



# NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2009

*"Committed to academic excellence and the education of the whole child"*

## OUR MISSION FOR EVERY CHILD

The mission of Odyssey Charter School is to work in partnership with the family and community, with the aim of helping each child reach their full potential in all areas of life.

We seek to educate the whole child with the understanding that each person much achieve a balance of intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and social skills as a foundation for life.

## CALENDAR

- ▶ **Mon, Aug 28 - Fri, Sept 4**—  
Book Fair  
(see our website for details)
- ▶ **Thurs, Sept 10**—  
PTO Meeting, 6:00 p.m.  
(2nd grade will be doing a special program on the Constitution prior to the meeting.)
- ▶ **Fri, Sept 11**—  
Dress Down Day
- ▶ **Thurs, Sept 24**—  
Board Meeting, 4:00 p.m.



## HOT OFF THE PRESS: ODYSSEY CHARTER SCHOOL PARTNERS WITH ACADEMICA



Bob Williams, President of the Odyssey Charter School Board announced today that the school would be working with Academica, the state's leading charter school service provider, to expand its educational reach beyond the local community.

As part of the partnership, Odyssey founder and executive director Constance Ortiz will lead the Academica Central Florida office as its executive director. Working with Academica founder Fernando Zulueta, Ms. Ortiz and Academica Central Florida aim to develop innovative educational programs throughout Florida using their successful school models as guides.

"I am thrilled to join forces with Academica," says Constance Ortiz. "They have a proven track record in education and I'm looking forward to bringing the innovations we have developed at Odyssey to the larger educational community."

"Our goal is to revitalize education options," explains Academica President, Fernando Zulueta. "We want to create high quality, technology-rich schools that also embrace the green and healthy initiative developed and successfully implemented at Odyssey."

The idea of replicating successful models is not new to Academica -- the company has helped create and grow some of the highest-performing public charter schools in the state and country. For example,

Mater Academy located in a predominantly working-class Hispanic community, has continually earned high marks on the state standardized exam, exceeded local, state and national graduation rates and has been ranked among the country's best public high school by both Newsweek Magazine (2007) and US News & World Report (2008, 2007). In May 2009, Somerset Academy, a group of seventeen public charter schools, became the first network of charter schools to be awarded district accreditation as a Quality School System through Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and AdvancED.

"My office will remain at Odyssey and I will be performing some of the same duties, not only for Odyssey but for other Academica Central Florida schools," says Ms. Constance. "The board has asked that I continue to work closely with Odyssey through the SACs accreditation process to capture the essential ingredients that make Odyssey the "green" and healthy school that it is. I am truly excited at all of the new plans being implemented as we speak!"

"Please know that it has been my greatest honor serving your children, and I will continue to do so in my new capacity. I am leaving you in good hands with the excellent leadership of Dr. Revis and Odyssey's newest sidekick, Dr. Orris.

Love you all, Ms. Constance"

## PRINCIPAL'S CORNER



Dear Odyssey Family,

I thank you for all you have done to make our school year start so smoothly. You have been great during this strange time of illnesses. Please keep in mind that our school and buses are disinfected daily-period. We are doing the utmost to communicate with you, our children and each other and will be just fine when this blows over. Remember, use the CDC and FLDOH websites for scientifically based information.

I hope you have had time to chat with your family's teacher. We have an incredibly strong staff; I am personally proud of them and look for great things for you all. Our holistic way is stronger than ever and we promise to you our commitment that when times are good or bad, we will stand by you and expect the same from you.

Please keep in touch via our email and voice mail system, our Google listserv, our homework hotline, our class websites, our notes home, our newsletters and so forth.

Peace and Love,  
Dr. Revis

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## NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The multiple, first place award winning Odyssey Charter School Chapter of National Junior Honor Society is pleased to announce that the new member selection process will begin at the end of the first nine week grading period. At this time, all academic records for 7th and 8th grade students will be reviewed for possible initial consideration.

