa Rica, Fannie May chocolate samples to promote the school's Fall Fundraiser, face painting, a large inflatable jumping gym, and an array of delicious food from grilled cheeseburgers and hot dogs to chili and apple squares. 🍂

(Clockwise from top left) Ryan and Sammy Sevilla, Savannah Allen, Kendall Rasmussen, Nicholas Acevedo, Tristan Augustine, Christian Acevedo, and Cameron Sorce joined together to visit the Woodland Troll on the Halloween Hike; our friendly witches, Sarah Faherty and Liz Christiansen stirred up nature news; Tristan Augustine gets his face painted by Tricia Rasmussen; Suhas Palwai and Guy Tusa have fun making scarecrows; Anne McGinley points out her family's Jack O' Lantern.

Special Note: FRCDS Kindergarten students, along with Mrs. Austen's preschool class, participated in the Ho man Estates Scarecrow Contest. The homemade scarecrows were then used to help add a whimsical appearance to the campus for Fall Festival.

Reflections on Back to School Night



Dear Parents,

Our blustery weather so early in the year already has us serving hot soup for lunch! With pumpkins, scarecrows, and bales of hay doing the campus, it's hard to believe summer was only a few short weeks ago. We are fully immersed in the hub of school with routines and relationships established; goals have been written by students and adults alike, all giving promise to the fulfillment of another marvelous year.

In summer, parents were invited to join our faculty and administration in reading Sir Ken Robinson's recent book, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*. Robinson explains that our element is where natural talent meets personal passion. This book was catalyst to opening year conversations at meetings where we explored the development and nourishment of our own talents and passions as well as ways to bring out the passions and talents in our students. His desire is to help readers examine the conditions in our lives that enable us to find passion and talent in ourselves and in others and to eliminate the obstacles that get in the way. Robinson explains that understanding these processes is essential for transforming education, business, and communities to meet the real challenges of the twenty-first century. He

describes intelligence as being 'diverse, dynamic, and distinct. Here is what that means for education: First, he suggests we rethink the hierarchy of subjects. . . The arts, sciences, humanities, physical education, languages, and math all have equal and central contributions to make to a student's education.

"Second, we need to question the entire idea of 'subjects.' For generations, we have promoted the idea that the arts, the sciences, the humanities, and the rest are categorically different from each other. The truth is that they have much in common.

"Third, the curriculum should be personalized. Learning happens in the minds and souls of individuals—not the databases of multiple choice tests." Robinson quips, "I doubt that there are many children who leap out of bed in the morning wondering what they can do to raise the reading score for their state."

Robinson summarizes "Economically and culturally, the future of America and of the rest of world lies now in a different direction. It will depend on the vitality, diversity and creativity of all its people. The good news is that there are many strong, practical and highly effective new forms of education that point the way."

The really good news is that our students are being nurtured and educated by individuals that understand this and we are pointing the way. We are increasingly conscious of making connections between core and enrichment subjects for the optimal flow of creativity and original thought from our students. We strive to find balance between the current demands of society, the expectation of parents, and the affordable education of the whole child, your child. Imagine the transformation in our culture if all

educators and parents in this country shared a vision as we do at Fox River Country Day School, that children should be allowed to remain childlike; to be in a place where it is safe to be creative, where drama is used to teach reading skills, where math skills are taught by application to real situations; where innovation is the norm, and where it's cool to be successful.

For ninety-six years, administrators and boards have come and gone, programs have evolved, buildings have been re-purposed, raised, and built. But what has remained constant is the fundamental belief that each child's heritage is his or her natural attraction to what is good and pure and true and intelligent. Strategic plans and annual goals are drafted according to this ideal.

We are four years shy of our centennial celebration, four years shy of celebrating one hundred years of our commitment to the vision—a shared philosophy—that established this school. Our educational philosophy is that children have an unlimited capacity to express goodness and intelligence. We work to help each child reach beyond limitations of all types and help each one discover higher and more rewarding levels of achievement. We are committed to looking for and finding each child's best nature and most expansive abilities.

Thank you for sharing this vision with us. Thank you for helping to carry it out, for supporting it in your conversations with others, for contributing to its financial stability, for giving of your time and talent. Thank you for recognizing that FRCDS is a place where children can learn to be contributors to the earth and help it weather uncertain times, through their leadership, their intelligence, their character, and their creativity.
~Karen Morse, Head of School 🍁



Karen Morse, (above) presents her welcome address; Gigi Sarnello plays guitar at assembly with Chuck Harvuot and Roger Honey; Bryce Casimino gets a hug from his new teacher Mrs. Rasmussen.

