

# Oneness-Family School

## VISIONS OF ONENESS



THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY



# Oneness-Family School

THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY

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[www.onenessfamilyschool.org](http://www.onenessfamilyschool.org)

Dear Parents,

Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding the Oneness-Family School. We are delighted that you are considering our school for your child.

Our program is Montessori-based, offering multi-age classrooms. In this environment, the students are grouped together in the following classes: pre-school through kindergarten; first through third grades; fourth through sixth grades; and seventh through eighth grades. We believe the continuity of staying with one teacher for several years provides an environment of consistency and personalized attention, enhanced by the development of a long-term parent-teacher-student relationship. The Montessori classroom also provides students academic flexibility by allowing them to work at their own degree of readiness. For instance, a student might accelerate in some subjects and work at grade level in others.

Our strong academic program is enriched by studies in art, music, art history, drama, dance, yoga, tai chi and meditation. Foreign languages, multi-cultural studies, world religions studies, field trips, physical education and environmental studies are also an integral part of the Oneness-Family educational program.

The Oneness-Family School provides a nurturing, caring environment for learning. Our curriculum and classroom structure enable students to discover their own gifts and talents. The school stresses essential values, such as tolerance, nonviolence through constructive conflict resolution, self-respect, respect for others, and kindness. We encourage every student to challenge themselves in each of these areas – to self-transcend – to continue growing and learning more as the opportunity presents itself.

Our community is multi-ethnic and draws from a broad socio-economic spectrum. A generous financial aid policy ensures that we open our doors to families who could not otherwise afford a private school education. Our parents are critical to our community and are involved in many areas of the school's life through our weekly community meetings, encouraged parent observations, volunteer councils, community special events, fundraising, and by sharing their skills, hobbies and knowledge of international cultures in the classrooms. . We provide childcare during meetings and conferences to encourage full participation.

Our full day program runs from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. For pre-school, we offer a full day option as well as two part-time options – three full days or five half days. Additionally, we provide childcare before school, beginning at 7:30 am, and after school until 6:00 pm.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lauren Thompson  
Director of Admissions

✧ Peace Begins With The Children ✧



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*“Oneness-Family School is founded on the belief that peace begins within each individual, and that successful academic achievement must be balanced by comprehensive personal growth.”*

--Andrew Kutt, Founder & Executive Director

“Our children have been blessed with gifted and committed teachers.

While each of their teachers has brought unique qualities and insights, all of them displayed a high level of perception and a commitment to bringing out the best in our children.

We’ve been impressed with how skillfully the teachers maintained the delicate balance of challenging our daughters to stretch and do their best – academically and personally – while still making each one feel fully supported and accepted. At OFS [they] gained a very solid academic foundation and an enthusiasm for learning...

They were enriched by field trips, nature studies, performances, songs and art projects.

One look at the classrooms speaks volumes about the rich environment...

and the festivals were great for reinforcing academic concepts

and an appreciation for diverse cultures...

“...Oneness

was not just a school;

it was like a second family to me.

The good people,

the feeling of safety

from the world’s hate,

and the healthy and nurturing

principles created a community

and a social structure that I

never wanted to leave...

Attending Oneness

pushed me forward so much,

not only academically,

but more importantly,

as a person.

[Andrew] saw my hidden

strength in writing and

helped me to dig deeper

to explore the depths

of my ability...

You helped me to mature

into a better person,

developing a greater

patience and tolerance

of the world around me

and the people living in it.”

- John Volpe

OFS Alumnus

We believe that our Oneness experience illustrates the

individual attention

and holistic approach

that OFS can provide

for children.”

- Lynda & Drew Wynn

Former OFS Parents

“Over the past four years

we have made good friends,

and have felt very much at home in

the community you have created.

It is a home away from home...

[her] teachers have been

excellent...

[She] has flourished into a

wonderful child under their wings.

They have encouraged, educated,

instilled wonderful values

and provided a nurturing,

loving and safe environment.

I cannot think of a better place

than OFS during this greatly

impressible stage of her life!

