



Monteverde Friends School/Escuela de los Amigos

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www.mfschool.org

Shared Responsibility



One of our young students doing the daily cleaning.

If you are on our mailing list, you understand that we are often looking for financial support from donors outside our immediate school community. In this issue, we want to emphasize that we don't just ask others to donate; we ask all of our school community -- students, families, staff, etc. -- to share in the responsibility of funding and operating our school.

That happens on all sorts of levels. For instance, every school day ends with 15 minutes when students help clean the classrooms and school buildings. Our housekeeper still does the deep cleaning, but cleaning up at the end of the day is an important way of teaching students to share responsibility for the facilities they use.

Students take responsibility for their own learning in different ways, as in the colegio English class role playing a court trial of Oedipus. School families organize events to fund special projects in the school and students raise money for their own class trips.

We hope you'll enjoy the articles below that describe these approaches to shared responsibility.

Oedipus on Trial



A blind Oedipus (with glasses & cane) with his defense team.



The jury ponders their decision.



The defense pleads Oedipus' case

At the end of last week, I sat in the courtroom with our 11/12 students. As a culminating project in her English class, Amber Lorenz had students put Oedipus, arguably the most famous of Greek tragic heroes, on trial.

The goal was for students to wrestle with a timeless literary and philosophical question: do we have control over our own destiny?

Students prepared for various roles, including attorneys, witnesses, members of the jury, using their knowledge of Sophocles' play *Oedipus the King* to determine the extent of Oedipus' free will.

Both the prosecution and the defense called and cross-examined witnesses, and the jury was charged with taking careful notes to support their verdict. In the end, the jury found Oedipus not guilty, convinced that a prophecy from the gods cannot be thwarted after all.

Amber designed this project to tap into students' comprehension of the play, critical thinking skills, and creativity.

As her first year at MFS comes to an end, Amber shared that she's grateful to teach in a community that values academic skills while simultaneously nurturing each student as a whole person.

"In English class, students learn and practice essential reading and writing skills, but they also build confidence, develop creativity, think critically, reflect on their lives and our world, and exercise empathy."

We are grateful she's joined our colegio team and value her commitment to making literature relevant to our students.

Know a student who might like to spend a semester abroad?

**We have one seat available in our 11/12 class for a study abroad student,
January 1, 2024 through May 31, 2024.**

**If interested, please read our [Study Abroad page](#) to see what is involved.
If it looks like that might work, please [contact us](#).**

Annual Caminata: School Community Role in Funding



Part of the crowd off to a start, two walkers with well-deserved celebration at the top, and a family group.

This month our school families sponsored our annual Caminata (Walkathon). Participants from young to old, walking, running, or bicycling, took off under beautiful sunshine on the 13 KM (8 mile) hike up steep hills. It is a tough course, and rides and refreshments are available along the way, but those who get to the top are rewarded with a lunch and incredibly beautiful views of the Arenal Volcano in the distance.

While the event is meant to raise funds for MFS, and it is quite a challenge, it is done in a low-pressure, untimed, non-competitive way. In many cases, whole families enjoy the walk together. And with the exercise comes delicious treats and lunch along the way.

Behind the scenes, it is a major organizing effort for parents and families of our students. There is a role for publicizing the event with posters, a way to sign up for the event, and a way to donate. Multiple parents are recruited to plan and prepare food for refreshments along the walk and lunches for 100 or more people. Cooking starts almost a week before the event.

Each year, our school families offer not only the Caminata but a Christmas Fair as well. The families, with suggestions from the school administration, agree on a special expenditure for something the school needs. Some years that has been something physical, like a new refrigerator. Last year and this year, their goal has been to retain a psychologist to help students with focus on mental health, especially following the pandemic years and their lack of in-person interaction.

The two events are just two of the areas we ask families to commit to as part of our application process. As outlined in the application materials, families are expected to:

- Participate in the Cleaning Day before classes begin in August.
- Serve as a “Family of the Month” once during the school year (washing rags, doing maintenance, preparing snacks for Parent-Teacher Meetings, etc.)
- Attend parent-teacher conferences in October and March. ? Be available to meet with school staff concerning your child as needed.
- Participate in an organizing committee for one of the two annual parent fundraising activities: the Christmas Fair and the Walkathon.
- Participate in each of the parent fundraising activities by preparing food or working on the day of the event.
- Attend Family Association Meetings (there are five or six each school year).

In this way, not only are students asked to share responsibilities, but they see parents model this shared responsibility as well.

Missed your chance to support the Caminata?

You can still donate to our [GoFundMe](#) for the event! At our last look, we were just \$900 short of our \$5,000 goal. Can you help us close that gap?

For separate, tax-deductible donations in your country, just go to www.mfschool.org/donate.

Well-Earned Class Trips



Our 7/8 class enjoying a little seashore.



The 11/12 class learned about using public transportation even for long trips like this.

Our students look forward all year to their annual class trip. For our primary grades, that means a relatively local outing. For our colegio (grades 7-12) students, it is a much bigger trip -- often to San Jose (3 hours away) or to the Pacific beach communities and overnight.

The trips combine academic learning with fun. Older high-schoolers often visit colleges and explore what would be involved in attending college here in Costa Rica. Trips often include cultural sites. Our 9/10 class recently visited sites including the Teatro Nacional, the Museo de Arte, and the Basilica de los Angeles, among others. This year, our 11/12 class traveled entirely by public transportation to illustrate and teach them how they can get around the country without a car. Their trip was also planned for the darkest time of the month so that they could see and learn about bioluminescence at the beaches.

That's not all -- there are evenings of fun! Last year, roller skating -- the first time for many students -- got rave reviews. This year, gathering around campfires has been popular. They also got creative and made a volleyball net out of sticks and fishing with just twine and hooks. None of the adults caught fish but a few of the students did. One girl even caught three fish!

These funds needed for these trips are earned throughout the year. Each class, from grade 3 to 12, raises money for their class trip. One day each week, a lunch or a recess is reserved for food sales. The classes take turns providing and selling the food. A recent lunch included rice and black beans, fried plantains, salad, a choice of chicken or meat, and an assortment of desserts. Typically, about 80 lunches are sold at 2,500 colones (about \$4.50) each and the profits are collected in a fund over the course of the year.

Students will probably mention how great it was to travel, to learn, and to have fun -- but we know that beyond that, they are gaining important life skills in sharing responsibility.



The Teatro Nacional had our 9/10 class looking up, and looking down!

