

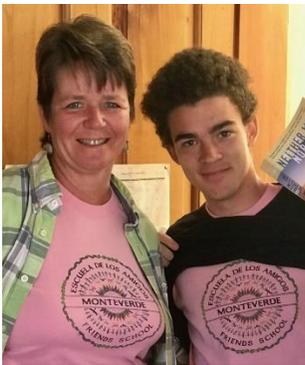
Monteverde Friends School Newsletter – Jan. 2018



Sue's reflections on first semester

We began the year welcoming back a full roster of students plus two gap year students (see "Focus on Friends" below) and four new teachers. We handed out brand new laptop computers to all our 9th through 12th graders and we were off to a running start.

Less than 6 weeks into the year we were hit first by rains that flooded the Meeting room and the kindergarten and the next week by [tropical storm Nate](#) which devastated parts of our community, jeopardized our livelihoods, removed our vacation week and turned our school into a camp and a place for community meals, we even had helicopters land. The weeks following were all about recovery, wondering whether we would have school or not or could even pass on the road.... The school organized for [service day](#) to help in the recovery efforts.



And despite the seemingly daily challenges...trees falling, pit vipers in the classroom, illnesses and more (after awhile I dreaded any morning whatsapp sound on my phone...just wondering what could possibly be next.) The semester still boasted of science fairs and beautiful art, lots of time blending older and younger children, hard work, community murals, the news of incredibly successful entrance exam scores by our recent graduates, pizza from the brand new wood fired oven out back, coffeehouses, dances and so much more! So, I want to say THANK YOU...thank you for all the great and small things you have done to help our school and to nurture and love our children.

Fundraising: Almost There!

Thanks to strong year-end donor contributions we are now **85% of the way to our \$76,000 goal** (our highest ever!) All donations received by March 31 will be used to replenish the financial aid fund, which has been needed more than ever this year after [Tropical Storm Nate](#).

If you would like to help with the final \$12,000 to guarantee assistance for every local child in need, you can donate online or by check from our website's donation page: <http://mfschool.org/donate/>. Gracias!





New teacher, same dynamic Arts Integration

After featuring her in our [last newsletter](#), our beloved art/music teacher PiLi Castro made the difficult decision to leave MFS for a full-time teaching job at a Waldorf School at Nosara Beach. This is an amazing growth experience for PiLi, and such a blessing for that young school - we wish her the best!

We are thrilled to welcome Scout MacKay, who brings 13 years experience teaching art and music, has worked off&on in Monteverde for many years, and has performed throughout the US and Latin America. Scout has seamlessly picked up the magical threads woven by PiLi, as she reflects:

"PiLi helped visual arts students find their niches and unique voices in art. I hope to build on that, guiding students to understand that music and art are inherently laced together, as (adapting a Picasso quote), 'we're all born natural musicians and artists.'"

Focus on Friends - Augusta (Gap Year Student)

Just a few credits shy of graduating from her high school in Oregon, Augusta decided to try our [Gap Year Program](#) last fall. She jumped right in - starting a student music club that performed at our [coffee houses](#), helping with a community mosaic project, studying Spanish, and enjoying the unique experience of a [homestay](#) with Marisela (the teacher featured in this year's [appeal letter](#)).

What's one thing you learned? **"How strong community is, how everyone works together. Everyone teaching and learning at the same time - you can be teaching something and learning something."**

How was the homestay? **"Marisela has been amazing! I've become really close with my host siblings. And she makes amazing food. She's really showed me the culture of being here. We've travelled around a lot.. it's been just amazing."**

Augusta's mom Heather adds, **"I think it's really exceeded expectations. There's been a lot of growing up. It's a perfect way to grow up quickly and learn to be more responsible than she already was."**



We are now accepting applications for next year's [Gap Year](#) (only 2 per semester) and [Study Abroad](#) programs. [Contact us](#) to explore possibilities. <http://mfschool.org>