...You certainly have achieved

your goal: to create

an educational community

that implements and embraces

diversity and peace.

I know that these values

are deeply rooted in her soul

and she will not forget them

--they are embedded

and will be part of her

throughout her lifetime.”

-Sue & Bill Clery

Former OFS Parents



“The presence of Oneness  
in the lives of our three grandchildren has been a gift for our whole family.

Beyond their learning to read

and reason, to observe and compute,

we delight in their growing awareness of positive problem-solving;

of the larger world and its geography, languages and cultural traditions;

in their respect for other people and for the earth around us;

and for the importance of peacemaking.

Our older grandson suggests a moment of silence before dinner.

Our granddaughter thinks about why people are marching for peace.

Our littlest grandson and his schoolmate come up with a way to avoid fighting over their favorite truck.

As they’ve learned, they’ve helped us to think more deeply about the ideas we value

and to explore them together in ways that continue to enrich us all.”

-Susan & George Spangler

OFS Grandparents

# FOUNDATION

The Oneness-Family School vision is to foster a new generation of leaders who can become meaningful contributors to the society of the 21st century by expanding their consciousness, realizing their potential, and coming to feel and understand that the world is one family. Our mission is to provide a holistic, life-enriching educational program and learning environment based upon the following 5 pillars: Skills; Knowledge; Self-Expression; Understanding; and Appreciation.

Oneness -Family School was founded in 1988 by Andrew Kutt. Inspired by his contemplative studies with his spiritual teacher, Andrew wanted to make a contribution to a more harmonious planet by helping children learn to become good citizens of the world. Andrew's vision of a new kind of educational program took root, one that gives equal weight to physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development. Out of his vision emerged several fundamental principles. It is upon the following core principles that our unique curriculum was established, and that Oneness-Family School was created.



\*The **World** is one family. All nations and all religions have something unique and significant to contribute to the world.

\***Education** is the vehicle to enhance humanity's evolution toward greater harmony and partnership on earth.

\*The **School** is a place of learning not just for students, but also for parents and teachers as well. All members of the community learn, work and play together cooperatively.

\*The **Curriculum** is based on self-transcendence – the idea of continual improvement and personal growth – not on competition with others.

\*The **Child** is at the heart of the school's program. We nurture the students' dreams and empower them to find their life's purpose.

## PHILOSOPHY

The name "Oneness-Family" refers to the idea that all human beings, regardless of their differences, belong to one humanity. Oneness-Family School celebrates the wonderful, rich diversity of that humanity. At the heart of the school's approach is a strong focus on international studies, including foreign languages, so that our students can gain the multicultural understanding necessary to be tolerant and effective leaders in today's global society.

Oneness-Family School provides an educational environment that emphasizes relevant, thought-provoking academics; dynamic, multi-faceted creative arts; and social responsibility. The results are enthusiastic learning, respect for life, and an appreciation of each student's unfolding spirit. At Oneness-Family School, we believe every student deserves to be acknowledged as a unique, growing individual. We strive to treat every student with dignity and to provide an atmosphere where everyone can feel successful. We believe this is the best way to equip them to realize their natural potential and become conscientious members of the world community.

Finally, we believe that a school can and should be like the growing child, open to change and evolution. At Oneness-Family School, we are committed to continually improving our program, expanding our knowledge, and incorporating the best new ideas into our classrooms so that we can provide the best possible holistic learning opportunities for all of our students.

# CURRICULUM



Our unique curriculum is divided into 3 parts: Academy; Self-Discovery; and Manifestation.

## Academy: Exploring the World

In Academy, we strive to make learning fun and meaningful so that students will become self-motivated learners. They study the traditional academic subjects through hands-on materials, frequent field trips, classroom presentations, and specialist instructors. While giving consideration to the students' individual learning styles and particular interests, teachers impart an understanding of how the different subjects are related to each other and applied in the real world. In a competition-free, colorful arena, each student is challenged to reach his or her own potential.