In order to be eligible for invitation into the society, students must have an academic record of no "C"s, at least one "A" and an overall grade point average of 3.6. In addition, the student must have displayed characteristics of outstanding leadership, integrity, morals and responsibility to community and self. It is possible for a student to have outstanding grades, yet not receive an invitation if they have behavioral referrals or conduct concerns.

Once identified, the student will receive an official letter as well as a criteria packet. The packet must be completed and returned to the NJHS advisors, Mrs. Sheppard or Mrs. Ferris. All materials will then be submitted to the Executive Committee for final review, consideration and approval vote.

Please understand that it is possible for a student to have outstanding grades, yet not receive an invitation if they have behavioral referrals or conduct concerns. Questions and concerns should be directed to Mrs. Sheppard at 733-0442.

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## BUS TRANSPORTATION

We have spaces available for part of NW area and the NE area. Leave a message with your address and number, and Ms. Ramos will call back with availability.

Also, if the parents received a ESOL letter from Ms. Ramos, please sign and return it asap.

## LETTER FROM OUR VICE-PRINCIPAL, DR. ORRIS

Hello to our Odyssey Family. The school year has started magnificently. We appreciate everyone's support in our new car loop procedures. Our children are safe and the flow seems to be moving as smoothly as possible.

We are embarking upon a new form of computer based assessment for our 3rd through 8th grade students. The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) will allow us to gather baseline data of our students. The test accurately reflects the instructional level of each student and measures growth over time. It is aligned with FLDOE standards and will give our students an opportunity to practice the FCAT multiple times prior to actually taking the FCAT. We will gain valuable information about how our students learn over time. This is information that we will gladly share with you during future conferences.

Although new to Odyssey, I am no stranger to education. My experiences as a head of school for over a decade have helped me greatly in my new position as your assistant principal. I am continually impressed with the strong professional attitude of our talented faculty and the hardworking efforts of our support staff. Your children are getting the very best care and educational opportunity possible. Each day, I see our students are working diligently. Our healthy environment clearly promotes good work and best efforts. We are working towards excellence in all we do!

Thank you for your support. I am sure that we can count on it throughout this school year. It really does make a difference in your child's life.

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## ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM



Your school has a wonderful room that houses information on lots of topics, with something special for everyone. That room is the library media center. In it you will find what our school board recognizes as "the center of the educational program of the school. It provides materials and services that meet academic, technical, personal and social needs of the school community."

In meeting these needs, the media selection policy makes available a wide range of materials on varying levels of difficulty, with something to appeal to everyone. Many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups are represented in the school library, and specific criteria are used in considering items to be included. Because libraries are forums for information and ideas, books are provided for the interest and enlightenment of all students and teachers.

Many of these books are on various reading program lists, such as Sunshine State Young Readers' Awards, Literature Circles, and The Classics and our Read Aloud Program. Some of these lists also include recommended reading levels. These reading levels are determined by companies that are selling the book product, and they do not necessarily reflect the appropriate chronological age, developmental age, maturity level, or family values for all students. As with all other aspects of a student's education, parents are encouraged to be involved in a student's book selections. The books in the media center, whether part of a specific reading program or not, are available for the review of all patrons, but are specifically recommended for none.

Since reading is vital to success in our world, and since we know that the best readers are those who have parents that are involved in their education, we encourage parents to read and review the books your student selects. Come in and visit. Browse the collection of your school media center. You may find just the right book to share with your child.

Odyssey's Media Specialist and loving it!  
Linda Baker

## BUSINESS PARTNERS



Odyssey would like to thank our business partners for recent donations of food and gift items to our school.

- Papa John's Pizza, Bayside Lakes
- Publix Supermarket
- Winn Dixie
- Major's Golf Course

**Another way to support our school:** During your United Way Campaign at work, you can designate Odyssey Charter School for your donation. Funds will then be sent for our school. We are a not for profit agency and qualify to receive these donations.

