A NOTE ON THE KRISHNAMURTI'S SCHOOL, “OAK GROVE”, OJAI

OAK GROVE SCHOOL was founded in 1975 by J. Krishnamurti, focuses on academically strong, inquiry-based learning in a noncompetitive environment, respect for the nature and an understanding of one’s self and the global community.

Its unique feature is the winding, oak-shaded paths that meander through the campus, to the intimate, wooden buildings designed to harmonize with the natural landscape it is a visual oasis, a peaceful, yet dynamic environment rich with opportunities for traditional and non-traditional learning. Organic gardens, a student-built greenhouse, a studio art building with a darkroom, ceramics and painting studios and weaving looms, two libraries, a recording studio, athletic fields, tennis courts, playgrounds and a central Pavilion and outdoor stage dot the 150-acre campus. Inside the Main House, with its brick fireplace, casual gathering area and home-like kitchen, organic vegetarian meals are lovingly prepared using fresh produce from the student garden.

The original enrollment was three young students, taught by two staff. As the younger students and enrollment grew, upper grades were added, resulting in the construction of the elementary school complex in 1977, and culminating in the addition of the high school and boarding facility in 1984. Today, nearly 200 students and 40 staff members learn together in an atmosphere nourished by mutual respect.

School offers a small, intimate, highly personalized day- and boarding-program that blends college preparatory academics with deep exploration of life’s issues. The curriculum meets or exceeds the University of California accreditation standards with the additional benefit of providing the context and skills for exploring the whole of life. Graduates go on to college having developed a global
perspective, sensitivity toward the environment and human relations, and exceptional critical thinking skills.

The 13,000-square-foot high school is a separate complex of classrooms, laboratories and a student resource center situated in tranquil surroundings, with an average of 13 students per class.

Oak Grove’s high school teaching staff-maximize in-class learning opportunities in the sciences, foreign language, mathematics and language arts through a rigorous, engaging college-preparatory program. Teachers support open minded and spirited discussion, encourage inquiry, and strive to develop in each student a self-reflective capacity that leads to inner honesty, independence and integrity. High school classes meet from 8 am to 4 pm, with noon dismissal on Wednesdays.

Oak Grove's student to faculty ratio is 5:1, with an average class size of 14. The school is fully accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). It offers space to grow, guidance to develop intellectually and creatively, and support to help students understand themselves and the world around them. It prepares its students for college, and for life.

Criteria for admissions include: student interest and character, academic aptitude and achievement, recommendations and interviews. For elementary, junior high and high school applicants, the admissions and school directors, with input from classroom teachers and specialists, make the final decision regarding enrollment.

Oak Grove provides cross-cultural learning opportunities at every grade level. Examples include international songs, movement and stories during preschool, a study of the world’s use of rice in a third grade nutrition unit, and formal high school study of World Religions and Cultures. Oak Grove teachers continually weave a global view into the educational process. Spanish culture and language
are introduced in first grade through music, games and performances, with instruction expanding through high school.

Weekly assemblies bring a culturally and internationally diverse series of musicians, speakers and performers to the campus. And visiting staff from other Krishnamurti schools provide an international perspective. At the high school level, students enhance their global and environmental awareness, provide service to others and add an experiential element to classroom learning through several international travel programs detailed below.

Oak Grove High School has a noted fine-arts program, which provides the tools and guidance for sophisticated artistic expression and understanding. Facilities include a photography lab and darkroom, a weaving and textile workshop, ceramics studio, a music recording studio and professional slide-making equipment for portfolio preparation. Dramatic arts are an integral part of the high school curriculum, with performances taking place throughout the year on the school's outdoor stage under the oaks. A full-year digital filmmaking elective merges art and technology as students learn film production and techniques, film history and appreciation, and collaborate on film projects. Oak Grove's new high school multimedia lab allows students to produce graphic visualizations for assignments across the curriculum, participate in website development and global communications.

Domestic and international travel opportunities have included visits to India, Italy, Mexico, Big Sur and the California desert. These trips enhance the student's global education and bring an essential dimension to classroom learning. Outdoor education trips build community, develop physical skills and provide opportunity for introspection. During high school projects month, small groups of students undertake in-depth explorations that span the subject areas, and prepare their findings in print, film, audio or theater to share with students and staff, as members of the interschool Condor League.
Oak Grove offers opportunities for competitive play in basketball, tennis, volleyball and soccer. It has a highly developed, challenging physical and outdoor education program. Often dovetailing with academic studies, students and faculty enjoy sailing, rock climbing, mountain biking and water sports such as surfing and kayaking. Camping trips at the elementary- through high-school level provide opportunities to learn and practice outdoor skills in a safe and supportive setting, supplementing regular physical education classes. Facilities at Oak Grove include two athletic fields, playgrounds, trails, tennis and basketball courts.

Early childhood and kindergarten programs at Oak Grove reflect their gentle, holistic approach by integrating physical activity into the curriculum. Toddler and preschool playgrounds provide space to move, run, climb, swing and explore. Throughout the natural campus setting, walking trails and grassy fields open possibilities for hikes, cooperative games, dance and movement.

Elementary students begin a formal physical education program two days a week. This expands to four days per week in third grade, when individual and team sports are introduced alongside group games, movement and body awareness. Competition is not the focus at this level, but is seen as a springboard for discussion and introspection. Third- through sixth-graders wrap up the school year with a four-day outdoor adventure. Seventh-grade students travel to Big Sur, and eighth-graders head to Mexico for camping, ocean sports and environmental service projects.

As members of the Condor League, Oak Grove High School students participate in team volleyball, soccer, basketball and tennis. Outdoor education at the high school level is more advanced, often spanning the curriculum and bringing together physical education, academics, community service, and the arts.

High school outdoor education programs include a fall all-school trip designed to bring the high school together in order to orient and integrate new and returning...
students and teachers. Typical destinations are Yosemite National Park, Big Sur or the American River, and include activities such as kayaking, backpacking and nature studies. A spring trip is curriculum-based at grade level and planned by the faculty. Freshmen and sophomore trips have included geological expeditions to Death Valley, Anza Borrego or Yosemite, cultural excursions to Baja, Mexico, and marine research of the coastal islands. Juniors traditionally go on a Southwest trip, which includes exploration of Native American cultures.

Oak school is a place where intelligence is nurtured and encouraged to flower: where students, staff, and parents explore together to learn and to live in relationship with each other and the world. The school does not subscribe to any creed or ideology. Rather, it assists students in the open-minded investigation of enduring human issues.