

Local artist, students, creating *Vision for Tomorrow*

The unforgettable experience of growing up in Oakwood is extremely beneficial to students and deserves a lasting memoir. In 2008, the Oakwood Schools Education Foundation completed its *Visions for Tomorrow* Grants Endowment campaign, exceeding its goal and raising more than \$500,000. Our generous donors enabled the Foundation to establish a special Endowment Fund to support teacher grant requests.

In recognition of this achievement and the donors who made it possible, a permanent display is being created that will list the names of donors who contributed \$5,000 or more, and depict wonderful memories of growing up in Oakwood and attending its exceptional schools. Darren Kall, a local artist, has embraced this project for the Foundation and is volunteering his time to create a unique bas-relief display that will be installed in the portico entrance to the OHS auditorium. Mr. Kall received his studio art degree from Rutgers College, and a graduate degree from Dartmouth College. His specialist training is in sculpture but he has completed training in many different media including painting, drawing, and printmaking. Darren and his wife, Kim, and son, Alexander, have lived in Oakwood since 2006.

To generate inspiration for his sculpture, Mr. Kall hosted ideation sessions with Oakwood students, alumni and parents. Freshman Ellen Geiselman said, "I thought that we gave Mr. Kall helpful insight about Oakwood, and what it means to be part of the community. Choosing actual kids that live and go to school in Oakwood was a great way to experience it first-hand. Mr. Kall gave us several exercises to get our creative juices flowing, and got to know us. I think that we helped a lot with this project." Participants

were asked to express their first, fondest and most memorable experiences from their Oakwood school days by first sketching images and then listing words that best described their drawings. Mr. Kall compiled the words and grouped them into themes that will provide the basis for the design of four 12" x 12" panels. Each panel will contain an image that represents the memories held most dear by Oakwood students surrounded by a border of words that signify their educational experience. "I thought the whole project was an awesome idea," commented Junior Adam Sobol. "It was fun to collaborate with everyone there. We sure did brainstorm a lot of morals, values and ideas about the true Oakwood. I am happy I had the opportunity to share my thoughts about the Oakwood message. I am excited to see the end project and all of the ideas shown."

Relief sculpture has a notable history dating back over 20,000 years in both eastern and western cultures. Several panels or sections of relief together may represent a sequence of scenes. Bas-relief, or low-relief, is very suitable for scenes with many figures and other elements such as a landscape or architectural background. A bas-relief may use any medium or technique of sculpture, with stone carving and metal casting being two widely used forms.

After sculpting the panels out of clay, Mr. Kall makes molds of his designs. The molds will be sent to a metalworker in New Jersey, who will cast them in a mixture made from fiberglass, resin and powdered metal to make the images permanent. The final result will be a lasting impression of the schools we all know and love, inspiring words that capture what they mean to us, and a list of donors whose commit-



Oakwood students with artist, Darren Kall, collaborate on words and ideas that depict the Oakwood Schools experience.



Artist Darren Kall sculpts a panel showing the front of OHS.

ment to our schools ensures their continued excellence. The panels are due to be completed and unveiled Homecoming Weekend, Oct. 2-4, 2009.

The *Visions for Tomorrow* Grants Endowment Fund remains open for

contributions. For more information about the Endowment Fund or the Oakwood Schools Education Foundation, please call Karen Gillingham at 297-5332. If you would like to read about Mr. Kall's progress as he creates this memora-

ble piece of art, and see photos of his work, please follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/oaktiles.

The Oakwood Schools Education Foundation would like to thank Danner ('11) and Grace ('12) Hahn for contributing to this article.

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