



Monteverde Friends School/Escuela de los Amigos

August 2022

www.mfschool.org

We're Back!

What a joy to see our students again -- to see the whole, unmasked faces of our students, all grades, K-12, and perhaps to hug them! Smiles were everywhere.



This returning kindergartner jumped into the arms of Liza Ewen, our Head of School, as soon as he saw her.

Our teachers and staff gathered starting August 3rd to organize for the new year and agree on some very limited pandemic protocols (e.g. that we will wear masks when in groups larger than a single classroom) to plan out schedules and to brainstorm for the return of "mini-courses" on Friday afternoons.

Then on August 10th, our students rejoined us with big smiles on their faces and hugs for people they may not have seen for a while. Some little ones who are just starting in Pre-K (age 3-4) were pretty shy, but that often wears off in an hour or two as they dive into lessons and new friends.

Over the last two years, while penny-picking to stay afloat, we delayed a lot of expenditures, such as classroom-related supplies. Now, with your help, we are trying to catch up on those supplies.

Following an introduction to the new school year shared by our Head of School, Liza Ewen, we outline four "wish list" items and explanations from the teachers who will use them.

We hope that with your donations, through our US, Canadian and Costa Rica arrangements for [tax-deductible donations](#), we will be able to purchase these items .

Also below, we introduce our new music teacher Gina Mirenda, whose experience includes two years in Mumbai, India, including a role in a Bollywood film! You can enjoy videos of some of her work.

A Welcome Back from our Head of School

Liza Ewen, our Head of School, offered this reflection on August 16th in the weekly news that she provides to all of our school families and staff.

While teachers are well-practiced at starting anew every 12 months, the process of starting the school year never diminishes in importance. The stakes are always high, especially when teachers are committed to building a classroom community that fosters belonging and inclusion.

The staff at Monteverde Friends School have long known what the current research in education shows—that students of every age and grade learn best and learn more when they are connected to and recognized by their teachers and peers.

Every morning, in individual classrooms and in school assemblies, our students and teachers greet one another, share a favorite story or poem, or play games. These small moments at the start of each day are a microcosm of the start of the new school year. Before learning new mathematical facts or equations, before naming the letters of the alphabet or the elements of the periodic table, students need to feel seen, heard, and known by their teachers and each other.

This sense of belonging and delight makes it much easier for students to try something new, face the unfamiliar, take a risk, make a mistake, and learn.

Welcome back, friends—I look forward to all the delight and all the learning of the year ahead.



Can you help us meet these needs for effective teaching?

Our goal: \$4,500



Amber Lorenz, high school English Language Arts

Reading assessment: The STAR Reading Assessment will allow me to see not only students' reading levels, but also which specific skills they have mastered or need to work on.



Gina Morenda, Music Teacher

Musical Instruments and supplies: We have dreams of developing a choir and teaching our students to play musical instruments but we need several things such as a weighted keyboard, music stands, new instruments.



Sirleney Perez

Primary Spanish Language Arts

Books in Spanish for younger students: The books we have for primary Spanish classes are old and no longer appeal to our students. We hope to buy sets of 10 books written in Latino Spanish to enrich our students' interest in Spanish Language Arts.



Liza Ewen,

Head of School

Up-to-date Projectors turn our classroom whiteboards into a hub of the most up-to-date, web-based resources for all of our students and share daily, individualized lessons, presentations, and assignments with ease.

For tax-deductible donations in the US, Canada and Costa Rica, by check or online, please click below:



Donations above and beyond the \$ 4,500 will go toward MFS scholarships.

Let the Music Begin!

We are delighted to welcome Gina Miranda as our new music teacher for all grades. She comes to us with not only multiple music talents but lots of multinational cultural experiences as well.

She was born and spent part of her youth in Heredia (near San Jose), Costa Rica, but with a dad from the United States, she also spent part of her youth in the US. She earned her Bachelor's of Music degree from George Mason University, with a few credits from Universidad Costa Rica as well.

In addition, Gina earned a Master of Music in Contemporary Performance from Berklee College of Music in Valencia, Spain. Just search her name on the Internet and you can find a number of her performances.

With her degrees in hand, Gina worked in Mumbai, India as an Assistant Professor of Music in a university there, while also actively performing in jazz venues with local and international musicians. Gina even got the chance to record a song for a Bollywood production! You can see a [clip from that film](#), featuring Gina's voice as the actress lip-

Click below for a sample of Gina's singing:



syncs to her vocal interpretation of an ancient Tamil poem set to music. The perfect role for Gina: they were looking for a Spanish accent over an Indian dialect!

Gina is full of ideas on how she can bring all that experience to MFS, with dreams of a chorus, creative classes, and performances. Already, our 1st through 4th graders are learning to play recorders!