## Self-Discovery: Learning About Ourselves

Self-Discovery helps students move toward greater awareness and mastery of themselves. Through the arts, athletics, lively discussions, and self-reflection they develop their imagination and individuality. Participation in these activities strengthens their self-esteem, cooperation skills, and creative courage. Self-Discovery opens their conscious minds to new experiences and to their own potential.

## Manifestation: The Fruits of Learning

Manifestation is the outward expression of the students' work in Academy and Self-Discovery. Performances, field projects, classroom displays, school fairs, and outreach programs are some of the many ways they use their skills, energy, and insights. The students gain a sense of competence and achievement, and learn to see themselves as valuable contributors to the community. School-wide festivals such as United Nations Day and the Winter Solstice Festival of Lights honor the different cultures and religions. In the spring, the children bring forth their appreciation of the earth at Earth Day and their studies of the physical world at the Science Fair.

## And More...

Communications lessons, fitness, yoga, meditation, nature visits, and out-of-classroom activities play an important role at Oneness-Family School. Frequent field trips make use of the abundant natural and cultural resources of the Washington D.C. area. We are committed to making time for physical fitness and relaxation, as essential parts of all-around well-being. Weather permitting, faculty and students are outdoors every day, taking part in non-competitive sports and athletic games or just having fun. All of the classes give daily time to centering activities such as silent reflection. (*See Director's Message on pg. 8*)

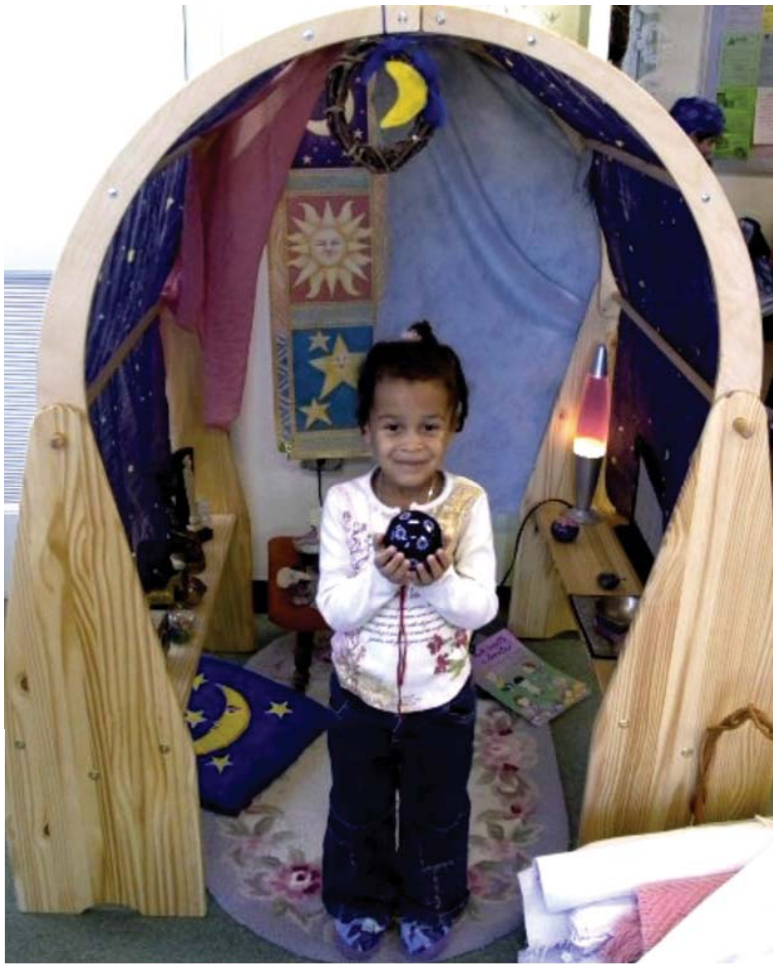


The creative arts are also integral to our approach. Students are exposed to a wide variety of creative experiences and they are encouraged to display, publish, and perform their work. Each year students present their work in a variety of media and settings, including our annual spring musical featuring the students in grades 4-8.

Interactions between the different age levels at the school are also an important aspect of our program. Older students learn through teaching and assisting younger children at work and in their play. The younger students benefit in their learning and in their self-esteem from the attentions of the older students.

