

# Open Classroom Community News



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## The Principal's Desk

Greetings-

It's hard to believe we have come to the end of another calendar year. These first four months have flown by. Your caring and generosity are evident in all you do – they are also evident in your children. It is such a pleasure to watch children helping children – to learn, to play, and to support.

I also want to remind you about communicating concerns or issues that may arise for you. Depending on the concern / issue, we always encourage our students to start at the source – we encourage each of you to do the same. If that is difficult or uncomfortable, there are other options including your classroom community support representative, your Steering representative, our Steering Chair and co-chairs, Carolyn or me. My door is always open and I am happy to sit down to discuss any issue. Email or a phone call also works well. I want every member of our community to feel that they are being heard and we will continue to work towards making that happen. I would also ask that each of us be mindful of both the method and manner of our communication. With the multiple modes of communication available to each of us it is easy to accidentally communicate with a larger or different audience than we intend.

I know that this time of year tends to have a focal point of giving and caring – but what I love about this Open Classroom community is that our season of giving never ends. So, while I wish you all a wonderful holiday season – which I hope you are able to spend with those closest to you – know that I appreciate and marvel at your ongoing spirit of caring and giving.

Peace -

Chris Gesteland

*Principal Open Classroom*  
801-578-8144, [Chris.Gesteland@slcschools.org](mailto:Chris.Gesteland@slcschools.org)

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# Co-Oper Challenge



Now that we are four months into our school year, have any of you out there in co-oping land had any challenges come up during your co-oping time? Perhaps there is a child in your classroom that is giving you a run for your money every time you run a small group? (Maybe that child even belongs to you.) Are you new to our school and still wondering how all this co-oping stuff works? Maybe you are a seasoned co-oper just feeling a little "burned out" after several years of co-oping under your belt. Fear not, the annual co-oping workshops are right around the corner, ready to help with all your co-oping concerns. They will happen the first week back from

a well deserved Winter Break, during your regular co-oping block.

This year, the workshops will focus on specific co-oping techniques and how these techniques fit into the mission statement and philosophy of the Open Classroom. So while you enjoy sipping on a hot beverage of your choice, the co-oping committee hopes that you will take a moment to read the attached "Mission Statement of the OC" (**See page 9**) and reflect on how co-ops and co-oping help support the over all philosophy and goals we have as a learning community. We request that you come to the workshops ready to participate in meaningful conversations about what we believe to be one of the most amazing and crucial elements to our school--- Co-oping!

**Submitted by Tara Romney Barber**

## Open Classroom Community News

The Open Classroom Community News (OCCN) is our school newsletter, published approximately every 2 weeks during the school year by a volunteer parent. We will accept any articles, announcements, artwork, or fliers from school committees, staff, parents and students. We can accept word documents, email text, jpgs, and pdfs. If you do not have an article but you know of something that you would like to see included let me know and I will see if we can research it.

Past OCCN issues are available at at <http://ocslc.org/community-news/>

Please send submissions to [oc.communitynews@gmail.com](mailto:oc.communitynews@gmail.com).

**The next submission deadline is and Tuesday, January 3, at 9 pm.**

**Have a Wonderful Holiday Vacation!**

## New Families Come shopping for the perfect committee

**Committee Fair**

**Jan. 9th at 6:30 PM**

**in the OC Cafeteria**

**Come see what makes the school go round and figure out what you want to be a part of next year!**



**THIS YOUR CHANCE TO FIND THE BEST COMMITTEE FOR YOUR TALENTS**

# The Giving Tree



Hello Wonderful OC Community!

Thank you so much for supporting the Giving Tree! 'Tis the Season for spreading joy and happiness - and as many of you know, this season will be difficult for some families to

celebrate the season due to financial stresses. We at the OC would like to continue our tradition of giving to those in our community that are struggling this year. We have decided to sponsor a handful of children from families at a partner school in our neighborhood. We have assembled "wish lists" from children and placed ornaments on trees near the front office with their requests. Many of you have already taken ornaments and signed the list. And the gifts are starting to be delivered to the office. Thank you!

It's not too late if you still want to participate! Please stop by our tree and take one, two, or a handful of ornaments to help out with our Giving Tree!

Since there are limited shopping left before Winter Break, we would like to give you a few ideas for your shopping list this week:

Smith's Gift Cards

Target Gift Cards

Walmart Gift Cards

Barnes & Noble Gift Cards

Toys R Us Gift Cards

Gift Cards to Shoe Stores

Or any other stores that you think could be helpful this time of year!

Please wrap, hang the description ornament from the present, and return to the office by Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011.