Parent Post

Editor: Kathy Prigge

Contributors: Kristin Brown, Marian Bruce,
Tim Holzworth, Christine Love,
Karen Morse, Erica Sevilla, Jami Switzer

The mission of the Fox River Country Day School is to educate the whole child through values-based curriculum conducted in a homelike environment, combining academic excellence with individual character development.



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A New School Year Begins

The exciting winds of change are in the air as new acquaintances are made and familiar parents, teachers and classmates reunite for back to school. Everyone is prepared to be surprised by the new milestones students will achieve throughout the coming school year.

FRCDS kicks off a new year with a number of activities to ease everyone back onto campus. Kindergarteners had a picnic and new families were introduced to the family-like atmosphere at FRCDS. A Middle School barbecue gave parents, teachers and students the chance to build stronger bonds before a new year with a challenging curriculum, which requires greater responsibility, more homework, intense research

and self-reflection. On the first day of school, an ice cream social provided another opportunity for everyone to enjoy a delicious treat and each other's company.

At Back to School night, parents, teachers and staff filled the auditorium and came together to set the tone for another successful year at FRCDS. Head of School Karen Morse addressed newcomers and returning families alike about the importance of being of "one accord" as the new school year begins—creating a shared vision for a learning environment that will best improve the creativity and success of each individual student. 🌟



Noelle & Tristan Wenceslao are excited to begin their first day at Fox River Country Day School.



Middle School students take a stretch on the shores of Lake Michigan (above); team building exercises were part of the curriculum during the leadership week at LOC (far left); Maxine Scoy challenges herself on the high ropes course (left).

Lessons for a Lifetime at LOC

Would you have the courage to walk a high ropes course 23 feet above the ground? Fox River's Middle School students sure did at the Leelanau Outdoor Center (LOC) in northern Michigan in September. The exercise required a lot of concentration and taught the students to step outside their comfort zones—and it was just one of many challenges faced by 41 middle school students at LOC this year.

Students from sixth, seventh and eighth grades made the four-day, three-night trip to LOC to learn about resilience, trust and teamwork in a

tranquil lakeside setting where there were plenty of opportunities to reflect on nature and themselves. Students and teachers were led in a series of activities that led to self-discovery and built rapport among the students who depended on their classmates for support and encouragement.

Some of the students' fondest memories were the canoeing trips, night hikes, swimming with fish in the Crystal River, singing silly songs before meals and around the campfire and challenging treks through large sand dunes. 🌟

FRCDS Teachers Make Beautiful Brides

First grade teacher Melissa Carpenter, and fourth grade teacher, Erica Smithee, have changed their names! Melissa and her husband, Rick Perez, were married on June 20th in Cincinnati, Ohio. Erica and Wade Loewe are shown celebrating their wedding day on October 10, in nearby Streamwood, Illinois. Congratulations Mrs. Perez and Mrs. Loewe! 🌟



Mrs. Melissa Perez with husband Rick (above); Mrs. Erica Loewe with husband Wade.

Environmental Education Buzzing with Fall Activity



Sweeet!

Last April, excitement, fascination, and a bit of nervousness were abuzz in the air as 9,000 Italian Honeybees arrived in a box on our campus. Our beekeeping adventure had officially begun, and as we opened the homemade hive box to shake the cluster of bees packed tightly around themselves for protection and warmth, we really had no idea what to expect. Our biggest fear was that they would decide that our freshly painted home was not appealing enough and decide that instead of falling and dying right inside, that all 9,000 of them would collectively decide to go and find a better home. As Ryan White shook the box, we let out a big sigh of relief as they

let themselves drop right in to begin the work of preparing their new home. During the summer, our bees collected nectar from thousands of flowers up to 2 miles away from campus and with a little tender care from us, filled up their boxes with enough surplus to allow the middle school Stewardship Crew along with 4th and 5th grade to assist in the harvesting of 25 pounds of fresh honey! This winter, the bees will cluster together to stay warm while surviving on the remaining honey stored in their combs.

For the Stewardship Crew and Grades 4 and 5, this was an absolutely fascinating experience to wit-

ness this process of caring for and learning about such a tiny but incredibly intelligent species!

How can you get a jar of honey to call your own? As a thank you for signing up for a tree sponsor on campus you will receive a jar- or look for the remaining jars of this golden treat as a sweet item to bid on at this year's auction! 🍯

Joe Sarnello is concentrating on a new skill, scraping honey from the comb as 5th grade students learn about harvesting honey; Tim Holzworth smokes the bee hive in preparation to remove the first batch of FRCDS honey.

