



## Monteverde Friends School/ Escuela de los Amigos Monteverde

Newsletter, December 2020

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### Exciting News ... And More Challenges



*Back to these days of togetherness*

On December 14th we got a wonderful piece of news: the Costa Rican government announced that private schools would be allowed to offer hybrid in-person/virtual classes starting in January! What a joy to know that we could be reunited with our students with that personal contact that virtual classes simply cannot provide.

But then – gulp! – we realized that once again, after totally revamping the school just months ago to move to all-virtual classes, and with only weeks to go before the start of second semester, we needed to totally reorganize our school once again. The 37-page manual of regulations from the Ministry of Education (MEP) on what we must do in order to reopen was a good hint at the complexity of the task.

The challenges have mounted. Social distancing will require 2 to 3 times the classroom space we have. As classes are divided into 2 or 3 rooms, more staffing is needed. Added space means more work for our (as yet) part time housekeeping and maintenance staff. Some families may not want their children to attend in-person; that means more staff to duplicate classroom lessons. Students and teachers will be required to enter and leave rooms in a certain order (e.g. enter to fill back seats first) to reduce personal contact. And then there's the challenging of redoing our entire schedule.

And those are just a few examples!

We are fortunate that, in this close-knit community, we have offers to use the space of other organizations that are empty due to the pandemic. We are in discussions now that hopefully will finalize those arrangements.

Despite how wonderfully generous our donors have been throughout 2020, we must make yet another plea for your support so that we can bring our students back together at least part-time. We fully understand that many of you many have been affected by this pandemic as much as we have, and that a donation may not be possible. But we hope that those less affected **will help us out.**

For U.S. supporters, perhaps you would consider a donation of up to \$300 that will help reduce your taxes even if you don't itemize your deductions. Or perhaps you would consider sharing the stimulus check that was just approved.

It is only with your help that we have been able to make it through all of the upheaval of 2020 -- drastic budget cutbacks when the local economy fell apart, then rebuilding and taking in students from a local school that had to close, securing the computer equipment for virtual classes, providing school supplies our students needed at home and on and on.



*Even with such a challenging first semester, our teachers still had enough sense of humor to celebrate semester end with a **video spoof** of all the ways virtual classes can go wrong -- like frozen or lost internet and riding around town to find a connection!*

With your help once again, we look forward to a better 2021, and we extend our fervent hopes that you, too will find a better year. We hope and pray for good health and a return to more normal lives for you and your love ones as we turn the page to a new year. And please know of our deep gratitude for you interest in and support for our school.

**Through partner organizations in the United States and Canada, we are able to accept tax deductible donations there as well as in Costa Rica.**

**We hope you'll find the best route for your donation by clicking below!**

