



Monteverde Friends School/Escuela de los Amigos

December 2021

www.mfschool.org

Heartfelt Season's Greetings

As the challenging year 2021 draws to a close, and Christmas is just days away, we want to express our deep appreciation of our extended community, from local to international. The Monteverde Friends School continues in its 70th year thanks to that community -- current and former students, teachers and staff, donors, volunteers, visitors -- that cares for us.

December has been eventful. It has included celebrations of holidays, studying peacemaking, packing up our things to return to a single campus in January, celebrating the end of semester with performances and heading into a semester break, much needed by all.

While we take this break, we remain aware of the opportunities and challenges ahead. COVID incidence in Costa Rica has been greatly reduced to about 100 or fewer daily cases for the whole country.

However, the first known Omicron case was discovered this week. With hopes that the high vaccination rates here -- over 90% of eligible groups have gotten at least one shot -- will limit Omicron effects, we plan to return all grades to our MFS campus. We really look forward to being all together again.

At the same time, financial challenges remain, as we run a full-time school while tuition is still reduced. We are seeing many more tourists and are hopeful that the local economy is improving so that families can afford, sometimes with scholarship help, to pay as we return to full tuition next year. But the challenge first is to get through this school year.

That's where our wider community comes through for us, and why we give great thanks.



Celebrating the End of the First Semester



At MFS, we have a great tradition for the last day of each semester: each grade level provides some sort of performance or skit. The skits are often totally endearing, whether the shyness of the children or the creativity of the presentation.

Last Friday at MFS, we carried on the tradition for the primary grades at MFS and for the colegio students at the CEC. It was sad that we weren't all together, as in pre-pandemic years, but lots of fun nonetheless.

At the primary level, the kindergartners provided a manger scene with angels and shepherds in costume. Another class performed Jingle Bells and a few students presented their own skits.

The 5/6th grade students created their own skit with a marvelously 2021 theme. In their skit the Grinch was spoiling their Christmas in a different way: he stole their extra face masks, leaving them unable to open their presents together because they didn't have enough masks. Fortunately, the Grinch finally returned the masks and they had their Christmas.

The skits are done from youngest to oldest grades, and the final act is done by the teachers. This time, the teachers truly -- and quite literally -- got the room rocking with their performance of "Feliz Navidad" (The video added "All I Want For Christmas Is You"). Overjoyed students leapt to their feet and joined the performance by jumping up and down. So many were jumping that we could feel the floor vibrating up and down!

Click the picture below to get a quick taste of the joy that filled the room for that performance!



Click the picture to see the video

Thank you to all who have already made their year-end donation!

It is a struggle to get through the current school year with reduced tuition while also gathering enough funds for next-year's scholarships.

Please support us with your tax-deductible donation to mark the end of 2021. Just click below.



Congratulations!

We are so proud of our three 11th grade students -- **Natalia Vargas Núñez, Laura Fonseca Brenes, and Roy Fabián Rodríguez Torres** -- who recently earned full university credit for precalculus.

And kudos to their dedicated teacher, **Jeynor Trejos Ramirez!**

Qualifying for these credits was not just part of their regular school courses. It was an extra class where they learned high-level algebra and trigonometry. They showed up before school, after school and even during vacations to meet with Jeynor in addition to studying on their own.

We look forward to great futures for these students!



On the Move ... Again



Moving the logs we used for outdoor seating and all the furniture we brought.

Over the past two years, we have provided schooling in a different format each semester. In March 2020, we made a rapid change into virtual for older students, home assignments for younger ones.

By August, for the first semester of 20-21, the whole school had virtual classes. Second semester we changed to a hybrid approach on separate campuses with in-person classes in the morning and virtual in the afternoon.

For the current year including the semester we just finished, all students were back for full school days, but continuing at two campuses.

Now for second semester, with social distancing requirements for classrooms reduced from 6 to 3 feet, we will all be back on the MFS campus. It's a squeeze, but we can do it.

As grateful as we are for the space that the Cloud Forest School rented to us -- we could not have had in-person classes at all without that space -- we are delighted to be reuniting at a single campus.

No more having administrative staff running back and forth to serve both campuses. Our teachers who teach all grade levels -- e.g. for art and gym -- can do so in one place.

But more importantly, we can get back to the day-to-day interactions that weave all of us into a single MFS community. Younger students can find role models in the older students as they interact for lunch, recess, assembly and worship times. Our new colegio teachers will get to know the primary teachers better, the better to share ideas and approaches.

Yes, the Omicron variant is a big variable here that could require change again, but we are hopeful that with well over 90% of our staff and older students vaccinated, and younger students getting vaccinated, any Omicron infections might be manageable.

Stay tuned in 2022 and we'll let you know how this goes!

We appreciate your support!

Tax deductible donations in Canada, the United States and Costa Rica.

Just click below:

