



Monteverde Friends School/Escuela de los Amigos

June/July 2021

www.mfschool.org

From One School Year to the Next



With limited attendance and careful table spacing, we celebrated as our Preppa students graduated. We are excited about their move into 1st grade

We made it! We finished an amazing year that fully challenged our ability to change course on a dime, tested our flexibility and creativity to the max and required extraordinary effort. But we made it through.

There were so many emotions as the year came to a close. Sadly we had to finish the school year virtually, so in-person goodbyes generally weren't possible. There was such a mixture of joy, sadness, relief and exhaustion.

Sue Gabrielson, Head of School for the last 4 years, headed off to lead the reopening of another much-needed school in our area. We also offered sad farewells to three teachers as they move to be closer to their families.

Now we turn to preparations for the new school year. Is it possible that it's only weeks away? We are sprucing up teacher housing for new arrivals and tweaking our hybrid school model based on last year's experience. We have just welcomed Liza Ewen, our new Head of School (see below) in Monteverde, and look forward to welcoming new teachers as the new school year begins to dawn.

Looking Back: Time for Appreciation



As our remarkable school year came to a close and we all breathed a sigh of relief, MFS held to the longstanding school tradition of holding Meetings for Appreciation. We would usually bring everyone together in person, begin with some

silence then call on students from each grade level to allow students from that grade to express appreciation if they feel led to do so. This year, we had to do that by Zoom, but the full appreciation was felt nonetheless.

Here's a sampling of some of the gratitude that was expressed, from our youngest to oldest students:

"I thank anyone who has ever helped me in my life and in this hard year."

"I thank all of the school because I think this school is very special."

"I thank Liz for teaching me poetry and being so nice."

"I thank my teachers, my friends and my dog and cat."

"I am grateful to teachers for trying hard when it is hard to teach online."

To a particular teacher: "You understood and had a lot of patience."

"When I was down you always brought me up"

To another teacher: "I don't know how I would have gotten through this year without you"

To the volunteer taking temperatures: "Thank you for always being so welcoming and silly. I always liked seeing you in the streets because you were always very friendly."



Sixth grade students mark their graduation by planting trees

**We'd like to say a special thank you to our recurring donors.
With their monthly, quarterly and annual donations, we get not only their support
but a predictable base of support that helps us in our planning.**

**It's easy to set up a tax deductible recurring donation!
From the U.S. just go to the [Network for Good donation site](#) and
set the donation frequency under Donation Preferences.**

**From Canada, just go to the [Canada Helps donation site](#)
and select the tab for Monthly Donations**

Looking Ahead: Our New Head of School



What are the odds that as we searched for a new Head of School we would find a Quaker with experience both in teaching and school administration who was interested in moving to Monteverde?

Well, somehow we did it.

Liza Ewen has joined us this month after 6 years of serving first as the Dean of Students

and then as the Acting Head of School for Friends School of Haverford, PA. Prior to that she spent seventeen years combining teaching with administrative roles (dean of students, department chair, college counselor) at Friends Central School (Wynnewood, PA)

Interestingly, it was schools that brought her to Quakerism. Liza grew up in Clinton, a small village of about 2,000 people in upstate New York. As she was finishing high school and looking for a college, she knew that after years of small towns she wanted something bigger, but not too big – near, but not directly in a large city. She focused her search on the Philadelphia area and chose Swarthmore college.

With its Quaker roots, Swarthmore offered a Quaker Meeting for Worship on its campus and Liza opted to attend to see what unprogrammed worship was like. That started to draw her toward Quakerism. Then as she began teaching, she realized that she wanted small classes like those she enjoyed in her home town. But most of all, she wanted to teach in a school that shared her values, and Quaker schools fit that.

As Liza puts in “For me, what I believe and what I teach are intertwined and inextricable.”

Coming to live in Costa Rica was already in the cards, as Liza’s wife Sandra is from Costa Rica. They wanted to ensure that their children, Pablo age 4 and Santiago age 10, would experience Costa Rica and Sandra’s heritage.

After months of recruiting and planning for the transition to Liza’s leadership, we are delighted she is here, and she shares those feelings.

“It is so nice to finally be here and doing the job! It is no longer just an idea. I am excited to be here.” as Liza puts it.



**We couldn't do all this without the amazing help of our donors.
We hope you'll consider donating, whether for the
first time or once again, by clicking on the icon below.**

**No matter how small or large the monetary value of your donation, we
deeply appreciate your support**

