

Head of the Middle School

Leadership Opportunity
July 2012

The Orchard School



Indianapolis, Indiana
619 students
Preschool – 8th grade
www.orchard.org

Carney, Sandoe  Associates

800-225-7986 ▼ www.carneysandoe.com

THE POSITION

The Orchard School in Indianapolis seeks a Head of the Middle School to lead a community of 244 fifth through eighth-grade students and thirty faculty and staff. For nearly 90 years, Orchard has been setting and achieving high standards of excellence as a national leader in independent school education with a strong, progressive tradition of child-centered learning. At the heart of this nurturing school are outstanding teachers, inspired students, committed parents and accomplished alumni/ae, the true driving force in Orchard's continuing success. It is essential that the Middle School engage a Head who will embrace progressive values and embody the spirit and values of the school.

The new Middle School Head will report directly to the Head of School and is a member of the Head's senior administrative team. This person is charged with ensuring the continuing excellence of all aspects of the division's operation in the context of the school's mission statement.

THE SCHOOL

The Orchard School was founded in 1922 by nine mothers who were committed to building an alternative elementary and middle school experience in Indianapolis. The genesis of Orchard came from the writings and philosophy of John Dewey and the progressive school movement of the early 1900s. From the beginning, Orchard students were involved in the learning process and guided to discover knowledge for themselves through experiential learning, extensive time spent outdoors and field trips. Originally housed in an apple, pear and peach orchard, Orchard moved to its current 50-acre campus in the mid-1950s.

The values esteemed since Orchard's founding are as important today as in 1922. Nine decades of accomplished graduates validate Orchard's belief in and commitment to progressive education. Orchard continues to provide a diversity of children a well-



rounded education emphasizing academic, social/emotional and cultural learning – a foundation for success and lifelong love of learning. Orchard's [*Nine School Promises*](#) demonstrate the school's commitment to the education and success of every child. Orchard's progressivism focuses more on pedagogy than curricular content and supports the school's expectation of rigor, accountability, and positive student outcomes.

The Mission

Nine women, seeking an innovative education for children, founded The Orchard School in 1922 as a progressive school. As an independent, non-sectarian school for students in preschool through grade eight, The Orchard School is committed to the following: The Orchard School guides each student to develop the knowledge, confidence and character essential for a life of learning, leadership and positive contribution to society.

The Orchard School philosophy has been consistently followed: when great teachers have the time and interest to truly engage a student's intellectual and creative curiosity students excel. Orchard honors children as the insightful, dignified human beings they are and Orchard graduates grow to be confident, well-rounded and kind. It's an effective strategy and more than 80% of graduates are honor students in high school among other academic, civic, artistic and athletic successes. Active, engaged learning is exciting to students and that enthusiasm maximizes their potential. As Head of School Joseph P. Marshall noted, "Orchard places children at the center of its actions and intentions. Educating the whole child is at the heart of progressive teaching and pedagogy. We see the benefits every day in students in preschool through the eighth grade, in our graduates as high achievers and leaders in high school and college, and in the career choices and lives of our alumni/ae."

The Orchard School

Preschool – 8th grade

Total Enrollment: 619

Middle School enrollment: 244

Faculty: 78

Middle School faculty: 30

Middle School student-teacher ratio: 7.5:1

Faculty w/ Advanced Degrees: 50%

Diversity of students: 29%

Diversity of faculty: 15%

Operating budget: \$12.8 million

Endowment: \$35 million

Annual giving, 2010-2011: \$814,000

Parent giving participation: 78%

Indebtedness: \$6.8 million

Average Middle School Tuition: \$15,527

Financial Aid budget: \$1.75 million PS-8

Students Receiving Aid: 30% PS-8

The Orchard School is accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS) and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

CAMPUS, SETTING AND LOCATION

The Orchard School's wooded 42.9-acre campus includes a central 153,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility for both divisions. Indoor learning spaces include 50 classrooms; a 280-seat Performing Arts theater; a Music Center with practice spaces for band, orchestra, choir and strings; a mirrored dance studio with sprung floor; two art studios; a photography lab; two kilns; a woodshop; three science spaces including one teaching laboratory; a media center with the library and multi-media technology lab; and the unique Dignity Center. Physical education spaces include two gymnasiums and one large motor coordination gym for young children, two climbing walls, a dining hall and a Parents' Center. Every square foot and acre have been designed or left to nature with children's learning in mind. The outdoor learning spaces are used throughout the school day. The large campus, half of which is wooded, includes four playgrounds, a ropes challenge course, log cabin, butterfly garden, research pond, greenhouse and an outdoor classroom.