No Field Trip Required

Last spring, parent volunteers once again were digging and planting seeds to assure that the Fox River community could experience the fruits of their labor in the summer and fall. Beans, tomatoes, basil and potatoes were among the many vegetables in the organic garden this year.

On a sunny afternoon in September, sixth graders were treated to a trip to the garden for some fall harvesting. Beautiful carrots were picked, washed, and gobbled up! For dessert- sweet apples from an apple tree nearby.

Thank you to Margaret Williams, Eric Larson and Julie VonderHaar who have led this effort giving us fresh, organic produce and yet another valuable experience for our students to take part in right here on our own school campus! 🍎



Patrick Geenen shows off a bunch of ripe carrots from the school's organic garden; 6th grade students join Tim Holzworth for an apple picking opportunity during their weekly Environmental Education class.

A Closer Look at Science: Cellular Biology and the Lay of the Land

Mr. Wlodek's science classes have been getting hands-on practice exploring the world both inside and outside of themselves.

Seventh graders recently learned there's more than meets the eye when they used a compound microscope to get a magnified look at their own cellular structure. The students examined a swab sample taken from inside of their cheeks, drew their discoveries and later identified their cell membranes and other features.

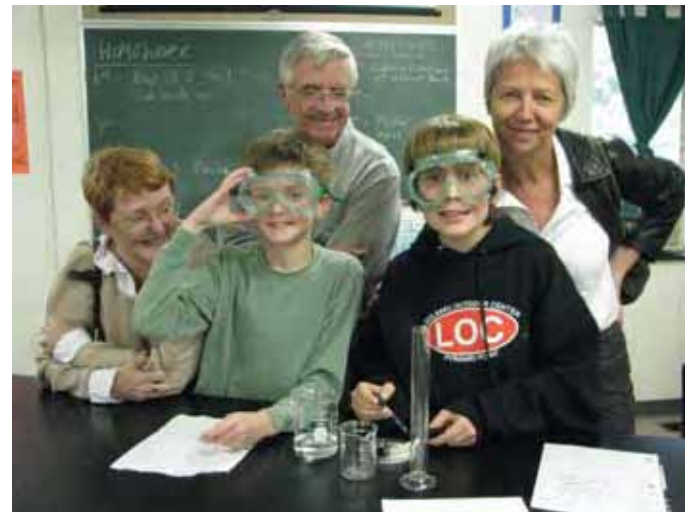
Like cartographers-in-training, sixth graders recently surveyed portions of the campus grounds with altitude-measuring tools and grid paper in hand. Students plotted multiple points on a small section of land, calculated the elevation of the land and used the measurements to construct a topographical map. 🍂

Janiece Levinson, Lorena Stelnicki, and Hannah Demel enjoy a closer look through a microscope; 6th grade students survey land during science class.



A Burning Need to Know

Students learning about the effects of acid rain on the environment had their grandparents assist with a chemistry experiment during Grandparents Day. Students put Calcium Carbonate (basic chalk) in a beaker filled with white vinegar, which is 5% acetic acid. Students observed the chalk disintegrate and shred as the solution fizzed and bubbled and rose to the top. After just a few minutes, the chalk had completely dissolved. Students and visitors alike were thrilled the experiment was a success. 🍂



Maddy St. Claire intently waits for the reaction of chemicals (above); Joe Sullivan (left) and Patrick Geenen (right) show off their science know-how to their grandparents.



An Experiment of Volcanic Proportions

Third graders emulating a volcanic eruption were able to create their own homemade geodes. In nature, as hot lava erupts out of a volcano and flows across the land, gas bubble pockets trap mineral matter found in ground water and crystallize them into beautiful rock formations called geodes. Third grade teachers directed their students to combine boiling water with a copper sulfate solution which was poured inside of egg shells. Much to the students' delight, as the hot water cooled and evaporated, they discovered colorful crystals had formed in their eggshells.



Jeron Lopez looks for crystal formations (above); 3rd grade students are amazed with their study of rocks and minerals.

Thanks to the FRCDS Community for their contributions to the Science Lab project at last year's auction! As you can see from the above examples, this generosity has made our science program stronger than ever! We're stocked with beakers, scales, vinegar, microscopes, test tubes, petrie dishes, iodine, etc. and all kinds of messy and meaningful unit plans are in the works.

