As you leave the Pacific behind and enter into the country, winding over various small hills, peaceful, quiet, full of that strange dignity of the country, you enter the valley. It is quiet, almost untouched by man. You enter into this valley, which is almost like a vast cup, a nest. Then you leave the little village and climb to about 1,400 feet, passing rows and rows of orange orchards and groves. The air is perfumed with orange blossom. The whole valley is filled with that scent. And the smell of it is in your mind, in your heart, in your whole body.

And there is a quietness in the mountains, a dignity. And each time you look at those hills and the high mountain, which is over 6,000 feet, you are really surprised that such a country exists. Each time you come to this quiet, peaceful valley there is a feeling of strange aloofness, of deep silence, and the vast spreading of slow time.

And the mountains that morning were extraordinarily beautiful. You could almost touch them. The majesty, the vast sense of permanency is there in them. And you enter quietly into the house where you have lived for over sixty years and the atmosphere, the air, is, if one can use that word, holy; you can feel it. As it has rained considerably, for it is the rainy season, all the hills and the little folds of the mountain are green, flourishing, full – the earth is smiling with such delight, with some deep quiet understanding of its own existence.

Krishnamurti to Himself
Ojai, 1983
Introduction

The Krishnamurti Foundation of America (KFA) is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Founded in 1969 by J. Krishnamurti and a small group of trustees, the KFA exists to preserve, protect and disseminate his teachings. The KFA oversees the historic Pine Cottage library and Pepper Tree Retreat in Ojai and Oak Grove School in Meiners Oaks.

Krishnamurti fell in love with the Ojai Valley in 1922 when he and his brother were guests of Mary Gray, a Theosophist who owned several cottages on McAndrew Road. Pine Cottage became Krishnamurti’s California home for the next six decades. Over the years, he gave hundreds of talks at the Oak Grove in Meiners Oaks which drew thousands of listeners each year.

Many of those who came to the talks became residents of the valley or frequent visitors. These included Annie Besant, Beatrice Wood, Monica Ros, Alan and Helen Hooker, and Aldous Huxley. The entire Krotona Colony moved to Ojai from Hollywood in 1924 and established the Krotona School of Theosophy. In the late 1940s, with Aldous Huxley and others, Krishnamurti started the Happy Valley School (now called Besant Hill School). Though Krishnamurti withdrew from participating at Happy Valley, his interest in education remained a primary theme throughout his life. He gave talks at Thacher School as well as dialogues with teachers and parents at Oak Grove School, founded in 1975 by Krishnamurti, with KFA trustees and director Mark Lee.

Each year Krishnamurti typically spent three to four months at Pine Cottage among the orange groves in Ojai’s east end. He enjoyed walking with neighbors and their dogs, hiking up Horn Canyon, and designing and maintaining the gardens with his personal assistant Mary Zimbalist and gardener Alasdair Coyne. During these months in Ojai, the KFA hosted numerous religious scholars, educators, philosophers, and scientists in multi-day discussions with Krishnamurti. Among these individuals were Jonas Salk, Rupert Sheldrake, Jacob Needleman and David Bohm. Krishnamurti’s discussions with Bohm have been transcribed and published in Truth and Actuality, The Future of Humanity, The Limits of Thought, and The Ending of Time.

Krishnamurti travelled extensively during his lifetime, talking with millions of people around the world. In 1985, while on a speaking tour of India, he became ill with pancreatic cancer. He traveled back to Ojai to live out his final days in the valley that he loved. Krishnamurti died at the age of 90 at Pine Cottage on February 17, 1986.

Today, 33 years after his passing, there remains the sense of urgency that Krishnamurti communicated while inquiring into life—an urgency to understand the nature of thinking, of fear, and of conditioning, and to see oneself as all of humanity. Articles written about the Ojai Valley still mention his importance in shaping the cultural and spiritual ethos of the community. Today his talks are viewed online worldwide; his books have been translated into more than 30 languages; and his foundations and schools are thriving in the United Kingdom, India, and the United States. Most Ojai residents and visitors know that an important ‘philosopher’ named Krishnamurti once lived here. Those who have read his work or visited the campuses on McAndrew Road or Lomita Avenue can attest to the teachings’ deep vitality and enduring relevance.
J. Krishnamurti (K) was born in Madanapalle, in southern India, on May 12, 1895. His family was of the Brahmin caste. His mother died when he was 10 years old and his father, a Theosophist, moved the family to Adyar, near Madras, where the worldwide headquarters of the Theosophical Society (TS) were located.

