



## Monteverde Friends School/Escuela de los Amigos

December 2022

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

### We Did It!



*One of several school parents who spent full days cooking traditional Costa Rican food to sell as part of the annual Feria to raise funds for MFS.*

Our heartfelt season's greetings to all!

Our first semester of the 2022-23 school year finished this past Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. The semester has in many ways been a return to normalcy. All grades are at one school site and able to mix in games, at recess, and through our "sibling" program.

Monteverde has come back alive, with many tourists yearning for travel after years of the pandemic. It has been a relatively successful year for the tourist industry here, though most employers and workers are still trying to fill deficits that resulted from the pandemic.

We see a lot of the same need to fill deficits for our students, in terms of both academics and emotional stability. Children simply don't learn as much through video, lacking in-person contact. Through a very generous gift, we've been able to implement a special reading curriculum to try and bring students back to expected levels. Through money raised by school parents, we have been able to provide a part-time music teacher and a part-time counselor.

It takes a whole community to accomplish this – students, parents, teachers, staff, and our donors. Our students and parents do their share of raising funds for special projects and funding class trips for the end of the school year.

We hope you will read on to hear how all parties are given important responsibilities – and for a little fun, how we celebrate at the end of each semester.

**Along with people in many countries, MFS is experiencing Costa Rica's rapid inflation and financial uncertainty.**

**For those suffering financially as a result, we understand that a donation is not possible.**

**If you are financially secure, we hope you help us through a year-end donation.**

**For tax deductible donations in the US, Canada and Costa Rica, by check or online, just go to**



## Everyone Doing Their Part



*The Feria -- not just a great place for Christmas shopping while supporting MFS, but entertainment as well!*



*Enthusiastic walkers in our 2022 Caminata (Walk/Run) organized by the parents and families of our students*

We want our donors to know that in addition to your generosity, all of us in the school community are investing our time and money, and learning important lessons on responsibility in that process.

We expect everyone involved in our school to take on responsibility for the school. It is an important lesson for our students to learn. That responsibility can occur in a financial sense or through other activities.

Here are some of the financial strategies:

- While we provide scholarships for many of our students, no one gets a free ride. Every family is required to pay at least 25% of the tuition for their child or children.
- Each year, school parents run three events to raise funds that they then designate for special school needs. The events include a Christmas Fair with local craftspeople paying fees for a spot to sell their wares while children enjoy a trampoline and a zip line outside. A couple of months later, parents organize a Sports Day with a small admission fee. The third event is a Caminata, a run/walk/bicycle for several kilometers, ending with lunch at a beautiful spot with a view of a volcano in the distance. Last year, these events raised enough to fund a part time music teacher, a part time counselor who works directly with students.
- Toward the end of our school year, each class takes a class trip. For younger students that is a local event, but our older classes pick a destination they can travel to and typically stay for a day or two. Older students are held responsible for raising the funds for their trips. They raise the funds throughout the year by organizing lunches or bake sales for sale to the entire school during lunch or recess. In addition, older students sponsor occasional Coffee Houses for the community – open mic shows for community people to share a song, a dance, tell a story, etc. with lots of delicious food for sale.

Some others ways that we hold students responsible:

- The last 15 minutes of each school days in cleaning time. Students empty trash from classrooms and offices, sweep floors, and perform other cleaning. While we still must have housekeeping staff clean as well, the message to students is that they must take responsibility for their classrooms and for the school facility.

- Our education includes helping students to find their own solutions rather than just providing our adult answers. For example, when two students are in conflict, we ask them to sit down together in a peaceful spot and explore seek something they can agree on. Similarly, we rely on students to design their own set of rules for recess while incorporating MFS’s standard of making recess games accessible for all age groups.

It takes a village to run a small, bilingual, school with high-quality academics that reflect our values!

Have a student who will be in 11th or 12th grade for 2023-24?

Would they be interested in a study abroad with us?

We anticipate that we will have **1 or 2 seats** available in our combined 11/12 grade classroom for the 2023-4 school year (August to May)

More information, including costs, on our **web page**.

After reading that, please **contact us** if you have a student who is interested

### Celebrating the Halfway Point of the School Year



*For a bit of fun, click on the picture for a video of our teachers dancing to Hayya, Hayya (Better Together), the anthem of the 2022 World Cup*

It has been 5 months of hard work since August when we started the 2022-23 school year at MFS. Students and teachers have worked hard throughout and are truly ready for a break!

It has long been an MFS tradition that before we start the holiday break, we take time to gather the school and welcome family members for a little fun through performances.

Each class puts on a brief performance of their choice. Most opt to present a musical piece, sometimes with instruments. Others prefer to do skits that students create. And some combine the two.

Our 5/6 class was particularly creative and very funny. Singing the “Twelve Days of Christmas” didn’t seem all that original – but then we saw what three of the students did to represent each of the days, and to act those out for each verse. For example, for the partridge in a pear tree, one student jumped on another student’s back, piggyback style. For the three French hens, the students would step forward and say something in French. Swans a-swimming

involved lying on the stage floor. The countdown from 12 was truly hilarious with the students going rapidly through 12 ways of representing the lyrics.

The presentations start with our kindergarteners and move up through the grades. The grand finale caps off the show with a performance by teachers. This semester the teachers danced to the song “Hayya, Hayya”, which translates to “Better Together”, FIFA’s theme song for the 2022 World Cup competition. Students always enjoy seeing their teachers in such a different role, and no exception here. Much of the audience was on their feet, cheering, singing along, and jumping up and down so much that we could feel the floor moving!

It's a great way to end the semester and head off for much-needed rest – but we are also looking forward to seeing our students again on January 11, 2023.

