



Monteverde Friends School/Escuela de los Amigos

October 2022

www.mfschool.org

An Eventful Month!



Our 11/12 class worked toward funding their year-end class trip by offering a Fright Night. The turnout was great as many enjoyed the food they served and the film for children and then one for adults.

What a pleasure it is to be handling normal challenges in the school year! After the last couple of years of constant change, these issues seem so small by comparison. This allows us to focus on the many ways that children (and all of us) learn, ways that go beyond what can be contained just in book learning.

There have been some challenges this month, as we completed our first term (quarter) of the year, took a week-long break mid-month and returned to start the second quarter. Hurricane/tropical storm Julia swept through southern Nicaragua. The resulting torrential rains didn't do damage here on the mountain but the waters flowed down to the lowlands, causing floods.

The Ministry of Education closed public schools for a few days, first due to flooding and then due to the spread of RSV. We remained open toward the end of the term, but had to close on the very last day which was planned as Cultures Day, exposing students to cultural patterns and types of food from different parts of the world. We heard that some of our students would have preferred to be here for Cultures Day instead of a day off!

We are back in session for the start of our second term, and thinking about all the ways that we teach beyond what's in books. An essay below, from Liza Ewen, our Head of School reflects on how our mission in teaching includes, but goes beyond book learning. The article after that looks at our mini-courses and the different approaches and skills they teach.

This approach gives a richness in education that we hope our students carry through life.

Do you have good memories of your time as a student, parent, teacher, staff member or volunteer?

Do you wonder where some of your school friends are and what they are doing? Join our new Facebook group, **Alums and Friends, Monteverde Friends School** and see who you might find there!

Recognize any of the children in this picture posted in the group by Mar Madrigal Rojas?





Learning in Many Ways:

Insight Shared by
Liza Ewen, Head of School

In thinking about my years as both a classroom teacher and an administrator at Quaker schools, I'm struck by what makes learning experiences different in Quaker schools. At Monteverde Friends School (as well as at Quaker schools around the globe), learning is not a series of problems to be solved but a set of experiences to be lived.

Of course, Quaker classrooms require that students practice fundamental skills in ways that may echo a more traditional education—memorizing one's multiplication tables, as it turns out, is crucial to academic and real-life mathematics.

But at Monteverde Friends School, foundational learning happens through inquiry and collaboration, involves reflection, and invites bigger questions. In Quaker classrooms, teachers and students are partners in the learning process, working together at almost every turn. Quaker education embraces the idea that explaining how you arrive at an answer is as (or more) valuable than getting the "right" answer.

We teach students habits of mind as we teach them essential facts and skills—critical thinking, careful listening, and creative problem solving. I hope that your conversations with your child's teacher in conferences highlight the value and importance of learning in a Quaker classroom, where teachers strive to prepare students to be intelligent, thoughtful, critical, and generous participants in the world.



It takes a lot more than just a village to afford this much-needed approach to education.

It is only with your support that we can offer this kind of education to our 125 students.

Please help us out with a tax-deductible donation in the US, Canada or Costa Rica.

Just go to our [Donor Page](#) for all the ways you can make your donation.



Teaching Different Skills in Different Ways

We use several venues to teach not only academics but values and ways of thinking about a broad range of things. Here are just a couple of examples.

High on the list of traits we would like students to adopt are responsibility and ownership. Ideally they will feel the school is truly theirs, and care for it as a result. One form this takes is that each afternoon, students spend the last 15 minutes before dismissal taking on cleaning tasks. No, the school is not spotless when they finish (sometimes far from it!), but students learn that they are responsible for the campus they use each day.

Similarly, year-end class trips, (which are particularly more ambitious for the older students), are not just a gift they can take for granted. Instead, each class is responsible for raising a large portion of the cost of their trip. Given that trips for older grades often involve transportation, meals and overnight stays, that is no small task.

Classes organize events like movie nights or coffee houses. For a movie night, for instance, they must decide on the movies (often both a children's movie and something for teenagers), what food they will sell, how they will advertise and how much they will charge. The night of the show, they take on preparing food, greeting guests, collecting and accounting for money and clean-up afterwards. It takes a lot of responsibility and skills for a successful event to come together, and the shows usually attract a full house.

Another example is the mini-courses we offer. In many schools, Friday afternoon is one of the toughest times in the week. Both teachers and students are tired and just want to head home for the weekend. But not so at MFS! That's when we offer mini-courses on a wide variety of topics. Our new term includes courses on everything from Lego Robotics to sewing, Latin dance, starting a school newspaper, making short films, weaving and so on. The toughest part for students is deciding which mini-course they will take, but fortunately the most popular topics are repeated in different terms.

These mini-courses don't check off the boxes for the curriculum stipulated by the Ministry of Education for accreditation. However, they do check off many items that we want our MFS education to include: creativity, imagination, working with all ages, physical dexterity in some cases, patience at times, and so much more.

We are so glad that mini-courses are back after not being able to offer them during the pandemic. They were missed so much by students that when we simulated a presidential election last year during Costa Rican elections, the winning candidate included restoration of mini-courses as a major part of his platform!





This message was sent powered by [DonorSnap](#). To unsubscribe and stop receiving these emails [click here](#)