



Monteverde Friends School/Escuela de los Amigos

March 2022

[www.mfschool.org](http://www.mfschool.org)

## Dare We Hope?



It doesn't seem possible that three-quarters of the school year has flown by!

In mid-March, we completed our third term. At the end of the first term in October, and after the third term, rather than send home a piece of paper with grades on it, our teachers meet with the parents of each of their students. They discuss academic and emotional progress, students' strengths, and perhaps areas of difficulty where parents might help. After just one day off, we moved into our 4<sup>th</sup> quarter on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

As the recent Omnicron outbreak wanes, and with all students back on one campus, we are starting to get a new sense of normalcy. We still wear masks, wash hands, keep primary and colegio students separated, and limit visitors on campus during the school day. Partly, we have just gotten used to these protocols, and partly other requirements (e.g. temperatures, distancing) have been relaxed.

*Click picture for details*

Teachers know that this part of the school year is often when students get restless, looking forward to the end of the year. Keep reading below to hear about the creative and hands-on approaches teachers have taken to enrich their lessons and hold student interest.

Meanwhile, our administrative staff still cover day-to-day issues, but along with the School Committee, they are also turning to the next school year. They are assessing where we might have one or two spots for new students, setting tuition levels and a new budget, setting up schedules, and determining how much we can give in scholarships and to whom.

School parents are organizing a fundraiser for the school, our Caminata/Walkathon for April 2nd. This is the first time in two years that we have been able to hold this annual event.

It feels so good that perhaps we can look forward to a normal school year!



How far we have come in two years! It was right at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> term, 2020, when the Ministry of Education closed all schools and our teachers scrambled to switch to virtual classes.

As ecotourists disappeared and the local economy crashed, we seriously questioned whether the school could continue in anywhere near its usual form— or even continue at all.

But you, our supporters, came through time and time again. Your donations doubled at the start of the pandemic. In 2020, you met a \$10,000 match in honor of longtime and much-loved community member Sue Trostle. This past International Giving Tuesday, you helped us buy tents, tables and computers for our students. You remember us both at the end of each year and around the year.

Now, once again, you have met a match, this time for \$15,000, even before our March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline!

Many times, we hear people here say in awe “We wouldn’t still have a school after the pandemic if not for our donors.” We hope that you hear in that our immense gratitude for your support.

### Creative Learning

It is amazing to see how our school integrates hands-on learning, creativity and shared Costa Rican and Quaker values. It often takes our students way beyond our small community to connect with the rest of the world. Here are just a few examples.

The day that Russia invaded Ukraine, our seventh and eighth grade students’ Humanities/Social Studies class was scheduled for a unit on Quakers and current events. That led to a discussion of peacemaking and war. Having learned of a link on Facebook to Quakers in Kyiv, Ukraine, students made posters expressing their peacemaking values and their support for Kyiv Friends. We posted the [students' messages](#) on the MFS Facebook page and linked to Kyiv Friends, where they too shared our post. The post on our MFS page was shared 112 times and reached more than 11,000 people worldwide, much to our students’ delight!

Our students are as glued to social media as teenagers everywhere, so their class continued to explore ways in which social media can be used for good causes. A week later, the class participated in World Wildlife Day, drawing pictures of endangered animals with text to explain why the loss of these animals would harm the environment.



Posters for Ukraine

They sent them to an international competition, along with students from 58 countries around the world.

Our younger students, in our 3/4 class, had a recent lesson focusing attention on appreciating even the smallest animals around us. They were challenged to create artwork that depicted their surroundings and particularly the various insects that are so numerous (and typically not biting or dangerous, except scorpions) in our rich Monteverde natural environment. What a variety of images they produced!

On the theme of combining art and other topics, our 11/12 class posted a beautiful chalk drawing on a blackboard (the back of a bus stop) in Monteverde's main gathering place. A local group recruits an artist each week to post positive messages there. The class picture celebrated International Women's Day, March 8th. Several of our teachers and students also participated in a local march upholding womens' rights, an important topic especially for our teenagers.

In colegio English classes, students were challenged to write a profile of a local person and enter their essay in the [New York Times contest](#). Students identified someone outside their family that they wanted to learn about, then interviewed that person, took their picture, and summarized their story in a short Q&A article of up to 500 words. We keep checking but the Times has not yet posted the winner of the contest, whose article will be published in the paper!

Also in March, our colegio students participated in a Career Day. Students attended five different sessions of panels with professionals from health, technology, business, education, nonprofits, architecture, art and corporate fields. We deeply appreciate the local community members and colleagues from abroad for showing up in person or Zooming to talk about their careers and share their advice.

Phew! It has been a busy but productive month!

*Our 11/12<sup>th</sup> graders with their art for Women's Day, and for Career Day, students learn about careers in finance.*



*Toucans are an amazing sight locally, but endangered*



*Some of the many insects and trees around us!*