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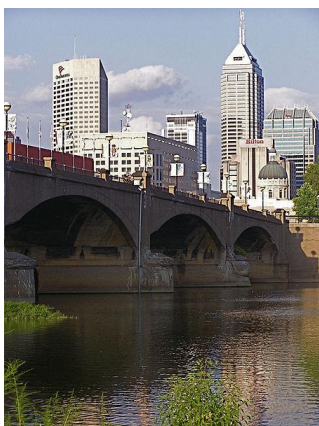
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Orchard School facilities are maintained and renovated as needed. Recent gifts from Ruth Lilly and Lilly Endowment, Inc. led to significant upgrades to the theater lighting, sound systems and furnishings, as well as the addition of the dance studio, the completion of a library renovation and the construction of The Dignity Center space. In 2010, the renovation of the seventh and eighth grade science classrooms was possible with the generous support of the Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation.

Technology is part of students' everyday environment. Pervasive technology that is always available means multimedia equipped classrooms, learning centers, library and labs as well as innovative initiatives such as a one-to-one laptop program for all middle school students.

The 11th largest city in the nation and second largest in the mid-west (to Chicago), Indianapolis has a population of over 830,000 and is the state capital. The Hoosier capital has witnessed tremendous growth and development in the past 20 years and consistently ranks as one of the cleanest and safest cities of the nation. The cost of living and unemployment rates remain well below the national average. A center of bio-sciences research and services, Indianapolis hosts the international headquarters of the pharmaceutical corporation Eli Lilly and Co., the US headquarters of Roche Diagnostics, and the world headquarters of Dow AgroSciences. Indianapolis boasts many fine cultural institutions, including the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the popular



Indianapolis Zoo, and the living history museum Connor Prairie. Indianapolis is also home to the largest children's museum in America and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, site of the Indianapolis 500, Brickyard 400, and Grand Prix motorcycle race. The Indiana Pacers of the National Basketball Association, the Indiana Fever of the Women's National Basketball Association, and the Indianapolis Colts of the National Football League call Indy home. Super Bowl XLVI will be played at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis in February 2012. The city has been referred to as "The Amateur Sports Capital of the World," and is the home of numerous amateur sporting organizations including the NCAA.

"What distinguishes us from other schools is that the child and the child's needs are at the forefront of every decision we make. So, in addition to developing an effective curriculum, teachers focus on students as individuals. How is this particular student going to learn the thinking skills associated with science, mathematics, and technology? How is he going to learn to manipulate and negotiate the complexities of the spoken and written word? How is she going to develop the skills for thinking, inquiry, and participation in a democratic society?"

- Joseph P. Marshall, Head of School



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COMMUNITY

Orchard families come from Indianapolis and surrounding counties within a 50-mile radius and represent a diversity of backgrounds with families from over 20 different home countries. Approximately 615 students are enrolled each year (two-thirds elementary students and one-third middle school students). One quarter of the student body are children of color. Last year, 206 children applied for admission, 142 were accepted, and 94 enrolled (38 in preschool, 35 in kindergarten-4th grade, and 21 in 5th-8th grades). An impressive reenrollment rate of 92% exceeds the national norm for independent schools. The parent-school relationship unites the community, as teachers communicate with parents openly and often. Open forums, Friday e-blasts and parent meetings with division directors to discuss substantive topics and other traditions like the Family Festival at the Orchard cabin combine to create a family sense in each child's life and the broader community.

Orchard teachers truly engage their students' intellectual and creative curiosity and develop a vibrant, innovative and engaging learning environment through their dedication and enthusiasm. Respect for each individual and each individual's membership in the community defines the essence of all interactions at the school. Orchard teachers strive to find the delicate balance between supporting and nurturing each student as an individual and setting high expectation for all their students. Half of the faculty hold advanced degrees and 70% have 10 or more years of teaching experience. Seventeen percent of the faculty are men.



THE MIDDLE SCHOOL (244 STUDENTS IN GRADES 5-8)

The Orchard middle school program provides a well-rounded education, including core academics, arts, physical education, and centers around the academic, social, and social/emotional learning for young adolescents. Students develop increased independence and personal responsibility and accountability as they encounter increasingly higher expectations for academic and behavioral excellence. The middle school teachers model Orchard's commitment to a "love of learning" and demonstrate flexibility, encouraging students with active, engaging lessons and units of study. The faculty strives to ensure that graduates meet the high expectations of the Orchard diploma, which calls for "ethical character, academic excellence, and demonstration of service."

The fifth grade is a special year, as students are moving from the mostly self-contained classrooms in their elementary school years. Students begin to rotate through classes

within the fifth grade “village.” The fifth grade village transitions these new middle schoolers into an expectation of greater movement and flexibility. The goal is increased independence and personal responsibility.

The middle school curriculum aligns with state and national standards, but the results of the individualized, active learning exceed national norms. At the same time, Orchard has continuous improvement strategies to ensure that its actual program and pedagogy are congruent with its progressive and constructivist mission and philosophy. Orchard successfully balances these contrasting factors. The primary goal continues to be to provide students with opportunities for the greatest depth of understanding. Detailed descriptions of courses for each grade and every department are available on the school’s Web site, www.orchard.org/program/our-curriculum/index.aspx.