## FIRST GRADE WELCOMES MUSICAL GUEST



Last Thursday, our first grade students enjoyed the music of classically trained pianist, Andrew Keane. Andrew, a senior at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, shared his story of how he started piano lessons in the first grade and continued through his first years in college. While he says he did not always like to practice, he enjoyed the recitals and performing for others. Today, Andrew continues to play and learn new material for his own enjoyment. He encouraged our students to take the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument because it is fun and teaches many skills that can be used in other areas of life. Andrew then entertained our students with several pieces by Beethoven, Chopin, and Rachmaninoff. The children asked many questions and shared their own musical stories. Thank you Andrew, for sharing your love of music with us.

## CLEANING OUT YOUR TOY CHESTS?

We are doing some special reading and writing projects this year and could use some: Potato Heads and/or accessories, loose keys, leap pad/Quantum lead pad books and cartridges.

If you have any you are getting rid of, please send them to Ms. Love in room 316. We will be sure to put them to good use. Thanks.

## REMINDERS FROM THE OFFICE

New tardy policy- Five unexcused tardies within a semester is considered one unexcused absence. Board absence policy states that nine unexcused absences per semester can lead to retention in the current grade. OCB Board approved 6/18/09.

Teachers request that if a parent is at school to volunteer or any other business please do not pop in to the classroom to see their child. It is disruptive.

It is against the school food policy to bring in other items such as fast food, pizza, soda or energy drinks.

## MONTESSORI VILLAGE PRESCHOOL NEWS

Our school year is off to a great start. We have introduced the Voluntary Pre Kindergarten (VPK) this school year. The program provides 3 hours of free Pre-K to children who turn 4 on our before September 1st. We have a total of 10 children enrolled in the program this year.

The preschool project for the this month will be to set up their vegetable and butterfly garden. If you have a heart for volunteering, please speak with the Preschool Director, Ms. Sutton. We would love to have volunteers help the children plant and tend their garden.

## ENRICHMENT NEWS

Our enrichment program which serves children in the before and aftercare programs is completing their first large scale project. The children are studying the environment of the gopher tortoise. The project began with a walk through our preserve behind the third wing of the school and a visit to the site of our gopher tortoise garden. Student's brain stormed ideas and drew pictures depicting their ideal garden. The next phase was research. As students researched the gopher tortoise, they reproduced their findings using recycled materials. As we have progressed through this phase of the project, the students have set up a mural in the cafeteria.

The next phase of the project will be to learn the science of gardening. Ms. Rubado will present several gardening lessons to the children. The enrichment program has partnered with Ms. Breinlinger's class to maintain and plant the garden. The final stage will be to capture our study in a report. This will be presented at our annual "Lights on Afterschool" program in October.

Not only have the enrichment children been participating in the large scale projects, they have also been actively doing science projects, outdoor water play activities, arts and crafts and indoor games. Our younger children have a special pull out session each day from 3:00 until 4:00. During this time they do music and movement, arts and crafts and free play. Please feel free to stop by the cafeteria one afternoon and view the turtle mural or ask questions about our program.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities are going to be posted on the Odyssey Charter School website. Many of our activities will be offered beginning in September or October. However, some activities will start later in the school year. Please check the website often to see what new activities we have added.

## THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE NEWS

We are off to a great start! The students are quickly catching on our daily routine and classroom procedures. We are all excited about the coming year!

Please be sure to visit the Book Fair--August 31st to September 4th. We are looking forward to meeting you at Open House on September 2nd at 6:00. Fourth Graders are preparing for their Wax Museum presentations on October 30th and are planning their annual field trip to the Lagoon in April. Third graders are planning a trip to the King Center to see Charlotte's Web. The date will be announced later. Third graders are also planning for a visit from a Native American story teller this year.