It was in Adyar that K was “discovered” in 1909 and declared to be the next World Teacher. He and his younger brother, Nityananda, were adopted by Dr. Annie Besant, president of the TS, and taken to the United Kingdom. There they were privately educated, and K was groomed for his role as the World Teacher. An international organization called The Order of the Star in the East was founded to prepare for his arrival. In anticipation of this role, K travelled throughout Europe, India and Australia to meet and address gatherings of his followers.

In 1922, K visited the United States for the first time, as a result of his brother’s ill health. Nitya died in Ojai, California, in 1925.

In August 1929, K dissolved The Order of the Star at its annual convention in Ommen, the Netherlands. He said, “Truth is a pathless land,” and he questioned the validity of all religious organizations. He declared it his mission to set human beings “absolutely, unconditionally free.”

Krishnamurti pursued this mission for the rest of his long life. He travelled to Europe, North and South America, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, giving public talks and discussions and founding schools in India, England, and California.

Throughout his travels, Krishnamurti interacted with many prominent individuals in the fields of science, the arts, education and politics. During the years of World War II, however, the global eruption of violence prevented him from travelling and giving public talks. During this period, he remained in Ojai and pursued his mission on a smaller scale. He gave many private interviews and initiated a series of writings in which he described his observations and illustrated his teachings. Many of these writings were published in the years that followed.

After the war, K resumed his global travels and speaking tours. Eventually he founded Krishnamurti Foundations in England, the United States, India, and the Spanish-speaking world. These organizational structures continue to function 33 years after his passing in February 1986, in Ojai, at the age of 90.

Throughout his public and private appearances, Krishnamurti emphasized that he was not a guru or an authority figure and that no sect, cult or religious organization should be created on the basis of his person, life or work.
The Intent of the Oak Grove School

J. Krishnamurti

It is becoming more and more important in a world that is destructive and degenerating that there should be a place, an oasis, where one can learn a way of living that is whole, sane and intelligent. Education in the modern world has been concerned with the cultivation, not of intelligence, but of intellect, of memory and its skills. In this process little occurs beyond passing information from the teacher to the taught, the leader to the follower, bringing about a superficial and mechanical way of life. In this there is little human relationship.

Surely a school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their behavior. From this they begin to discover their own conditioning and how it distorts their thinking. This conditioning is the self to which such tremendous and cruel importance is given. Freedom from conditioning and its misery begins with this awareness. It is only in such freedom that true learning can take place. In this school it is the responsibility of the teacher to sustain with the student a careful exploration into the implications of conditioning and thus end it.

A school is a place where one learns the importance of knowledge and its limitations. It is a place where one learns to observe the world not from any particular point of view or conclusion. One learns to look at the whole of man’s endeavor, his search for beauty, his search for truth and for a way of living without conflict. Conflict is the very essence of violence. So far education has not been concerned with this, but in this school our intent is to understand actuality and its action without any preconceived ideals, theories or belief which bring about a contradictory attitude toward existence.

The school is concerned with freedom and order. Freedom is not the expression of one’s own desire, choice or self-interest. That inevitably leads to disorder. Freedom of choice is not freedom, though it may appear so; nor is order, conformity or imitation. Order can only come with the insight that to choose is itself the denial of freedom.

In school one learns the importance of relationship which is not based on attachment and possession. It is here one can learn about the movement of thought, love and death, for all this is our life. From the ancient of times, man has sought something beyond the materialistic world, something immeasurable, something sacred. It is the intent of this school to inquire into this possibility.

This whole movement of inquiry into knowledge, into oneself, into the possibility of something beyond knowledge, brings about naturally a psychological revolution, and from this comes inevitably a totally different order in human relationship, which is society. The intelligent understanding of all this can bring about a profound change in the consciousness of mankind.

The original statement of intent was written by Krishnamurti in 1975 when the Oak Grove School was founded. The statement was revised to its present form in 1984 by Krishnamurti and the school staff.
From his earliest years, Krishnamurti was not interested in having any organization established around himself and his teachings. Except for civic and practical organizations like the post office and nonprofits to save the whales, he felt that those with religious, psychological, and philosophical purposes succeeded only in dividing people and creating conflicts.