# SPECIAL PROGRAMS

## Virtues & Values Program



Virtues & Values, like other aspects of the Self-Discovery curriculum, are integrated into the school day and are not always a separate area of focus; indeed, many of the most powerful values lessons are to be found throughout the day -- in the midst of class lessons, projects, lunch, or recess. However, there are also times devoted to the discussion, exploration, and implementation of virtues and values. One of the most important times for this work is during each class's morning meeting. Students often bring up current events that involve ethical dilemmas. Discussion of these events can be the jumping-off points for deep philosophical discussions. Students have a chance to state their opinions, check in with peers and adults about their beliefs, hear another side of an argument to consider, and problem-solve with their community. School or class events also provide an opportunity to discuss the classroom community values, guidelines, and consequences. It is the balance between abstract discussion and real-life implementation that gives students at Oneness-Family School a strong foundation for their own values, and an understanding of the virtues toward which they can aspire.

## Peace & Conflict Resolution Program

Another important area of focus for our students is conflict resolution. Students learn and practice conflict resolution skills and are often asked to help mediate conflicts among students in the younger grades. They often do role-plays to practice appropriate behavior in challenging situations, and discuss the virtues and values displayed in movies, music and literature. Each classroom has a Peace Corner where students may choose to go to center themselves and practice the steps of conflict resolution. When a conflict arises in class, it is the students themselves who, using guidelines they have created, problem-solve and successfully deal with the conflict.



# International Outreach Program

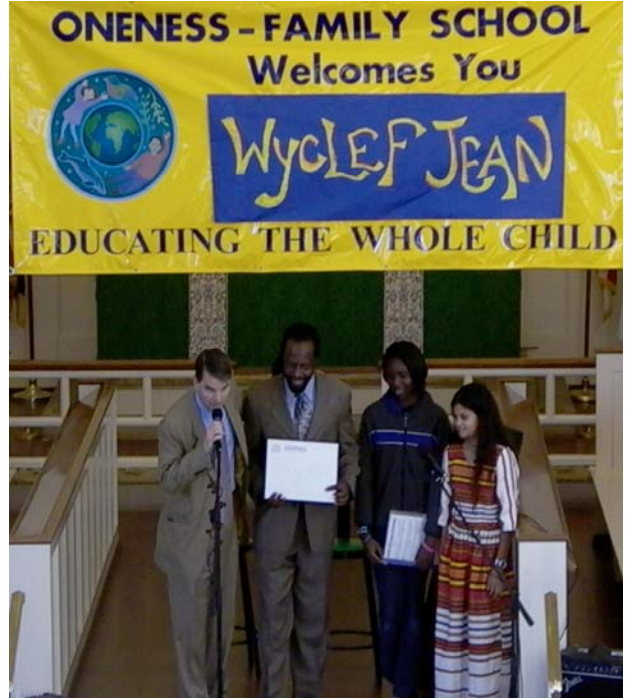


CARRYING THE HARMONY RUN TORCH  
several

The Oneness-Family School has participated in numerous community service projects locally as well as internationally. In recent years, our students have carried the torch for the International Harmony Run, traveled to Washington D.C. to march with the International Peace Caravan and participate in the opening ceremonies for the Native American Museum. In addition, students have supported the UNICEF Polio Project, the Angola Project, the Muhammad Ali Center, the National Parkinson's Center, and schools in El Salvador, Haiti, and Sri Lanka, as well as

local charities.

Most recently, we collected \$800 and 20 boxes of school supplies and "kids kits" to rebuild a school in Haiti that had been decimated by hurricanes. We were lucky enough to have the ambassador to Haiti and his nephew, singer Wyclef Jean, come to our school to personally receive our donations.



WYCLEF JEAN ACCEPTING OUR DONATION



**Oneness-Family School** - Andrew Kutt, Director  
Visit with the Ambassador of Angola, Josefina Pitra Diakite  
and the Chairperson for the Friends of the Children of Angola, Ms. Maria Abrantes

# Peacekeepers: A Global Citizenship Program For Children

In 2000, the school established a global citizenship program for children called Peacekeepers. It focuses on the twenty different areas of skill development below that are necessary for students to become young diplomats. We are working with the 6 Friends organization and secured intranet technology to bring the Peacekeepers program to students across the globe.