One final note: Due to the larger than normal need during these tough times, we have a long list of wishes. We would love for entire families to step up and SPONSOR ONE WHOLE FAMILY or ONE CHILD. That would be simply amazing, and if your family is in the position to do so, it would be a wonderful way to pay it forward this season.

To sponsor a child or family, please call the OC (801) 578-8144 to talk to Rose Evans or Carolyn Turkanis. We are happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you and Happy Everything to you this Season!

My best,

**Rose Evans, OC Counselor**

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## Solstice Celebration

Hello OC Community,

We'll once again be having a parent-supported Solstice Celebration immediately after school on December 16th.

I've booked the playground from 3:00-3:30 so come on down after the bell rings at 2:50 and we'll get started.

If you're a new family and are curious about the Solstice Celebration, please don't hesitate to ask

other families about what this old (now evolved) OC tradition is all about and how to participate. Or you can just show up and see.

**Again, this is parent-sponsored and**

**completely voluntary.** Old

families and alumni are welcome to come. In fact, we hope they come. This is about community.

**Thanks all, Tim Phillips**



# The Library Shelf



In  
the

summer of 2007 I remember still feeling like a New Family, despite looking forward to our third year at the OC.

We had just received our welcome packet telling us all the things we needed to know to prepare for the new school year.

It also told us who our new teacher would be.

I have to admit to having really hoped for Denise. Her classroom felt safe and secure and the children were encouraged to show their intelligence and creativity in every moment of their day. But instead we got Leslee.

"I don't know this person! Where did she come from?!"

After stewing in my disappointment for a short time my brain reminded me who this woman was—one of the authors of *The Book. Learning Together—Children and Adults in a School Community*. She wasn't some newbie or outsider, she literally wrote the book (along with Barbara Rogoff and our own Carolyn) about this school and the philosophy behind it.

I re-read *The Book*. My disappointment quickly turned to relief and then excitement. My child would get the benefit of twenty-plus years of experience in a program our family had already accepted into our lives.

We are now in our fourth year of learning together with Leslee and we would not trade a moment.

If you would like to re-read *Learning Together* you can borrow it from our very own library. The parent resource section is located on the south/west corner of the library.

Parents are more than welcome to set up an account and check out some amazing books. Jai and the parent volunteers will be happy to help you find what you need.

**- Karen Larson, Library Chair**

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## OC T-Shirts

Front



Back



*Not a true representation of what the t-shirts look like*

### On Sale!

**Friday, December 16**

**By the Office  
Before and after school**

**White short sleeves: \$8 - youth  
sizes, \$10 - adult sizes**

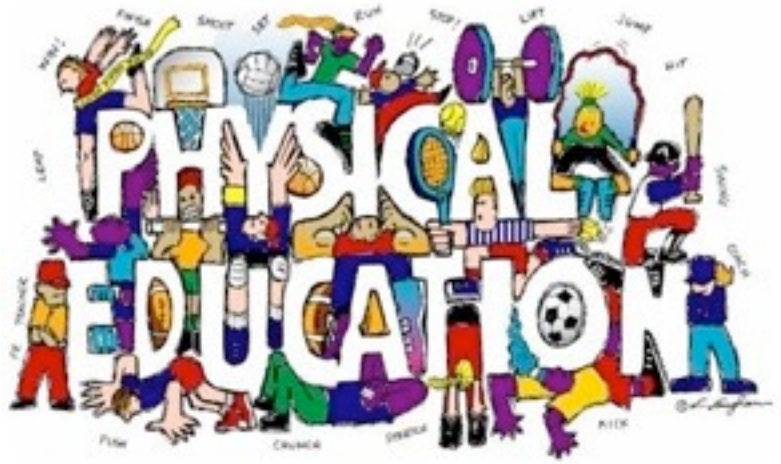
**Black long sleeves: \$15 - youth  
sizes, \$18 - adult sizes**

# P.E. at the OC

As the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester ends and the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester begins, I wanted to share what has been going on in the gym at the Open Classroom. Is it Physical Education (PE) or is it Physical Activities (PA). What ever we decide to name it, just know that there is a lot of movement and learning going on. For those of you who do not know, my name is Penny Davis and I am the lucky one that gets to play with all your kids in the gym. My husband is Chuck and we have Elliot (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) in Christina's class and Grayson in Ruth's 1<sup>st</sup> grade class. I am honored to be one of the teachers at the OC that gets to contribute to the overall learning that takes place. I am passionate about helping kids develop fundamental motor and game skills so that they can get the most out of play and realize that being active with others is a good way to build and maintain relationships while staying healthy.