In the 1960s, it became apparent that his work required a new practical, secular organization for limited purposes. It was necessary to manage the dissemination and preservation of the teachings, to raise funds for Krishnamurti’s travel and work, and to support schools founded in India, Europe, and later the United States. An earlier organization, Krishnamurti Writings Inc., had been dissolved as a result of mismanagement and legal issues.

In 1969, the Krishnamurti Foundation of America (KFA) was established in Ojai, California as a 501(c)3, not-for-profit organization to manage his work in the United States. Similar nonprofits arose in England and India with the same purpose and similar structures. Rather than adopting a corporate or business ethos, Krishnamurti wanted a new and different relationship among the responsible trustees. His concern was to prevent any kind of spiritual or psychological authority around him and his work. To prevent moral corruption, he wanted the trustees to “live the teachings.” To prevent psychological and spiritual authority, no single person should dominate the others. He said friendship, trust, and affection would define their relationship.

Six founding trustors contributed $500 each to the original trust. They were: J. Krishnamurti, Erna Lilliefelt, Theo Lilliefelt, Mary Zimbalist, Alain Naudé, and Ruth Tettemer. Erna Lilliefelt told me what Krishnamurti said as they established the trust: “Love the teachings and love each other.”

Evelyne Blau, age 97, is the only surviving trustee (now emeritus) from the early days. Since that time, there have been 42 trustees, all serving voluntarily to hold “in sacred trust” the work established 50 years ago. In 1977, on a retreat with the trustees in Ojai, Krishnamurti said, “The very teachings are sacred, holy. The investigation of that teaching leads to, or brings about, the truth, which is holy. And if we are committed to that, to the investigation of the teachings and the discovery of, or coming upon, that truth which is holy, then we are responsible to that.”
History of the Pepper Tree Retreat and the Krishnamurti Educational Center

Michael Krohnen
Pine Cottage Librarian

The Ojai Valley is one of the rare valleys that stretch from east to west. It served as a home for generations of Native American ‘Chumash’ over thousands of years. In the 1800s, American pioneers began colonizing the valley, primarily for agricultural purposes.

A property on McAndrew Road in the east end of the valley has been associated for many years with Krishnamurti and his work. The original structures were a ranch house called Arya Vihara (noble abode) and Pine Cottage, both built around 1900. In the mid-1920s, these structures were acquired by Krishnamurti and his brother, Nityananda, and held by the Brothers Association Trust. After Nityananda’s death in 1925, Krishnamurti continued to reside at Pine Cottage whenever he came to stay in California. During World War II, since he could not travel and give talks, he spent six entire years here.
In the late 1940s, J.R. Davidson, a well-known European architect, designed a two-story structure, now referred to as the Annex, next to Pine Cottage. This building served as offices and archives in addition to guest quarters.

In the 1950s and 1960s, difficulties arose about the management of the property, and Krishnamurti spent much less time in Ojai. In 1975, a settlement was reached, and he returned to Ojai on a regular basis—February through May each year. In 1975, he founded the Oak Grove School, which operated on the east end property for its initial years before moving to its present campus in Meiners Oaks, near the center of the valley. For several years, some of the teachers and staff of the school resided at Arya Vihara. In the early 1980s, the house was transformed into the Krishnamurti Library.

In 1977, Mrs. Mary Zimbalist, Krishnamurti’s assistant, commissioned a large extension of Pine Cottage, designed by the Los Angeles architect Charles Moore. At that time, the Annex also underwent renovation and expansion.

In 2000, a new archive and office building was constructed on the east end property. It served as the library for about nine years, while Arya Vihara began to be used as a guesthouse.

Over the years, many additional changes occurred. Most significant were the passing of Krishnamurti in 1986 and Mrs. Zimbalist in 2008. They had determined that after their deaths, Pine Cottage was to be used as the Krishnamurti Library and Study Center, and no one was to reside there. In 2009, Arya Vihara was radically renovated. It was renamed The Pepper Tree Retreat and offered to the public as a guesthouse with six units.

In 2014, another building was constructed for events like yoga workshops. It is a one-room circular structure called the Event Pavilion, situated next to the medicinal herb garden.