Orchard graduates pursue their studies at a variety of high schools including: Brebeuf Jesuit, Cathedral, Park Tudor and University High School While Indianapolis does not have a tradition of students attending boarding schools, Orchard has had a small number of students attend boarding school, including Culver Academies, Lake Forest Academy and Phillips Exeter Academy. In recent years, 90% of the Orchard graduates attending Park Tudor made honor or high honor roll during their first semester and the majority of freshmen at Brebeuf Jesuit who earned a first-semester 4.0 were Orchard graduates. By senior year, many graduates become National Merit Scholars, as many as 20% recently having earned the distinction.



THE DIGNITY CENTER

The Dignity Center was established at The Orchard School in 2002 as an extension of Orchard’s guiding principles including the School’s Mission, Cornerstones, and Diversity statements. The Dignity Center recognizes and advocates for self worth and the worth of others. By facilitating authentic and relevant learning experiences, The Dignity Center empowers teachers, students and the broader community to discover dignity in all people by learning to understand the perspectives of others.

IMAGINE

Each year, the Orchard School sponsors IMAGINE: Students for Global and Local Action, an annual middle school leadership program that serves to inspire, engage and empower middle school students to become active and involved global citizens. Participating middle school teams are comprised of four students and one teacher/adult from middle schools throughout Indiana. The 2011 program is titled “Building Bridges

of Understanding and Respect Through Digital Expression”. The focus is on empowering middle school participants to examine their own communities through a lens of multiple perspectives and social equity. By describing specific problems and designing solutions, the students’ culminating project is a digital presentation for the community in the spring.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2012

The 2007-2012 Strategic Plan has achieved its goals (some will be ongoing) in spite of the unanticipated economic downturn. Goal 1 pertained to program: to assure that Orchard continues to provide the best, most innovative, dynamic, progressive curriculum and program. Over the last four years, teachers and administrators have worked to create the current, integrated/interdisciplinary, and consistent educational program. Orchard empowered the faculty to develop, evaluate, and review curriculum through both vertical and horizontal communication and discussion. This solid foundation of curricular documentation, communication and innovation ensures students experience a challenging education within each grade level that maximizes each student’s potential as a learner. Goal 2 is to build and implement a financial model that assures Orchard’s long-term stability and sustainability; and Goal 3 is to position Orchard as a unique option in the marketplace.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL HEAD

By any standard of measure, Orchard has numerous and substantial strengths. Foremost among these are:

- Superior plant and facilities
- An enviable endowment
- Excellent executive and senior administrator leadership
- A passionate and experienced faculty who are encouraged to master their craft
- Talented and highly diverse students
- A significant commitment to need-based financial aid
- An historic and on-going philosophy of whole-child, progressive education
- An environment where children are joyful and confident and feel safe and cared for
- A culture of collaborative decision making



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Even a school as strong as Orchard offers opportunities for new leadership. In the Middle School, then the opportunities are these:

- Striking the right balance between embracing progressive roots and preparing children for more traditional secondary schools
- Respecting the core values and traditions of Orchard while moving the School forward
- Coming to consensus around what “progressive means” in the 21st century especially for grades 7 and 8 and ensuring that parents and other constituencies understand as well
- Prioritizing the Middle School program for more focus, depth, and continuity
- Bringing new ideas, energy, and clarity around a vision to the Middle School
- Hiring, mentoring and developing new faculty as openings occur
- Developing closer ties with secondary schools in the area
- Enhancing communication with the parent body

QUALIFICATIONS

Professional Qualifications

- A master’s degree or equivalent
- Prior program and administrative experience in a PreK-8 or PreK-12 environment
- Teaching experience in a middle school
- Strong curricular experience within the progressive tradition
- Understanding and advocacy for the whole child continuum K-8
- A vision for technology integration
- Experience and training in diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice
- Broad knowledge about innovative ways for teaching and learning
- Experience with faculty assessment and professional growth models

Skills and Personal Qualities

- Demonstrates a love of young adolescents
- Creates a caring, dynamic culture for students, faculty /staff, parents and others
- Values and embraces diversity
- Partners well with other directors and staff throughout the School
- Advocates for teamwork for the whole child middle school program, including strong academics, music/arts, physical and social/emotional education, learning supports and parent communication
- Has excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Leads by example
- Is visibly involved in all aspects of school life

- Listens actively and builds consensus or acts decisively as required
- Thoughtfully and sensitively manages the transition from a senior to a younger faculty

COMPENSATION

Compensation package will be very competitive and commensurate with experience and the regional independent school market.

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically and as separate documents the following materials:

- *cover letter expressing interest in the Head of Middle School position at The Orchard School*
- *current résumé*
- *statement of educational philosophy and practice*
- *list of 5 references with name, phone number, and email address of each to:*

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