Plans for the second wing garden are under way but we need a lot of support to get it off the ground. (ha! ha! pun intended)

## RETHINKING SCHOOL LUNCH

Dear families, Please read Odyssey's wellness policy located on the school's website under the healthy cafe.

<http://www.odysseycharterschool.com/lunch.html>

Our school has joined The Center for Ecological Literacy's "Rethinking School Lunch" and uses a systems approach to address the crisis in childhood obesity, provides nutritional education, and teaches ecological knowledge to our students.



By becoming familiar with the board adopted policy, you can partner with the school and help your child become and stay healthy.

The wellness policy includes many ideas to promote a healthy school environment including ideas for healthy celebrations, healthy fund raisers, and alternatives to food as reward.

Bon appetit!

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## WELLNESS PROGRAM

You're Invited!

Odyssey's Wise Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles WELLNESS Program invites Parents, Students and Teachers to join the Wellness Committee! The purpose of our Wellness Program is to promote, protect and enhance the health and learning potential of students and staff. For more information on the goals of this program, please review the Wellness Policy on our Website (click the link on the Healthy Café page) or read the copy in our front office. Volunteers are always welcome (and needed!) to help with activities such as farm-to-school produce harvests and grant writing. To join the committee, send your contact information and thoughts to Jane Martin at [martinj@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:martinj@odysseycharterschool.com) or [drjanemartin@bellsouth.net](mailto:drjanemartin@bellsouth.net). Meeting dates and times TBA.

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## COUNSELOR CORNER

Dear Parents,

At Odyssey Charter School we are all involved in helping our children grow by working together to insure that their personal and educational needs are met. As the school counselor, I am involved with the children and can assist you or your family in a variety of ways.

These services may include coordination of referrals to community agencies, working with children in the classroom setting, consulting with parents, teachers and the community or assisting parents individually to understand child growth and behavior. In addition, I serve as the ESE and Title 1 Coordinator where I perform a variety of functions which impact the school community. Please call me if you would like to know more about the programs and services we offer!

Sincerely,  
Janine Frahm M.A. LMHC  
Guidance and ESE Coordinator

## CARLOOP REMINDERS

Thank you very much for your patience and cooperation in the car loop during both arrival and dismissal. There are a few reminders that we have for you that may help the car loop to run even more safely and effectively.

### Both Arrival and Dismissal Reminders:

- Please refrain from talking on your cell phones while in the car loop.
- The speed limit is 5 MPH. There should be NO reason to exceed that speed!
- Remember to use your turn signals when merging out of the left lane. The people behind and in front of you need to know if you are planning to merge!
- Students should only get in or out of the vehicle using the passenger side doors.

### Arrival Reminders:

- Before you pull into the parking lot remind your children to gather their belongings so that when the vehicle is stopped they can get out as quickly as possible.
- Once your vehicle is unloaded please exit the car loop using the left lane so that we may clear out the right lane for the next set of cars. (Don't forget to use your turn signals!)
- Children must stay in the vehicle until either a teacher or Safety Patrol opens the door.

### Dismissal Reminders:

- Be sure that the names AND grades of your children are CLEARLY written in LARGE BLACK letters on your rear view mirror tag.
- If you need a new tag please see the front office.
- Once your vehicle is loaded please exit the car loop using the left lane so that we may clear out the right lane for the next set of cars. (Don't forget to use your turn signals!)
- Please be aware that we have varying dismissal times throughout the grade levels. If your children span throughout the grades please be aware that you should adhere to the time of your oldest child's dismissal.

### Walk-up Dismissal Reminders:

- Please remember to bring the tag with your child's name so that the person at the door knows who to call for.
- Please form a line going one behind the other down the side walk. We must do this due to fire codes and organization.

Thank you again for all of your patience and cooperation as we all work together to make our car loop safe and effective!

KEEP UP TO SPEED AND  
CHECK OUR SCHOOL  
WEBSITE WEEKLY!

[www.odysseycharterschool.com](http://www.odysseycharterschool.com)



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