Jim Sawgrass Presentation Caps Off
Native American Heritage Week

On Thursday November 21, UCP West Orange students celebrated Native American Heritage Week with a presentation by Jim Sawgrass, of Muskogee Creek descent. All the students were thrilled to see live dancing, learn about the history of Native Americans, and see authentic bows and arrows on display! At the end of the presentation, students were even treated to math homework being “shot” out of a musket as well as face painting. The event made the news! You can check out the West Orange Times & Observer pictures, some of which are included below, at the following link: http://ow.ly/tt2650xjSRP A big thank you to Jim and his son for coming to teach our eager learners about Native American history. The school would also like to thank all of the UCP parents, families and friends who purchased coupon books this year. Without your financial support, the Jim Sawgrass presentation would not have been possible!
UCP Purchases Land for New West Orange Campus

By Amy Quesinberry. Reprinted from the West Orange Times & Observer.

Big changes are coming to UCP West Orange Charter School in Winter Garden, now that the purchase is being finalized on an eight-acre piece of land on County Road 535. A new and larger campus will provide the school with greater capacity and an enhanced educational experience for both special needs and general education students.

United Cerebral Palsy of Central Florida’s Winter Garden facility is moving just north of its current location at 1297 Winter Garden Vineland Road, Suite 112. The school serves 170 children in prekindergarten through fifth grade, and about 70% of the students have a disability and are receiving educational or therapy services, according to the principal, Thomas Brickel. The school is at capacity and has a waiting list, he said. The move will give UCP the space to provide education for 250 students.

“The new campus will provide our West Orange students with the opportunity to seamlessly receive educational and therapy services during their middle school years,” Brickel said. “Our families have struggled to find satisfactory school options for their students after they graduate from fifth grade. Many families of graduates, unhappy with the current selection of schools, prefer to transport their children to our TLA campus, which is near the downtown area. "How convenient will it be for West Orange families to finally have an elementary and middle school for students with and without disabilities in the heart of Winter Garden?" Brickel asked.

Dr. Ilene Wilkins, CEO of all UCPs in Central Florida and surrounding municipalities, said the organization will ask for feedback from staff, teachers, parents and students to create a wish list. “What do they want in a campus?” she said. Once that's determined, then the architect firm, SchenkelShultz, will start working on the design. Brickel said construction will take up to one-and-a-half years.

The initial space will be 22,000 square feet, and there is space for future expansion of another 8,000. UCP has been in the current space about five years. Prior to that move, the school was in the West Orange Shopping Center, on South Dillard Street, and the Winter Garden Plaza, on West Colonial Drive.

"I am truly excited at the prospect of a larger, more accommodating facility," Brickel said. "Our new facility will have some essential school features we currently lack, such as a cafeteria, a larger kitchen with ample room for our kitchen equipment, a teacher break room and rooms for diagnostic testing. "We will also be able to design a playground/P.E. area equipped for our students in wheelchairs from the ground up," he said. "With the increased number of classrooms, we will also be able to accommodate a greater number of students with and without special needs that are currently on our waiting list."

The new school will cost $6 million to $7 million, including the land; a capital campaign has begun, with several commitments. "We're certainly looking for anyone who would like to get involved in the way of donations," Wilkins said. "If parents have been looking for a place and haven't been able to find one, we'll be able to accommodate them."

"For years, our UCP families have been waiting for the time when their kids can continue their integrated education and therapy services into the middle school years," Brickel said. "For me, it is a joy to finally tell them, "Yes, your kids can stay with us through eighth grade."
Glimpses from the West Orange Fall Festival

SAVE THE DATE!

December 5 (4:30 pm)
Parent Workshop - Visual Supports (presented by CARD)

December 6
Third Grade Field Trip - Crayola Experience

December 13 (1:30 pm)
PTO Meeting

December 16-18
Raffle Baskets sale / Car loop suspended

December 18
Family Holiday Party

December 23-January 1
School closed

January 2, 3 & 6
Camp only

January 7
Semester 2 begins

January 13-17
Parent/Teacher Conferences
UCP WEST ORANGE PTO invites you to attend our school Holiday Party

* WEDNESDAY * DEC. 18th *

6PM UNTIL 8PM

TANNER HALL
29 W Garden Ave
Winter Garden 34787

- FACEPAINTING
- FOOD
- MUSIC
- PERFORMANCES
- RAFFLE BASKETS
- and more!