The east end property, now designated the Krishnamurti Educational Center, offers a large variety of events and services. There are regular dialogue meetings open to the public, various other presentations related to Krishnamurti and his work, and a study program for residential students of college age.
The Core of the Teachings

Krishnamurti’s biographer, Mary Lutyens, asked him to define the core of his teachings. He wrote the following:

The core of Krishnamurti’s teaching is contained in the statement he made in 1929 when he said, “Truth is a pathless land.” Man cannot come to it through any organization, through any creed, through any dogma, priest or ritual, not through any philosophical knowledge or psychological technique. He has to find it through the mirror of relationship, through the understanding of the contents of his own mind, through observation and not through intellectual analysis or introspective dissection. Man has built in himself images as a fence of security – religious, political, personal. These manifest as symbols, ideas, beliefs. The burden of these images dominates man’s thinking, his relationships and his daily life. These images are the causes of our problems for they divide man from man. His perception of life is shaped by the concepts already established in his mind. The content of his consciousness is his entire existence. This content is common to all humanity. The individuality is the name, the form and superficial culture he acquires from tradition and environment. The uniqueness of man does not lie in the superficial but in complete freedom from the content of his consciousness, which is common to all mankind. So he is not an individual.

Freedom is not a reaction; freedom is not a choice. It is man’s pretence that because he has choice he is free. Freedom is pure observation without direction, without fear of punishment and reward. Freedom is without motive; freedom is not at the end of the evolution of man but lies in the first step of his existence. In observation one begins to discover the lack of freedom. Freedom is found in the choiceless awareness of our daily existence.

Thought is time. Thought is born of experience, of knowledge, which are inseparable from time. Time is the psychological enemy of man. Our action is based on knowledge and therefore time, so man is always a slave to the past.

When man becomes aware of the movement of his own consciousness he will see the division between the thinker and the thought, the observer and the observed, the experiencer and the experience. He will discover that this division is an illusion. Then only is there pure observation which is insight without any shadow of the past. This timeless insight brings about a deep radical mutation in the mind.

Total negation is the essence of the positive. When there is negation of all those things which are not love – desire, pleasure – then love is, with its compassion and intelligence.
Current and Future KFA Projects

Jaap Sluijter
Executive Director

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America (KFA), we have planned several events and new publications. We intend to showcase the many accomplishments of the KFA, such as the publication of the Collected Works, the creation and flowering of the Oak Grove School, the founding of a vibrant and active center in Krishnamurti’s former home, and much more.

Krishnamurti left behind a very large body of work: many books and more than 10,000 transcripts and 3,000 recordings of his talks (of which about 650 are on video). The archives of the KFA hold thousands of manuscripts as well as letters from Krishnamurti and from people who played a role in his life.

Krishnamurti’s primary and lifelong mission was, in his words, “to set man absolutely and unconditionally free.”

To stay relevant and keep up with the fast pace of technological change, our archives department has reinvented itself several times over these past 50 years. We migrated from stenographers’ notes, to reel tape audio recordings, to many different video formats. We currently have all audio and video recordings stored in several digital forms. The work scheduled for the coming years is to continue digitizing old film footage and manuscripts. A major part of this work involves annotating this collection in the database.

It has been assumed that traditional book publishing is on its way out. The fact is that the volume of paper books sold worldwide is still high. We keep seeing good sales of Krishnamurti books in North America, Europe, and China. This year we will reprint the coffee table book One Thousand Moons. We also plan to publish a new book entitled Unconditionally Free, based upon the panel exhibition called The Mind of Krishnamurti. This will be an overview of his life and teachings placed in a historic context.

The KFA, in close collaboration with the other three international Krishnamurti Foundations, is continuing to make the teachings available to new and existing audiences. The dissemination work...
has focused on making available the unabridged versions of the spoken and written work. We recently completed an overhaul of the teachings website, jkrishnamurti.org. We also have a fast-growing collection of video and audio on the official Krishnamurti YouTube site. This channel has become the number one YouTube channel for Krishnamurti material. Scholars and educators now have access to unpublished material that was previously accessible only at the archives.

Over the past few years, the KFA has developed a strategy of using social media platforms to publish material specifically designed for younger audiences. These short video clips and text quotations highlight the relevance of the teachings to the many challenges of daily life and to the larger existential questions posed by Krishnamurti. Please visit theimmeasurable.org to see our latest offerings.

