

## Monteverde Friends School – March 2017 Newsletter



**65 Years!** With 30 out-of-town guests and hundreds of local alumni, parents and teachers, we celebrated this milestone with a breathless series of Wolf Talks, square dance, coffee house, Sports Day, nature hikes, dinners... and even some time to just catch up with old friends.

Saturday evening's formal dinner – deliciously catered by Greg Casillas and Kay Chornook, served by our colegio students – featured music by student Francis Guindon and testimonials by Gaby McAdam (graduate) and Josue Picado (graduating student). Guests were inspired to pledge **over \$66,000**, including:

- \$6,744 in cash donations to address our technology needs
- 5-year pledges of \$11,675 per year (ie, \$58,375 total) from our newest “[Integrity Donors](#)” – friends who make monthly/annual pledges to help form the bedrock of our school, providing steady support for our financial aid fund. Please [contact us](#) to learn more about monthly/annual giving.

The reunion was so much fun, we'd like to give more of you a chance to join in closer to home. Rick will be hosting satellite reunions in June in Vancouver, Seattle and possibly one more stop, and at [Friends General Conference](#) in Niagara Falls (July 3-7). [Contact us](#) to register and learn more.

### Summer Camp Coming Soon!

Musical theater, bilingual, beach, Fiddler on the Roof... need we say more? 3-6 weeks of stage adventure for teens, and 2 weeks for younger kids, plus a new 2-week soccer camp (2-hours/day). [Learn more on our website.](#)



### Special Fundraising Goals

As a fundraiser I shouldn't really say this, but we have reached this year's fundraising goal for next year's financial aid fund – gracias! But don't worry, if you haven't had a chance to donate yet, we still have some special goals to work towards. [Donations received by March 31](#) will help us:

1. Establish a new **Teacher Financial Aid Fund**. We try hard to reward our amazing teachers with fair pay, but the reality is that paying tuition is still a struggle for some. This fund will ensure that all our teachers have the peace of mind of knowing their children can attend MFS.
2. **Improve our technology**: new laptops so we have enough for a full class to work on projects at the same time (or possibly a Chromebook for each high school student).
3. Incorporate **environmentally-responsible features** in our new teacher house. Solar hot water heating, rainwater catchment, grey-water processing, sustainable landscaping, natural light, and a solar-clothes-drying room will make this not only a lovely and cost-efficient place to live, but also an educational resource and model home for the whole community. Thank you also to the Monteverde Community Fund for a grant to help with these modifications.

## New Teacher Housing

We love our teachers, and we want to keep them! Quality, affordable housing is key to this, and it's been harder to find as more housing switches to AirBnB. So, we are investing some of our reserve funds to build a 3-unit, 2-story building below Puffer House, then we'll use the rent money to replenish the reserves.

We broke ground Feb.6, and will finish in time for the new school year in August. We are also using this opportunity to teach students about permaculture – in a minicourse with Gaby McAdam they will design and install a greywater garden, living fence, and landscape design to control water run-off.

Happy homes = happy teachers = happy students.



### Focus on Friends – Adrien Taylor, Gap Year

In January, Adrien bravely signed on to be our first-ever [Gap Year](#) student. Designed for students recently graduated from high school, this program provides participants with a chance to learn Spanish, audit any courses they want or need, and volunteer in areas they want to explore as possible future studies/careers. Or even just some time to clear their heads.

**“Being taken out of the old high school system and into a new system was confusing. I needed time to figure it out, some time away from school.”**

Adrien, for example, has a tremendous variety in his program (which is customized for his specific interests):

- Volunteers in the new community library, the Children's Eternal Rainforest, and the school garden
- Studies Spanish Second Language classes
- Audits Humanities (English + Social Studies), Art and Music classes

And if that isn't enough fun, he is also a regular at our Saturday ultimate Frisbee games, joins in on community service days, performed at the poetry slam, helped as a server at the reunion dinner, and just in general is a part of all the joyful rhythms of the school and community. He also enjoys a great relationship with his homestay family.

“I hoped to explore around several different ideas for what to study or focus on. But these weren't really my personal interests – I thought I knew my own interests, but after a while I realized I didn't know. A lot were things I'm not passionate about, but the culmination of expectations others have for me that I have to fulfill. I was just looking for the least painful way to fulfill them.”

**“Thanks to this gap year, I've been able to clear my head to think about what I want to do. I don't have an answer yet, but a better way of thinking about it.”**

We are grateful to Adrien for the great energy he brings to the school, and for his crystal-clear recommendations to make this new program even better next year. We hope we have given him as much in return – a unique life-experience and opportunity to test various waters and find his own passion before taking the plunge into the next phase of his education.

*We are currently accepting applications for a maximum of 3 Gap Year participants for August-Dec. 2017 and/or Jan-May 2018. [Contact us](#) to explore.*