The K-2/3 classes started off the year learning the classroom rules and what to expect during each weekly lesson. It was great seeing how excited the kids were to return to the gym to run and play. The Kindergarteners looked hesitant but still listened closely to what I had to say. Many students were eager to show me different exercises they remembered from last year and to ask me, "When are we going to play ... (fill in with any number of activities we got to do last year).

Once we got into the routine of things, we spent the next couple of months learning how to bounce and roll a ball and throw and catch. We practiced individually, with partners and in small groups. It's awesome to see how eager all the students are to offer support and encouragement as they all practice new skills.



During the next trimester, we will focus on fitness then move on to developing good hand-eye coordination through racquet sports.

The 6th-8th graders began the year practicing basic exercises along with some fun, low-impact games. They finished up the trimester learning the fundamentals of volleyball. I think they are ready to join a league! They will spend the next trimester mastering various sports through our awesome Friday sport's program.

The 3/4 and 4/5 classes will begin the new year developing their hand-eye coordination while learning simple game dynamics. This is the age when kids take what they've learned developing fundamental motor skills and use those skills to play different games and sports. I am looking forward to working with these students in this stage of the process.

That pretty much sums up what has been going on in the gym. I want to send a huge shout out to all the co-ops that help me out. Your enthusiasm and support helps teach our kids that play is for all ages!

**Submitted by Penny Davis**

# Sports Corner

We have just started our second semester of our Sports Program. The 6th through 8th grade classes get to participate in one of three off campus sports: a water option, a sports option, or a fitness option. They also get to choose an on campus option: Hip-Hop Dance, hiking/outdoor fitness, yoga, cappoiera, karate, or fencing.

This week I am highlighting the art of fencing! Fencing is a combat sport originating in the 18th Century, where the participants use bladed weapons. Fencing means "the action or art of using

the sword scientifically". Fencing is one of only four sports which has been



featured at every one of the modern Olympic Games!!

We are lucky enough to have a superb fencing instructor to teach our students again. Sergei Gritsaev has been practicing in the art of fencing for more than 40 years! He has over 30 years of teaching experience. Sergei teaches private & group lessons at his Sandy studio, Utah Swords Academy. They also offer summer & winter camps for beginners and advanced fencers. If you or your student would like to pursue further instructions in the art of fencing, you can find information at [www.ufencing.com](http://www.ufencing.com). There, you will find studio information & lesson prices offered at Utah Swords Academy.



**By Chad Johnson**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING? Your Open Classroom Community Connections Committee

### UPCOMING SCHOOL EVENTS

#### MOVIE NIGHT – COME SEE

#### THE ORIGINAL MUPPET MOVIE!

**When:** Friday, January 6, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.

**Where:** At school, in the gym

**What:** We'll be watching the 1979 Muppet Movie together – great for all ages!

**What to bring:** Bring a snack to share. If you don't want to sit on the gym chairs (!), we'll have a separate area for folks who want to sit on the floor.

**Contact:** Lisa Shaw at [lisashaw99@gmail.com](mailto:lisashaw99@gmail.com).

### UPCOMING LET'S-GET-TOGETHER

#### (PARENT INITIATED) EVENTS

*(These events are not school-sponsored, but have been organized or suggested by and for OC families.)*

#### SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

**When:** December 16, after school

**Where:** School playground

**What:** Singing the Solstice Song together, and to each other, is a great old OC tradition. Come and learn more!

**Contact:** Tim Phillips at [tim@phillipsvideopost.com](mailto:tim@phillipsvideopost.com).

#### TUBING AT GORGOZA

**When:** December 28, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

**Where:** Gorgoza Park, at the top of Parley's Summit; see <http://www.gorgoza.com/gorgoza>

**What:** We hope to see other OC families at Gorgoza for some great innertube sledding! Note that kids under age 3 are not allowed, and that prices for an

hourly pass range from \$12 for kids 42" and under for a two hour pass, to \$33 for folks over 42" for a four hour pass. Call 435-658-2648 for more information. If we get more than 20 confirmed going we can get a group rate!!

Please let us know if you'll be there

**Contact:** Kirsten and Rob MacIntyre at [losmacintyres@yahoo.com](mailto:losmacintyres@yahoo.com).



# Get to Know the Teachers



## Kirsten Oliver 3 / 4 Blend

### **Favorite animal?**

Bears of all kinds

### **Favorite treat?**

Chocolate and coffee

### **Why are you a teacher?**

I became a teacher because I am passionate about learning and want to have a positive impact on society. I thought teaching kids to read was more positive than suing people.

### **Where have you taught?**

I have been fortunate to work only at the OC as a school teacher with the exception of a brief (1 semester) stint teaching law in high school at West High. Prior to receiving my teaching license, I taught yoga at various studios and companies around town.