The internet and social media platforms provide increasingly important venues for the dissemination of the teachings. We have been exploring a more complete online ecology for the teachings. By “ecology” we refer to the various nested and inter-linked online components that would serve individuals with different levels of familiarity with the teachings.

During his lifetime, Krishnamurti established study centers and retreats in England, India, and here in Ojai. These locations provide accommodations for individuals to stay for a few days or longer to study the teachings and deepen their investigations. This exploration could take the form of individual study, a dialogue with other people, or participation in one of our programs. Over the past years we have been changing the format and duration of our events. Based on their popularity, we have recently increased the number of our mid-week in-depth study programs.

The Krishnamurti Educational Center (KEC) in Ojai also seeks to keep the teachings alive within the KFA community. Krishnamurti emphasized the vital importance of this activity. Our Pepper Tree Retreat, located on the grounds of our KEC campus, is currently operating with a permit to house six guests and five staff members. We are now applying for a permit to house up to 10 guests and 18 residential scholars. We feel this would provide the best number and mixture of individuals to create an atmosphere that is most conducive for exploration. Consequently, we will need to build additional accommodations as well as a kitchen facility.

Our residential student program has now been running for six years, and the interest and demand has been increasing. We are receiving more applications from the target group – college-age women and men who would like to take a gap year to delve into the teachings – as well as applications from older individuals who feel the urge to go deeper into the teachings. One of our initiatives this year is to determine how to support educators at universities and other institutions to make the teachings part of their curriculum. Educators at universities across the world have made attempts of this kind, and we intend to harvest their collective experience and make it available for others.

Yet another initiative undertaken over the past four years is our Explorations Conference during the week prior to the annual May Gathering. In these conferences, outstanding scholars from various disciplines make scientific presentations and debate how their perspectives might relate to the teachings. We feel that this conference is an integral part of Krishnamurti’s vision for the Study Center. He stated that the people at these centers should be able to discuss with specialists in any branch of knowledge. The topic of this year’s conference is Freedom From the Known. It will feature a keynote speaker who is among the most distinguished neuroscientists in the area of human perception and consciousness.

The drought continues unabated in Ojai, and an additional reduction of water use is anticipated. Water use restrictions have resulted in the loss of several trees in our orchard and the oak grove. Because citrus trees consume a lot of water, the KFA has decided to reduce their number and replace them with drought-tolerant trees such as olives and pomegranates. The orange trees have a historic relevance and were featured prominently in Krishnamurti’s writings, and so we have designated a two-acre portion of the property as “historical” and are committed to maintaining orange trees in this area. We plan to plant hundreds of additional drought-tolerant trees during the present rainy season. This campaign will include a special planting of 50 trees by the students of Oak Grove School as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations.
The Archive

Cory Fisher
Archivist and Publications Director

The Krishnamurti Archive is the official repository of Krishnamurti’s original material. This includes handwritten manuscripts, letters, photographs, audio and video recordings, and related materials. Its mission is to preserve the teachings of Krishnamurti as they were written and spoken, without distortion or interpretation. The Krishnamurti Archive also exists to give scholars and researchers access to original documents.

There are three physical Krishnamurti Archives—one located in Ojai, (KFA); one in Brockwood Park, United Kingdom, (Krishnamurti Foundation Trust); and one in Chennai, India (Krishnamurti Foundation India). The original materials were split among the foundations and are preserved in their respective archives.

The archive on McAndrew Road was designed and built in 2000 specifically for the KFA collection. Inside the building is an 800 square-foot vault, which is split into two zones—the core vault and the access vault. The preservation and long-term storage of the collection must meet stringent environmental standards that are maintained year-round. The KFA has the largest collection of Krishnamurti’s original handwritten documents, estimated to be over 4600 pages.

Also housed at the KFA archive is an extensive collection of original audio and video recordings, thousands of photographs of Krishnamurti dating from the turn of the century, and a paper collection of books, journals, newspaper and magazine articles. The book collection continues to grow as copies of every new edition of Krishnamurti’s work are added, including translated editions.

The KFA archive is also the home of the Krishnamurti Digital Archive. This server stores the complete digital collection and also functions as the central station for the international archives. Decades of work have gone into digitizing the extensive collection of original audio, video, and paper records. Having digital copies of the originals allows the Foundations to make the teachings available more efficiently through online media channels.

Krishnamurti’s talks are preserved as potential catalysts for the transformation of consciousness.

