

NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

Woodland Charter School's 180 students had a busy fall

BY CHRIS CARMIENCKE

Woodland Charter School in Murphy has had a bright, active, and positive start to the school year! We have more than 180 students in first through eighth grades, as well as 24 staff members and many parent volunteers who have created an exciting learning community that takes part in a Waldorf-inspired curriculum.

We are nearly at full capacity but do have a few openings in first, second, third, sixth, and eighth grades. We continue to provide an in-person, full-time charter school experience that is different from a traditional school experience through an integration of art, music, and developmentally appropriate thematic learning in a lovely outdoor and indoor environment. We are proud of the care and kindness we have in meeting the

needs of families in Josephine and Jackson counties who are looking for something different. We appreciate the continued support of Three Rivers School District for sponsoring us.

The first major event this fall was the lovely Sunflower Festival on the first day of school. This was when we introduced the students in our first-grade class, each of whom was greeted by an eighth-grade student, on one knee, presenting that new student with a colorful sunflower. The faculty sang for the students, and, in Woodland tradition, the story of the new class was shared and the first-grade teacher "named" the class. This year Tanyia Hall, our first-grade teacher, shared a tale and named the first-grade class the Evergreen Class!

At the end of September, Woodland hosted the annual Festival of Courage. We transformed the school into festival grounds by staking colorful flags into the earth, hanging banners from the classrooms, and setting up the field and campus for various activities to test the courage of our students. We began the day with an assembly where students

performed for the school. We heard songs, poems, and music, and we received baskets of iris bulbs from the first grade! There were many jovial "buddy class" activities where students in first and fifth grades, second and sixth, third and seventh, and fourth and eighth teamed up to provide a service to the school.

In early October, our parent volunteers put on the Harvest Faire after a several-year hiatus. The Harvest Faire is an after-school event for the entire school community, a fair of arts and crafts, food, desserts, and drinks prepared and sold by the middle school students, and the creation of a harvest mandala. This year the community shared a bountiful harvest of flowers, veggies, fruits, herbs, and mushrooms in a large mandala.

We have also taken several exciting field trips with our students, including day trips to Sanctuary One, Raptor Creek Farm, Pheasant Fields Farm, Rogue Rock Gym, and Provolt Recreation Site. In addition, our fifth-grade Oak Class went on a three-day, two-night trip to Redwood National Park just south of Crescent City. Students explored the habitats and biodiversity of the national park and enjoyed the hands-on activities and the amazing education provided by park rangers.

Woodland took part in three other great events this fall. First was an in-school celebration of Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) where the seventh-grade Dragonfly Class created an *ofrenda* (non-religious altar) to honor those who have passed away. Students in all the grades were able to add to this altar with pictures of loved ones, poems, stories, and other student-created mementos.

Second, we had our second annual jog-a-thon fundraiser, where students were able to go to the Hidden Valley High School track to run as many laps as they could in the predetermined amount of time.

Last, we had a Lantern Walk, where students in the younger grades created lanterns and used them to take part in a short walk just after dusk. The purpose of this event was to remind us that we all hold a light within ourselves and that we need to give this light to humanity through acts of service.

If you are interested in knowing more about Woodland Charter School, or are interested in enrolling, visit our website at woodlandcharterschool.org, or send us an email at office@woodlandcharterschool.org.

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A view of the Woodland School garden. Photo: Chris Carmiencke.



The Blue Heron Class created a sukkah (a temporary structure with a roof of leafy boughs, bamboo sticks, etc., built by Jews for Sukkot to commemorate the tabernacles of the Exodus) as part of the third-grade curriculum. Photo: Chris Carmiencke.



Krishna Kol Aam and Robert Hall share some "buddy class" time planting iris bulbs. Photo: Chris Carmiencke.

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