



## Thank you, Thank you!

The outpouring we have received from you, our MFS community, has inspired and nourished us through this difficult time. Whether you are simply reading our newsletters, or sending us messages or donating, you help us do this work. As Monteverde remains without tourists and thus with few jobs, you've donated 2.5 times as much as our prior year. We are hearing from people we haven't heard from in several years -- or ever before.

You've given us the courage to make tough decisions for the new school year that is just 6 weeks away. While the level of donations is amazing, we still need to replace the 80% of our budget that usually comes from tuition through a combination of cutting expenses and collecting tuition where possible. We've reduced our budget -- and tuition -- for this year by 25% by cutting 3.5 positions and reducing most staff to 80% time and pay. But still, we don't know whether the \$200,000 of tuition included in the reduced budget will materialize so that we can welcome all our returning students back.

You've inspired us -- so we would like to return the favor by sharing what inspires us about MFS. Here are the perspectives of a former teacher, a long-part-time community resident, and a current volunteer. We hope you will enjoy!

### Reflections on Recreo -- Monty Ogden, Former Teacher



*Looks like Monty wasn't the only one enjoying recess!*

Of all my teaching duties, morning recess was my favorite, learning the names and playing style of each Kinder/Pre-K student, even as I ran through the day's lessons for high school English class in my head. Those little people reminded me not to take myself so seriously, to drink in the full joy of greeting your friends in the morning.

But I also loved lunch duty on the cancha (soccer field), 1st and 2nd graders begging for a chance to ring the bell after the ten second countdown to end the period, high school students, some with blue or pink hair, eating in the shade of the kindergarten classroom where they themselves first learned what it meant to go to school. From the vantage point of that station, I could see it all: children slipping in and out of the woods at the edge of the soccer field, a square of sandwich in one hand, a fairy king's invisible staff in the other; a volunteer tending the circular garden

above the meeting room while two teachers and a parent shooed a lora snake away from the field and into the woods.

I could even see into the windows of my own second floor classroom, where colegio (high school) students had usually claimed the space for their own, listening to music through a bluetooth speaker and finishing pen and ink drawings from their pre-lunch art period. On occasion, white clouds might creep in from the forest and cover the field all the way to the ground. In those moments, the delight, from the youngest student to the oldest teacher, was palpable as we each gave up whatever it was we were doing and gave in to the pleasure of blindness and light.

Among the many lessons MFS taught me, I am perhaps most grateful for the way it freed me from the delusion that a friend is someone your own age, that school means sticking to your cohort. At MFS each grouping and every space was fluid; at any moment a 3rd grader might rouse one of those colorful highschoolers from their ukulele and gossip for a game of tag or to seek help mediating a disagreement at the swingset. Friend groups could easily span four grade levels. And there was no such thing as an age limit for who could participate in the lunchtime futbol game; you were just as likely to see a fourth grader sinking the ball in the back of the net as a high school senior. With the freedom to seek the guidance and friendship of those both below and above you in years, the pool of wisdom and of possibility widened, life became interesting.

### Are you up for another challenge?

The match in May, honoring Sue Trostle, was matched in little more than a week. Can you do it again? Even with all the generosity to date, we are still in need for the fast-approaching new school year.

New donors have challenged everyone to chip in to match their \$10,800 donation.  
Whatever the size of your donation, every little bit counts!

For donations in Canada, the US or Costa Rica

**DONATE HERE**

### A Perspective from the Community -- Kay Chornook



*That's Kay with Wolf Guindon a few years ago -- in a forest, naturally! Kay is a native of Hamilton, Ontario but for the last three decades has spent several months a year living in Monteverde.*

*She is the author of "Walking with Wolf: Reflections on A Life Spent Protecting the Costa Rican Wilderness"*

I came to Monteverde in 1990 as a volunteer with the Monteverde Conservation League. My initial exposure to the Friends School was due to my friendship with Wolf Guindon, one of the original Quaker founders of the community. I started attending Meeting and school events such as coffee houses and fundraisers. Like so many, I quickly fell in love

with Monteverde and recognized that the Friends Meeting and School are the heart and mind of this living, breathing body, while the mountain air, forest and tumbling mountain streams are the lungs, limbs and blood that fuel our special community.

I have had several friends from Canada visit over the years. Most visitors head straight into the forest, but I always recommend that they attend Meeting and, if there are children, visit the Friends School. Inevitably they react with curiosity and amazement at the openness, freedom and wide range of teaching methods and activities. Young teenagers are in awe when they pass groups of students wandering together down the road, on their way to visit local trails, farms or elders, laughing and singing together. When the Canadians see this, they inevitably exclaim that at their school they would never be allowed to do such a thing. School life in Canada has become much more regulated.

My young friend, Noë Pigeau, asked me if it was possible to not only visit the school, but make a presentation sharing his experiences growing up in the northern bush of Ontario. Both the school and the grade 5 teacher, Mash, were very welcoming. Noë enthusiastically gave a short talk with pictures about the very different world where he is from followed by questions and a discussion with the class. The experience didn't stop there - he and his brother Sam took part throughout the week in science and English classes. They also got the chance to climb trees with Mash, one of their favourite experiences while in Costa Rica.

All the kids who visit leave with the same remark: "I wish I could go to school here". The Friends School focuses on the Quaker principles of peace, cooperation and simplicity but also provides an education weaving the search for knowledge throughout the colourful tapestry that is the Monteverde community while embracing its spectacular natural environment. When I donate to the school it always makes me feel like I am making an investment in a brighter, kinder future.

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### View from a Longtime Classroom Volunteer -- Kenna Manos



*Kenna, in the green shirt, along with MFS students and staff, learn timber framing to build our amazing meeting room.*



*The resulting meeting room at the rise of mid-week worship with all of our students, faculty, and some local Friends. The room is in near-constant use for everything from worship to shows and coffee houses, to science fairs to recess on rainy days.*

I often wonder how my life would have been different if I had attended the Monteverde Friends School. How might its trajectory have been altered if my formal education had begun with models of kindness, respect, and cooperation---as embedded in our school---instead of the competition, ambition and criticism that characterized my own school days? How much earlier would I have started on the path towards more gratitude, more love, and less judgement?

Our Quaker testimonies of peace, integrity, community, and stewardship deeply inform our school here. Even our kindergarten students attend the Wednesday mid-week meeting. Although few are Quakers, their lives are shaped

by ongoing practices of quietness, respect, and openness. Students may fidget a lot during their early years of meeting, but they often return as adults to pay tribute to how these practices of silence and thoughtfulness have been instrumental in their future lives.

A few months ago, at recess time, a gathering of kids and teachers huddled at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom window. They were staring at an Orange-bellied Trogon (now reclassified as a Collared Trogon) on a branch outside. Both students and teachers may have seen this bird dozens of times before, but nature doesn't lose its fascination here. No one is blasé about such sightings; each is a treasured event. I tried to imagine what would occasion a similar group of avid spectators in other locations. Perhaps a schoolyard scuffle? Showing off the newest version of an I-phone? Here, though, nature still takes precedence.

The Monteverde Friends School, serving the local community, has always been our major ministry as a Quaker meeting. For nearly 70 years, we've been providing bi-lingual education to local students. May we find, with your help, that way will open to continue this ministry for many more years.

**Feeling Inspired?**

**We hope you'll support us with your donations so  
we can continue this important work!**

**Let's meet the new \$10,800 challenge!**



**To make a tax-deductible donation in the**

**US or Canada**

**Or a direct deposit in Costa Rica**



*This picture taken by a student who studied at MFS for a semester. The picture was part of his Eagle Scout project.*