The archives in Ojai, India, and the United Kingdom are dedicated to ensure access to Krishnamurti’s work for anyone who may be interested now and in the future – “for a thousand years!” he said. There is no dogma attached to the teachings, but rather an invitation to reflect on life’s deepest questions. Krishnamurti’s talks are preserved as potential catalysts for self-knowledge, self-understanding and the transformation of consciousness. When asked what would happen to this work when he was gone, Krishnamurti replied: “If it means something very deep to you, to you personally, then it won’t be corrupted. You understand? So it is up to you, not up to the centers and information centers and all the rest of that business. It depends upon you, whether you live the teachings or not.”
Krishnamurti first visited the Ojai Valley in 1922. At that time, he was already a speaker who addressed large audiences around the world. Ojai soon became his home while in the United States. His residence there was at Pine Cottage on McAndrew Road, built among orange trees in the east end of the valley, close to hiking trails into the mountains.

According to records from those early days, Krishnamurti helped to maintain the orange trees around Pine Cottage. During World War II, he helped to plant the orange trees between Pine Cottage and the Pepper Tree Retreat. These trees are now gradually succumbing to old age, but they are lovingly tended, and there are plans to replant the gaps in the rows.

In the late 1970s, the original Pine Cottage was expanded, and a garden was planned to fill the gaps between the new construction and the surrounding orange grove. Krishnamurti participated in the plant selections and plantings. He also enjoyed watering the plants and watching them flourish. He always requested a complete tour of the garden each time he returned to California.

In recent years, some elements of the Pine Cottage garden suffered damage, which led to a new proposal to maintain this landscape in its original condition. The intention of this proposal was to enable a visitor far into the future to look at the landscape and see what Krishnamurti saw when he lived there. The aim was to preserve as closely as possible the same view across the Ojai Valley that he enjoyed from his writing desk on the south side of the house.

In 2018, the KFA trustees endorsed this proposal to create the Heritage Garden around Pine Cottage so that it may be protected from changes over the years.

Krishnamurti’s love of nature has been described many times in print and in his talks, but his love of gardening is less well known. The Pine Cottage garden is his living landscape legacy.
The intention of all the Krishnamurti schools was communicated through dialogues, talks and written works. Although Krishnamurti shared a great deal on the topic of education, he intentionally did not leave a blueprint, nor did he give any individual or school the authority to interpret his teachings for others.

Providing an excellent academic program is vital. One must learn to communicate well and be able to deeply explore maths, recognize great works of poetry and art, have a solid concept of world religions, geography, and science, develop skills in organization, use tools (physical and technological), create and read music, and explore a somatic understanding of one’s body through sports, yoga, breathing, and dance. One must be able to develop proficiency in exploring the natural world and to travel in cultures different from one’s own.

What, however, is required for honoring one’s innate intelligence, to allow a student to “develop fully as a complete human being ... giving the child the opportunity to flower in goodness”? This aspect of our purpose, which is not separate but integrated into the academic learning, is a bit more complicated to implement, as the teachings suggest there is no way or method.

How does a school “teach” expanding one’s awareness, living in the present, understanding how conditioning distorts one’s thinking? We approach this, therefore, with openness and inquiry, through opportunities for self-reflection, silence, pure observation, physical and psychological space, through stretching our comfort zone, exploring our relationship to nature, ourselves, others, and the world and perhaps something beyond. This is the realm of self-understanding, a way to awaken the child’s intelligence.

Having a school without an explicit blueprint is a radical undertaking. It asks us to actively question and look at how we provide the opportunity to learn functional knowledge while at the same time exploring the intelligence within ourselves, with the goal of realizing human potential, not only for the individual’s sake, but for the sake of humanity.

The following is Oak Grove School’s mission statement and a brief history:

Inspired by the original intent and statement of philosophy left by the school’s founder, J. Krishnamurti, the mission of Oak Grove School is to assist students in developing those qualities of mind, heart, and body that will enable them to function with excellence, care and responsibility in the modern world. In addition, it is the intention of the school to offer a place where the whole community can inquire together into the perennial questions of humankind and explore an approach to life that is whole, mindful and intelligent.

