Values

Teachers’ palettes and the paintings students create

Orchard Friends School
“The object of teaching a child is to enable him to get along without his teacher.”

-Elbert Hubbard

“When your values are clear to you, making decisions becomes easier.”

-Roy Disney

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all”

-Aristotle
Founded in...

1999 by Kiyo Moriuchi and Melanie Stackhouse, Orchard Friends School is dedicated to the education of children who demonstrate language and sensory challenges. The function of our school is two-fold: to educate children with learning differences as well as to educate the surrounding communities about learning differences. During the first few years our school developed and expanded to include children in Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Our Mission

Orchard Friends School is dedicated to the education of children with language-based learning differences.

“Friends School” means that we are rooted in the traditions of Friends education and grounded in the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, stewardship, and mutual respect. Our program and services are non-sectarian.

“Education of children” means that in addition to our primary goal of teaching the children enrolled in our program, we reach out to our families and the larger community to improve understanding and practice in the education of children with language-based learning differences.

“Language-based learning differences” means that we provide a language enriched program and environment to serve children who need special modes of instruction.
Orchard Friends School is a school for children with Auditory Processing and Language-Based Learning Differences. Our student population ranges from kindergarten students through 8th graders. The program meets its mission to educate students with learning differences; while doing so, we operationally define “educating” broadly to include teaching about basic values. Part of our goal is to create an environment in which students learn academically in a positive environment that fosters basic acceptance of and value for each student as an individual.

Orchards Friends School began in 1999. At the beginning of that school year and at the beginning of each subsequent school year, the staff and students join together to have a group discussion. During these discussions the students share with the staff and their peers how they would like to be treated during their tenure at OFS. It is a collaboration during which a list is created. The final list is known to the school community as The Spirit Document. Once The Spirit Document has been created the staff and students sign it. The signature is to formalize our promise to function within its described values.
At OFS, it is our belief that the teachers and staff help to create the learning environment described above; it is also our belief that the students help to make that learning environment dynamic and very real for all of us. We are proud of the basic structure that we provide as a staff. We never cease to be amazed at the wonderful insights and contributions our students make to help us define and expand our fluid learning environment.

The following document includes some of the values that we hold at OFS. It also lists examples from current and previous Spirit Documents. Clearly, there is a melding of our values and the hopes and desires of our students.
Equality

Treating others as you wish to be treated

Students at OFS are given the opportunity to learn in an environment that is free of preconceived ideas about students with learning differences. Everyone is encouraged to show off their talents, and learn from their struggles in a place that is free of ridicule.

“We will work hard to be friendly toward everyone.”
-Spirit Document, 1999

“We all fit in at OFS.”
-Sean, from 8th grade graduating quilt

“We will work toward having an open mind and an open heart with every interaction.”
-Spirit Document, 2002
Compromise

Helping to find the middle ground

All children have misunderstandings. We help each child to see that where the breakdowns in communication occur, and how to come to a peaceful solution.

“We will solve our problems peacefully and make our school a peaceful place to learn.”

-Spirit Document, 2008

“I learned how to stay calm at OFS during stressful times.”

-Alexandra, OFS Student

“We will try to compromise and use our words to solve our problems.”

-Spirit Document, 2004
Self-Reliance
Understanding our own uniqueness

Everyone learns differently, and helping children to understand their individual learning difference is key to our balanced educational program. Students learn why they have trouble in some areas, and what they can do or ask for to help them with that area.

“The teachers will help us with our problems, but we need to learn to ask for help.”

-Spirit Document, 1999

“The teachers at OFS taught me strategies that help me to control my impulsivity and how to be patient.”

-Corey, OFS Student 2001-2004

“The tables are small in the cafeteria. That makes it easier for me to follow conversations.”

-Gabby, excerpt from Annual Giving letter 2008
Creativity

Children learn to open their minds

Whether it’s solving a word problem or putting together a rocket ship, coming up with creative solutions to problems is key to helping our students to become more independent.

“At OFS, I learned how to be myself and live by my own standards.”

-Michael, OFS Student 2001-2003

“Since OFS I have tried Photography. I can put my imagination into a picture.”

-Tim, OFS Student 2002-2004

“I learned a lot in OFS. I learned that I can do anything if I can dream.”

-Matt, 2001-2004
Community

Helping others help themselves

Our students learn that they are always part of something larger than themselves. Whether it’s a class, a school, or a neighborhood, they should be giving something back to contribute to the good of everyone.

“After leaving OFS, I have helped plant a garden in an inner-city school in Philadelphia.”

-Blaise, OFS Student 1999-2002

“We need to work hard to keep our school and community neat, clean and orderly.”

-Spirit Document, 2000

“We understand that Orchard Friends School is our community and all of us share in the responsibility of maintaining the community.”

-Spirit Document, 2002