1. Silence & Concentration
2. Imagination
3. Learning About Our Feelings
4. Virtues & Values
5. Harmony & Art
6. Pathway of Writing
7. Music
8. Affirmations
9. Fitness
10. Nature
11. Interconnectedness
12. Creativity & Problem Solving
13. Cooperation & Teamwork
14. Non-Violent Conflict Resolution
15. Partnership & Sharing
16. The World In Which We Live
17. Learning From the Past
18. Active Citizenship
19. Leadership Skills
20. Building a Just & Peaceful World

Peacekeepers began as an exploration of what might be possible if students were given more of an opportunity to effect real change. The results have been both inspiring and challenging. The students' enthusiasm is a constant source of hope and strength. At the same time, their conscious concern for the world is an ever-present reminder that we adults cannot shrink from our own responsibility as global citizens. The sky is the limit for what the Peacekeepers can achieve – now as students, and later on as adults. We look forward with anticipation toward the contributions to world progress that they will make, in small as well as perhaps big ways, and are grateful to them for the hope with which they supply us each day.

## Earthkeepers: An Environmental & Ecology Program

In 2004, the school established an environmental awareness and action program for children called Earthkeepers. Designed for students in grades one through three, Earthkeepers nurtures the students' natural love and respect for the Earth. It focuses on teaching students ecology and the interconnectedness and inter-dependence of everything on the planet. Each week the students go outside to explore and interact with nature. The children develop tools for environmental responsibility, ecological understanding, and recycling awareness through team-building activities, field trips, time for reflection, poetry and crafts.



# ACADEMIC TESTING



To ensure the quality of our academic program, assessment is essential. Research done in five Montessori schools in five different states shows a high positive correlation between the number of years in Montessori schools and high scores on standardized achievement tests. However, the use of standardized tests is just one way we evaluate our program and your child. We have found that this type of test is not a fully accurate measure of the strengths and qualities of each student, as these test results do not present a holistic view of the child. As such, we do not teach to the standardized test content, but follow our state approved Montessori curriculum that incorporates all of the general knowledge information covered in the standardized tests, based on a 3-year curriculum cycle. Other tools of assessment on which we rely include: teacher observations of student classwork, student demonstrations of mastery through presentations and projects, ongoing evaluation of students' social-emotional development, as well as in-class quizzes and tests.

That being said, in the spring, we administer the Stanford Achievement Test to our students in grades 3-8. While individual results vary from year to year, all of the classes consistently score well above the national mean in all subject areas, receiving above average stanines (7, 8, and 9). Those students in the last year of their cycle (3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade) average in the 95%. Of particular note, all of the students score above the 85% in Listening & Thinking Skills in all of the academic areas tested. At Oneness, while we do not teach to the tests, we do teach students to be conscientious, open-minded thinkers.

## WHERE OUR GRADUATES GO FROM HERE

The Barrie School  
The Bullis School  
Edmund Burke School  
The Field School  
Georgetown  
Preparatory School  
The Holton-Arms  
School  
Landon School for Boys  
Lowell School  
Lycee Rochambeau  
(The French  
International School)



Maret School  
The McLean School of  
Maryland  
The Newport School  
The Nora School  
Sandy Spring Friends School  
Sidwell Friends School  
Stone Ridge School of the  
Sacred Heart  
Thornton Friends School  
Washington Waldorf School

## THE LIFE OF OUR SCHOOL

Oneness-Family School is a growing community of children, families, teachers, and friends, committed to excellence in education. We have a strong family-school partnership that strives to build positive and productive relationships among all the stakeholders in our school – students, parents, teachers, and administrators. We value healthy communication between family and school and we encourage our families to be active participants in our wide variety of school activities. Parents are warmly invited to visit and experience our unique environment.