1975: J. Krishnamurti and the Trustees of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America founded Oak Grove School as one of a group of international schools. The original three students and two teachers met in an old ranch building called Arya Vihara, now Pepper Tree Retreat, located near the present Krishnamurti Library on McAndrew Road in the east end of Ojai. Mark Lee was appointed as the first Principal of the school. David Moody was the first teacher and later was appointed co-administrator with Mark.

1977: The Pavilion, with its iconic wavy roof, was nestled among the oaks adjacent to the Oak Grove where Krishnamurti spoke. This first building served as a one-room school house for 18 students.

1978-79: Thanks to general contractor Max Falk and his team of students, teachers, parents and professional carpenters, the elementary school with 6 classrooms and 6 apartments was constructed. A building called the Main House was completed during the same time.

1984-87: OGS parents sought to continue their children’s elementary education into high school, so thanks to the KFA and a matching grant of $500,000 from friend Babu Morali, a high school and student center were added, along with an expanded preschool. At the same time, Besant House dormitory was opened as a family-style boarding facility for junior high and high school students. David Moody was the school director during these years.

1989: Oak Grove began an annual senior trip to India, thanks to the support from AG Trust. Mary Lou Sorem and Karen Hesli were co-principals during the years from 1988 until 1995 and 2001, respectively.

1996: As the school’s student population approached 200, the need for an expanded art building became apparent. Supported by OGS parent volunteers Jane Carroll, architect, and Andrew Stasse, general contractor, OGS parents raised $250,000 to complete the project.

2001-2006: School directors during these years included Darcy Gray, Peter Thielke and Ellen Hall.

2009-2015: Meredy Benson-Rice was appointed as Head of School. Oak Grove gained financial sustainability and established a reserve fund and an endowment fund. Significant deferred maintenance and capital improvements were completed. The Arts of Living and Learning program was developed over a year-long process by the staff and faculty. The Oak Grove School Board was re-established. Oak Grove achieved a 6-year WASC/CAIS accreditation.

2018: Renovation of the Main House was completed.
The Reflective Classroom will be added during the summer of 2019 to provide a shared space for students and teachers to gather in silence, to engage in dialogue, or to participate in other quiet, reflective practices. The current Head of School is Jodi Grass.

What started in 1975 with 3 students has grown to a school currently serving 216 students with their families and over 65 full and part-time faculty and staff.

2019

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Thank You to Our Supporters

The Krishnamurti Foundation of America exists today because people all over the world have been touched by Krishnamurti’s message to humanity. One of our intentions during this anniversary year is to acknowledge the close friends who have given the time, energy and financial contributions that have sustained the whole organization for five decades. Thanks to the support of people like you, the foundation’s programs, properties, and staff have preserved Krishnamurti’s teachings for future generations and continue to reach new audiences.

Ways to Support the KFA

The Krishnamurti Foundation of America is committed to creating opportunities to inquire into the root of the complex problems of our world. When you choose to support the Krishnamurti Foundation of America and Oak Grove School, you help us provide unique opportunities for living inquiry and self-exploration with the goal of realizing human potential, not only for the individual’s sake, but for the sake of humanity.

We are a non-profit charity. We rely on donors like you to help us continue our programs and to share Krishnamurti’s work with the widest possible audience. It is only with your support that this important work is possible.

If you would like to join us in keeping these teachings and opportunities available, please consider making a financial contribution at www.kfa.org/donate.
A round the authority of a person or an ideology cooperation becomes meaningless and leads to various forms of conflict. All of us are working together in a spirit of real cooperation in which there is no authority: it is our interest in the teachings which brings us together and helps us to work together. So the authority of a central directive ceases; each of us is important and we all help each other.

To make this possible the Krishnamurti Foundation is the new organisation without the psychological belonging and dependence which most organisations bring about. This is very important to bear in mind in all the work we are doing together. Cooperation is necessary but the ugly and brutal side of organisation has no part in what we are trying to do. There is a great deal to be done which has not been done in the past.

We must meet together at least once a year to talk things over as friends, expose our problems and resolve them. Organisation does not draw us together, rather we are drawn together as human beings to resolve our human problems.

J. Krishnamurti

Each of us is important and we all help each other.
Bibliography

The following books give further information about Krishnamurti and his relationship to Ojai, the KFA, and the Oak Grove School. They are listed in order by date of publication.


The Foundation gratefully accepts donations to support its study center, Oak Grove School, the archive, outreach efforts, publications, and online resources such as TheImmeasurable.org.