Inaugural Acorn Open Golf Outing Provides Fun and Funds to FRCDS

A beautiful sunny day welcomed golfers to the FRCDS Inaugural Golf Outing on October 5 at Elgin Country Club. This challenging 18-hole course provided the perfect stage for an afternoon of golfing for a great cause... the students of Fox River Country Day School. Thank you to all of the golfers and sponsors who made this first time event such a success. The Acorn Open raised \$13,000 net for our school!

Contests and games provided an added element of competitive fun on the course. Two Hole in One contests gave golfers the chance to win a brand new Harley Davidson motorcycle from Zylstra's in St. Charles or a 2009 Hot Tub from Arvidson Pools & Spas. Another popular feature was the opportunity to get a stress relieving mini-massage provided on Hole #1 by Asha SalonSpa.

The success of this event would not have been possible without the unselfish sponsorship of several FRCDS families and their businesses. Special thanks to GSG Consulting (Art & Jane Saenz) for their Platinum Sponsorship of \$5,000. We would also like to thank our Gold Sponsors of \$1,500 each: United Engravers (Terry & Dori Capps); Schmid Tool (Patrick & Heidi Leahy); and Lab Information Technology (Martin Laster & Stephanie Drawhorn-Pauldon). And our 12 Hole Sponsors of \$250 each.

This year's successful outing has paved the way for this to be an annual event each fall. Stay tuned on the date and time for our 2nd annual Acorn Open! 🍂



(Clockwise from top left) Peter Mikulak gets ready to tee off; winning first place overall with a score of 64 are Terry Capps, Je Baumgarten, Bob Hasse and Eric White; the second place team with a score of 67 was Ryan Grant, Carson Greene, and Stuart Greene; Art Saenz enjoys a day of golf with friends and associates.



Students "Dig" the New Sandbox

Preschool and Kindergarten's didn't waste any time digging in the new sandbox that appeared one Monday morning in September. Boys and girls alike were thrilled to make sand pies and volcanoes or just feel the sand sifting between their fingers. Thank you to the Saenz family for their very kind and generous donation! 🍂

From the Board of Trustees Marian Bruce

The very early arrival of fall with its chilly temperatures appears not to have dampened the warmth of community and the excitement of a new school year on our Fox River campus. With a cool but delightful Fall Festival behind us, our children and staff are well into another year of learning and character-building. Each year the board is ever more conscious of the quality of our program and of the faculty and families who participate in it.

Speaking of participation, the PSA has a variety of ways in which you can be part of our campus activity this year, whether it is as a volunteer, participating in planned social activities or as a contributor to the various fundraising campaigns throughout the year.

We thank you if you have already taken part, and we thank you in advance for your future role in making these activities a success. We are especially grateful to each family who has already made or pledged to our Annual Fund.

This year, with the still strained economy causing a slight drop in enrollment, we have a larger gap than we had hoped - and had budgeted - between tuition revenues and the cost of educating your children. We hope you will be as generous as possible when you respond to this year's Annual Fund letter from Head of School, Karen Morse. We send you our gratitude in advance for your part in making this the best-ever year for your children at FRCDS. 🍂

Bonding Among Generations at Grandparents Day

Grandparents and Special Visitors Day at Fox River Country Day School is a tradition that aims to bridge the gap between generations by creating special memories that can be shared by both students and their loved ones. Grandparents, along with other family members and friends of our students, participated in a broad range of classroom activities—they played chimes in accompaniment to singing students in Mrs. Spears' music class, observed art and swim classes, helped with scientific experiments, and even worked alongside Kindergarten students to create a family tree.



Karen Morse and Jami Switzer also met with our guests to highlight the shared values of FRCDS and our families and to view a slideshow of activities from the previous school year. It was a poignant day filled with tender moments as pride and love were exchanged between the generations. 🌸



Dejanie Blalark is beaming with joy as she shares special time with her grandparents (far left); Azaan Kahn works on a special project with his grandmother; Danny Price reads a book with his grandmother (above).

Middle School Students Enjoy Three Cups of Tea

Did you know that Greg Mortenson's favorite food is corn, or that the name of his next dog is going to be Cupcake? Even if you've read Mortenson's bestselling book, *Three Cups of Tea*, you probably didn't; Mortenson saves those interesting pieces of trivia for when he talks in person. In mid October, a group of Middle School students saw a new side of Nobel Peace Prize nominee Greg Mortenson when they traveled down to St. Louis with Ms. Love and Mr. Tim to hear the author speak at Principia College.