Oneness-Family School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, or national origin in admissions or employment. We welcome students of all races, creeds, nationalities and sexual orientations from 3-15 years of age.

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE: Why We Emphasize Self-Reflection



Childhood and pre-adolescence can be a time of great disillusionment, as the world becomes more and more complex and confusing, with competing messages in the media and in students' lives. But it can also be a time of



great energy and hope, if students can feel empowered by their beliefs, their understanding of themselves, and the skills they develop to create the kind of world they want to live in as adults.

In the early years, children are gradually awakening to their deeper selves, their gifts, their potentials and the outer world. As they expand their awareness, they begin to understand the needs of others, the sacredness of life, and the ability to embrace a community consciousness.

At Oneness, circle time, the peace corner, and the sacred items are vehicles that naturally transport the students toward a place of self-reflection. During circle time, the whole class spends a moment each day "making silence". Circle time is also a place where students are encouraged to form and ask questions, to develop opinions, and to seek the opinions of others. The Peace Corner is a special space where the child can go to contemplate or appreciate a unique object related to a current or seasonal theme. The sacred items are special objects used in ceremonies and the honoring of the season. The children can touch and explore these objects, which inspire awe and help set a tone for the classroom. These tools help the child discover the power of silence, connect with a natural sense of wonder, and provide a respite from the clamor of the bustling, modern world.



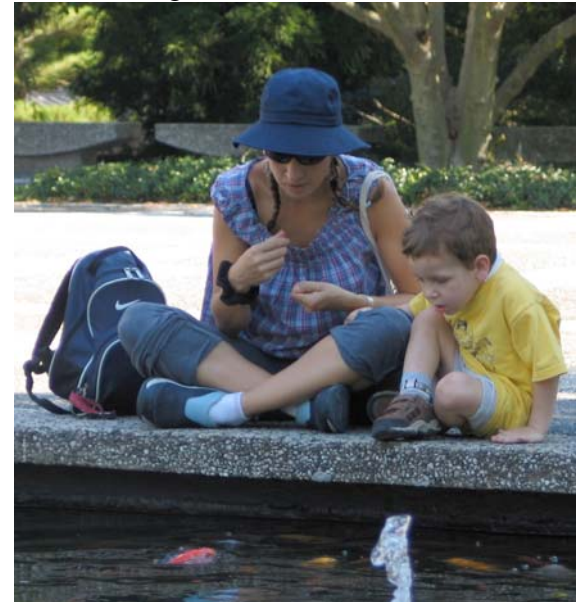
As students grow, they are also transitioning into a new understanding of reality. They are much more conscious of others and the larger community. Their creativity is in full flower, and this helps them to learn about their feelings and ideas in more depth. They are often full of questions as they seek to understand the truths about life, becoming philosophers and grappling with ethical and social dilemmas. They are very concerned with what is "fair" and just. They are able to understand and explore value systems, their own and those of others. At the same time, their abstract thinking has more fully matured, allowing them to imagine what it would be like to be someone else and to develop empathy.



Children learn better when they feel good about themselves. Therefore, the curriculum includes a program that teaches self-esteem to children through cognitive restructuring and positive thinking skills. This allows the child to learn skills that help them know they are o.k. in spite of difficult things that happen, and empower them to be in control of their own feelings, thinking, and decision-making.

By the time the students reach pre-adolescence, morning circle

time takes on new and deeper meaning for them. They are able to use the time to explore and express their maturing belief systems and personal inner hearts. They may explore how they use the sacred space of morning circle, designing centerpieces with candles or special items and experiment with different ways to ring the chimes or bowls to get the most meaningful sounds to accompany their personal reflection time. As a class, the students discuss the basics of meditation, how it is used around the world, and its known benefits as stress management and concentration tools. The students have opportunities to try a variety of non-religious meditation techniques. During the school day, students further develop their skills in self reflection by writing responses to guided questions in their journals. Journal questions give the students time to reflect on their own connections to current curriculum themes and to the units being studied.



