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Montessori school celebrates 45 years in Shoreview

SHOREVIEW — Oak Hill Montessori, which serves more than 200 students from age 8 weeks to 14, is celebrating its 45-year anniversary in Shoreview this year.

The school started in 1964 as a school for students ages 3 to 6, operating out of a rented space in St. Odilia Catholic Church. It bought its current facility at 4665 Hodgson Road in Shoreview in 1971, expanding and remodeling the building in 1995 and adding capacity for preschoolers through elementary-age students in 1996. Greater capacity for infants and toddlers was added in 1997.

Other improvements included the 2000 pur-



— Submitted photo

First-, second- and third-grade students at Oak Hill celebrated the United Nations' International Day of Peace in September by singing at the same time as 80,000 other students at worldwide Montessori schools.

chase of adjacent property for parking and recreation, and another expan-

sion in 2002 that incorporated two new classrooms, a second upper ele-

mentary classroom, art and music space, a multi-purpose room and the

founding of the school's junior high program. In 2007 it bought land to the north of the school that is now partly utilized as a play area and community garden.

Director of Development and Marketing Paula Carlson said the school has seen enrollment growth this year in spite of the down economy, with more parents seeking all-day classes for toddlers and students ages 3 to 6, and more young students remaining at the school through elementary and junior high.

"Our growth validates the value today's parents are placing on their child's education," she said. "At the same time,

the need for all-day programming indicates that we have more dual-income families. Nationally, most independent private schools are either holding their own in terms of enrollment or experiencing moderate to significant declines."

Accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale, Oak Hill is an independent non-denominational school that follows the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, who taught that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child.

—Michelle Miron