### **Why are you at the OC?**

I started at the OC with my kids in 2002. At first, I was attracted by the whole child philosophy and the nurturing atmosphere. Later I became impressed by the progressive and masterful teaching that I witnessed during co-oping.

### **Can you share an example of the OC philosophy in action in your classroom?**

My students have a voice in their learning in my classroom. I encourage students to participate in discussions whether we are voting on what jobs our classroom needs, how they would like to present an end of the unit project or what spelling words to choose for the bonus list. I also encourage students to do special projects of their own choosing when they are finished with their work.

### **Background - Family, where are you from, married, children, pets etc. ...**

I hail from the great state of Michigan. I moved to Utah to study ballet at the University of Utah when I was 18. Instantly I fell in love with the physical beauty of Utah and later my husband Anthony, a Utah native. Anthony and I have two boys, Dominic 15 and Thomas 13. We also have two black lab mixes, Luna 2 years and Suki 7 months.

After a foot injury ended my dance career, I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Chemistry. I worked in an environmental lab for two years before going back to school to study environmental law at the University of Utah law school. Working as an attorney turned out to be a wrong choice for me, so after having my second son I became a stay at home mom until I received my teaching certificate through the Alternate Route to Licensure through the Utah State Office of Education in 2007.

### **What is your favorite color?**

Purple, green and blue

# Get to Know the Teachers

## Shelly Marston 1/2 and is Literacy Specialist

### **Background - Family, where are you from, married, children, pets etc. ...**

I grew up in Whittier, California. I have two boys, two cats and one husband.

### **What is your favorite color?**

Sunset Orange

### **Favorite animal?**

Orca

### **Favorite treat?**

Dirty Soy Chai

### **Why are you a teacher?**

I started at the university pursuing a degree in business. For one of my classes I had to teach a concept. I loved it. I loved thinking about how to break down the concept to teach it in a manner all students could understand the information. The next quarter I changed majors. I get to be creative and watch kids discover something new every day.

### **Where have you taught?**

After my student teaching at Washington Elementary, there was a position open at the OC. I have taught here ever since.

### **Why are you at the OC?**

I was investigating schools for my son and was disappointed. For one of my classes at the U I had to observe Carolyn's class at the OC. I instantly fell in love with the school. My son started the following year. I had the privilege of co-oping for three years before becoming a teacher.



### **Can you share an example of the OC philosophy in action in your classroom?**

The first five to ten minutes of our school day is spent doing Welcome Time. You can find kids reading, drawing, playing a game, sharing a story with a friend or adult, or connecting with a friend. It is their time to settle into the day. This is beneficial for the students and a great time for co-ops to connect with kids.

**The Art Committee wanted to  
Thank everyone for coming out  
to our ART & CRAFT BAZAAR! We  
had a great time!  
I think we have a new tradition in  
the making...  
Happy Holidays!**

## The Mission Statement of the OC

"The Open Classroom Community, through a cooperative environment, will empower children to become responsible, life-long learners."

### Open Classroom Philosophy

The OC is a community of learners in which the students, parents and teachers actively participate in creating and maintaining a meaningful, purposeful learning environment. The curriculum embraces traditional academic subjects as well as decision making and problem solving on many levels.

The OC has an educational goal to teach the whole child and to provide opportunities for growth academically socially, emotionally, creatively, physically , and cognitively. While the primary focus of the program is the education of children, the importance of family and community involvement is strongly recognized and all community members are valued as learning partners. Together they work to provide purposeful learning experiences with a clear goal, building on the students' interests, needs and prior understanding; help children develop skills in decision making and problem solving; provide opportunities for making authentic learning choices and being responsible for consequences; experience community learning as well as individual progress.

The Open Classroom philosophy is that students learn most effectively when they are immersed in authentic learning experiences where they can:

- Practice self-reliance;
- Assume responsibility for their own learning;
- Develop positive self-esteem and confidence;
- Experience decision-making opportunities;
- Learn cooperatively in multi-aged settings;
- Receive guidance and support from caring, licensed teachers; and
- Receive guidance and support from parents who actively participate in classroom activities and program operation.

Students, teachers, and parents cooperate with one another to create and maintain a meaningful, purposeful learning environment where every child:

- participates in individual learning experiences that are built on the child's interests, needs, and prior understanding
- participates in cooperative learning experiences with other children and adults who represent diverse ages, abilities, and backgrounds
- develops decision-making and problem-solving skills
- develops positive self-esteem and confidence
- practices self-reliance and assumes responsibility for his/her own learning
- participates in experiences designed to nurture his/her cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and creative development
- develops an understanding of what it means to be a respectful and contributing member of a diverse community