Other experiences in and out of the classroom give students structured time to continue becoming more aware of their feelings, beliefs, and inner balance. Students often create art to inspire others or art objects to go on the sacred shelf in the Peace Corner. The class often chooses to listen to inspiring music to help them achieve their goals.

Nature walks or journaling time outside also help

students discover more about how they fit in the world, and the interconnectedness of all things. At Oneness-Family School, these events are not separate from the academic curriculum, but serve to support and connect the learner to the learning, the student to his or her world.



# SCHOOL CALENDAR 2008-2009

Wed., Sept 3	First Day of School
Sat., Sept 6	New Parent Brunch 10AM
Sat., Sept 13	Annual Back to School Pot-Luck Picnic 11-2pm Norwood Park
Thurs., Sept 18	<b>All School Partnership Meeting 7PM</b>
Tues., Sept 30	NO SCHOOL Rosh Hashanah
Oct. (TBA)	Jazz Night
Tues, Oct 14	<b>All School Partnership Event 6:30-9 PM</b>
Fri., Oct 17	UNITED NATIONS DAY FESTIVAL 10AM (No School-Little Stars)
Mon., Oct 20	NO SCHOOL – TEACHER INSERVICE
Tues., Nov 4	NOON DISMISSAL – TEACHER INSERVICE
Wed, Nov 5	MS Family Conferences Cycle 1 – Noon Dismissal for MS only
Tues., Nov 11	NO SCHOOL for Pre-K - 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade (Parent/Teacher Conferences) Little Stars - Parent/Teacher Conferences 1 – 4PM
Fri, Nov 21	Extended Family Day (grandparents and family friends visit) 9AM
Wed. Nov 26	NOON DISMISSAL – Thanksgiving Break
Thurs. & Fri. Nov 27-28	NO SCHOOL – Thanksgiving Break
Fri. Dec. 12	FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS 7PM and Holiday Bazaar (before & after program)
Mon., Dec 22–Fri., Jan 2	WINTER BREAK
Mon., Jan 5	School Resumes
Mon., Jan 19	NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Mon., Jan 26	NOON DISMISSAL – TEACHER INSERVICE
Fri., Feb 13	Family Dance 7-9PM
Mon, Feb 16	NO SCHOOL – President’s Day
Fri., March 6	SCIENCE FAIR 9:30 AM
Mon., March 30	NO SCHOOL – TEACHER INSERVICE
Mon., April 6–April 13	SPRING BREAK
Tues, April 14	School Resumes
Fri., April 17	Earth Day 9AM
April (TBA)	DRAMA PRODUCTION
Sat., May 9	<b>Special Community Event</b>
Fri., May 15	Family Day for Little Stars (2 yr olds)
Sat., May 16	“A Walk for Water”
Fri., May 22	SPRING TEA FOR CPG and NO SCHOOL for Little Stars Parent Teacher Conferences for Peace Arbor Only (School in Session)
Mon. May 25	NO SCHOOL Memorial Day
Tues., May 26 – May 29	Silly Week for CPG
Mon. June 1	Field Day
Fri., June 5	NOON DISMISSAL and LAST DAY; No School for Little Stars GRADUATION 10AM & ART SHOW and FAIR 12 – 3PM

# Oneness-Family School

## THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY

### VISION

Our vision is to foster a new generation of leaders who become meaningful contributors to the society of the 21st century by expanding their consciousness, realizing their potential, and coming to feel and understand that the world is one family.

### MISSION

Our mission is to provide a learning environment in which personal growth is valued as much as academic excellence.

Supporting the foundation of our curriculum are five essential pillars:

#### Skills

Provide students with the academic and life skills they will need to successfully live, work, and achieve their goals.

#### Knowledge

Guide them toward a deeper knowledge of the world, and of themselves—their strengths, interests, values, feelings, and aspirations.

#### Self-Expression

Empower them in the realistic, creative, and harmonious expression of their own visions.

#### Understanding

Instill in them a broad understanding of, and respect for, the world and its diverse cultures.

#### Appreciation

Nurture their appreciation for life itself, and for all living things.



SERVING STUDENTS AGE THREE THROUGH GRADE EIGHT

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