

**K.**  
**2007-2008**  
**Summary of the Year**

K. has become a voracious reader this year, gobbling books of all types whenever the opportunity arises. He read the entire Redwall series, as well as the Harry Potter series, among countless others. He joined a book club, along with some of his friends and peers, who met at Open Connections (a resource center for homeschoolers. See the Open Connections section in this portfolio), once a month, following his Tuesday Tutorial program. This was something he thoroughly enjoyed.

In addition to reading, K. has taken a liking to other activities, including archery. He was inspired by Brian Jacques' Redwall series, set in medieval times, and saved his money so he could purchase an authentic medieval bow and arrows from a master archer at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. We purchased some straw bales from our local hardware store, and K. built himself a makeshift target practice area in the backyard. He spent many hours shooting arrows into those bales. When it came time for K. to do his comprehensive project at Open Connections, in Tuesday Tutorial, he knew exactly what subject he would cover. Archery! K. learned a great deal about medieval history, as well as the Renaissance era while preparing for his facilitation. He read loads of books on the subject, and spent hours researching the topic over the internet. His hard work paid off, as his presentation went just as he planned it. He was very proud of this accomplishment!

In addition to archery, K. also started playing the drums this year. His drum teacher is a teen who attends programming at Open Connections. He has already learned several beats and has become quite adept at picking out the drumbeats in songs he hears. He can often recreate those beats on his drum set.

This year, as in years past, K. enjoyed honing his athletic skills for three seasons of team sports. K. is passionate about sports, and his work ethic and team spirit have been appreciated by all of his coaches and teammates. He started the school year off in the fall, playing flag football through the YMCA. K. fine-tuned his catching skills and excelled as a receiver, scoring several touchdowns for his team throughout the season. His confidence soared, preparing him for another fun and challenging season of basketball in the winter. Again, K.'s determination, focus, and positive attitude helped to propel his team to quite a few victories, the positive attitude helping to soften the blow of the tough losses.

Spring brought K.'s first experience with KAU baseball. He loved it! He practiced daily, out in the yard with anyone who was willing to throw a ball with him or pitch to him. Considering it was his first year, he made huge strides in his development as a baseball player, and was nominated as a potential player for the Allstar team. Even though he didn't make the final cut, he felt incredibly honored to have even been considered. He can't wait for next spring to get back on that field!

K. was, once again, privileged to glean Miss Kathleen's wisdom and experience, while enrolled in her Earth Explorers classes at White Clay Creek State Park. Kathleen is a naturalist who teaches science at the park through the Nature Center. As always, this year she was thorough in her approach, emailing information to the families enrolled for further study of topics at home. K. loves the hands-on, experiential nature of the classes and plans to utilize this park service for years to come.

Our family hit the road quite a bit this year, taking advantage of the wonderful learning opportunities that exist in our community at large. See the field trip section of this portfolio to get a glimpse of just some of the places we visited.

K. spent a good majority of his time every week in programming at Open Connections. He was enrolled in Kinesthetics/Math/Farm on Mondays, as well as two Tutorial programs, one on Tuesdays, and one on Fridays. These programs are full-day programs that embody OC's philosophy of a learner-directed approach based on experiential learning, creativity, and collaboration, to name a few. Opportunities abound for exploration of a vast array of subjects. See the Open Connections section in this portfolio to get a feel for what K.'s experience was like at OC.

K. took the required third grade test this year. He spent a good many hours preparing, utilizing test prep workbooks and the like. He was quite pleased with his results as he scored in the 93<sup>rd</sup>, 94<sup>th</sup>, and 82<sup>nd</sup> percentiles in reading, language, and math, respectively.

K. developed quite an interest in history (and the resultant, geography) this year, inspired by field trips and books. We gathered oodles of information about the history of Pennsylvania, especially our local area, which is rich and teeming with particulars, as well as the history of our country in general. See K.'s book/materials log for a list of some of the publications that inspired him in his quest for knowledge.

This being an election year, K. was compelled to better familiarize himself with our country and state's political structure, voting process, etc. This fit well with his studies of PA and US history, helping to piece all the facts together.

In addition to the above, K. benefited from practice in the three Rs via workbooks, journaling, and reading. He also enjoyed a few lessons in fire safety and practice (installing and climbing down a window ladder, the highlight) both at OC (fire drills) and at home, as well as health and safety discussions, in particular, bike/scooter/skateboard safety.

We are looking forward to what next year will bring, stimulated by the power of curiosity, stirred by the hunger for competence and mastery.