The Middle School students who listened to Mortenson's talk all read *Three Cups of Tea* before going to St. Louis, so they had a context for



the ideas he talked about. Mortenson began by sharing this African proverb: "If you educate a boy, you educate an individual. If you educate a girl, you educate a community." He explained jokingly that if audience members wrote it down, they wouldn't need to take any more notes for the whole talk, because that proverb encompassed his key point. It has served as a theme for Mortenson's life work, too, building schools for girls in Pakistan.

After the presentation, audience members and those listening to the talk over Principia's Internet radio had the opportunity to ask Mortenson questions. The FRCDS contingency was excited to unexpectedly hear a question sent in over the Internet from Mr. and Mrs. White! The students waited in line after the talk to meet the author and to get copies of his book signed. Mortenson even graciously took a picture with the group. The trip to St. Louis was a quick one, but the ideas shared and the memories made will last much longer. 🌸

Middle School students, Christine Love, and Tim Holzworth meet Nobel Prize nominee and humanitarian, Greg Mortenson.



Once Upon a Prehistoric Time

Building teamwork and collaboration skills was the goal for a recent project in Susannah Neville's third grade class. Students were divided into three groups and were tasked with piecing together a puzzle of the world's seven continents to re-create their own version of Pangaea—the single land mass scientists believe existed 250 million years ago before the continents shifted and broke apart. The groups combined their creative skills and referenced maps to create their own version of a super continent. Students were overheard during the project using their CBQ's respect, courtesy, and creativity! Exclamations such as, "That looks really, really good. Good job!" and "Should we make a sun or a moon? What do you think?" were also heard, along with "We only have five more minutes. We should stop talking and just work." 🌸

Will VonderHaar, Tiffany Filawo, and Nicole Welch present their Pangea creation.

Middle School Sports



Working for the Goal

The boy's soccer team worked through heavy rains and some injuries this fall while facing talented opponents. Through it all, the team held their own. Coach Kyle Monestero expressed his pride and high regard for the determination and effort that the Middle School boys have put forth during the last two months. "They have all worked really hard as a team this season. I am impressed with how well they have played. Our last game against Elgin Academy was especially inspiring. We were down 3 to 1 and they just kept fighting; they did not give up. The game ended in a 4 to 4 tie. Although we didn't get the win, it was a great game!" 🍁

Ben Sloat (top left) defends the ball against a player from Harvest Christian Academy; displaying the V for victory after winning a game is (bottom left) David Oh, Jacob Clapp, Russell Bergeron, Andrew Lee, and Ben Prigge; Derrick Martinez (bottom photo) gets ready to score a goal.



Volleying for More Wins

While Mr. Wlodek spends his days experimenting in the science lab, after school, he leads the sixth, seventh and eighth grade girls in experiments with gravity, force and trajectory of a volleyball. The volleyball team is comprised of 21 girls who compete as part of their physical education curriculum requirement. The girls are focused on learning the essentials of the game, in particular ball control, as well as serving, bumping and setting. "The girls are having a lot of fun and are learning how to work like a team," Coach Wlodek said. "We've only won one game, but everyone is working really well together." Mr. Wlodek hopes to add more wins this season, and thinks the girls' enthusiastic attitude is going to pave the way to success. 🍁

Coach Wlodek prepares to start a game with players (bottom left) Hae Lee Jeong, Hannah Demel, Destiny Barfield, Elena Silva, Libby Guerrero, and Samantha Madrid. Brenna Wall sets up a bump (bottom photo).



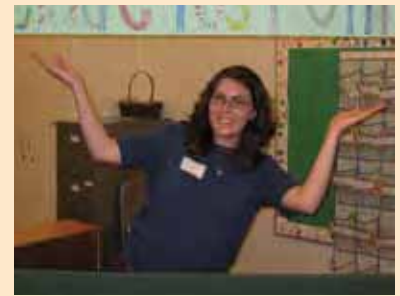
Getting to Know You

New faculty and staff were asked...



What about FRCDS most appealed to you when you accepted your position? The small group of staff really appealed to me. I appreciate the opportunity to get to know everyone, to work together in a family environment.

~Christie Coddington, Resident Director



What has been your most memorable experience thus far at FRCDS? I'll pick two: First it would be making anemometers with the first grade class. It was great fun to see our meteorological team measuring and recording our findings. Second would be exploring the great and beautiful city of Chicago with the MS dorm students one Sunday. The highlight was our adventure riding quadracycles down the paths of Lake Michigan.

~Audrey Smith, Assistant First Grade



What is your favorite place to visit? I love going to visit my parents in Louisiana; I am going back for Thanksgiving and I am so excited!

~Alycia Perot, Kindergarten Teacher