



Monteverde Friends School/Escuela de los Amigo

January 2024

www.mfschool.org

New Year, New Semester and New Tasks

Happy New Year for 2024! As the calendar changes, we move into our second semester of the year. Our first semester ended a bit abruptly, two days earlier than expected because of the number of absences due to COVID and respiratory illnesses. Now we are back, with mostly full attendance.

While our teachers turn their attention to second semester and graduation requirements, our administrative staff turns to preparations for the 2024-25 school year. This includes three areas that are the frequent source of inquiries, so we are devoting this issue to explaining our current process, in addition to general information on our web page:

- New admissions to MFS, <https://mfschool.org/how-to-apply/>
- Study Abroad opportunities, <https://mfschool.org/study-abroad/>
- Volunteering, <https://mfschool.org/volunteering-2/>

We hope you find this helpful!



Whatever the season or semester there's always soccer at recess especially when wearing shirts for their hero, Argentinian Soccer player Lionel Messi.

What we know so far ...

We are recruiting for Pre-K and Kinder:

- **Pre-K:** Must be 3 years old by August 2024, must **complete an application** by **February 15, 2024** and we must meet the child (to be arranged).
- **Kinder:** Must be 4 year old by August 2024, must **complete an application** by **February 15, 2024** and we must meet the child (to be arranged).

We will have two spaces in the 11th grade for Study Abroad students:

- Could be 2 full year students, 4 students for a semester each or a mix of the two.
- Requires English and Spanish fluency -- Science and English classes in English, math and Spanish Civics in Spanish (Tutoring available).
- Student must be mature enough to do well in a homestay with a local family.

Stay Tuned!

Over the next two months we will be assessing whether we have additional seats available to admit new students, and at which grades. Watch for announcements in our newsletter, on our [Facebook page](#) and on our website, www.mfschool.org.

- Tuition of \$8,250/semester plus Homestay at \$3,500/semester
- If you are interested, please [contact us](#) . We will explore with you whether there's enough of a fit to complete the full application.

Can My Child Attend MFS for the 2024-25 School Year?

For many schools, securing admission for your child might be a simple matter of filling out an application. MFS, however, has been very full in recent years, typically with only about a half-dozen open seats each year. Thus, it is only worth your time and effort to fill out the entire application once you know whether a seat is available in the class your child would need.

Instead, we offer a [simple form](#) to get some basic information. When we identify an open seat, we scan those responses for requests for the appropriate grade. When there is a match, our Head of School contacts the parents to determine whether there is still interest in MFS, and to get an initial read on whether there is a good fit. If both questions result in a “yes,” the parents will be encouraged to submit a complete application.

We prefer ongoing students who plan to attend for several years; that gives the student, teachers, and class the opportunity to adjust to learning patterns and creates stability for the school community. For primary grades, we require that the student attend a minimum of an entire year, beginning at the start of school in August.

In a way, that is the easy part of the process. The process of determining openings is more complex, with interdependent factors (see the accompanying list of due dates). For starters, our School Committee sets tuition levels for 2024-25, based on having approved a budget for that year. With those levels in mind, families look at their future plans and give a preliminary idea of whether their student(s) will return.

With our goal of serving as many local families as possible, we provide financial aid of up to 75% of tuition. Each year, the Financial Aid Committee decides how to distribute its annual fund to support the greatest number of local families in need of financial assistance.

That’s where your generous donations are so important, for the total we have collected in the prior 12 months determines how much aid we can distribute.

Meanwhile, our Head of School will be reviewing new applications to see whether there is a good fit with our potential openings. Those admissions cannot be finalized until we know for sure how many openings we have. We learn that for sure once we reach April 12th, when 2024-25 registration fees are due. At that point, we work on finalizing decisions on new admissions.

As you can probably see, it is a complex process. We deeply appreciate your patience and cooperation over the coming months as we take all these steps.

The Schedule

January 22

2024-25 Tuition Levels Announced

January 26

Financial Aid Application forms available

February 23

Financial Aid Applications Due

March 15

Financial Aid amounts provided to families

April 12

Registration Fee due for any student who will attend for 2024-25

By April 30

Confirm new students.

We want to say a huge Thank You to those who donated at 2023's year end.

You've made our Financial Aid distributions for 2024-25 possible, meaning more local students can join us.

With continued help from donors, we begin now to assure that we will have enough Financial Aid for the 2025-26 school year.

Click below to explore ways to make tax-deductible gifts from the U.S., Canada or Costa Rica:



What Opportunities Are There For Study Abroad?



*Flossie Martell-Glennon,
12th grade, from Ithaca, NY*



*Rosa Mangels, 12th grade
from Baltimore Friends
School*



*Katina McDonald Manos,
9th grade, from
Halifax, Canada*



*Lea Klute, 9th grade,
from Worrstadt,
Germany*

We are excited to announce that we have at least two seats available for study abroad students in the 11th grade for 2024-25. That could be up to four different students for a semester each, or two full-year students, or a mix of the two. To start applying, please fill out this [short form](#) to see whether there may be a fit and whether to proceed with a full application.

Study Abroad experiences are a fabulous opportunity for older high-school students (10th through 12th grade) to experience a different culture and language, and often their first time living away from their family. It does, however, take a mature student who can adjust quickly to a whole new school environment as well as living with a local family.

From an MFS perspective, our ongoing students experience other cultures through visiting students, but we limit the number of visiting students to provide a stable school environment.

One of the biggest challenges for study abroad students, even with a few years of studying Spanish, is to adjust to two classes in Spanish – Math and Spanish/Civics/Social Studies – and English, Humanities, and Science in English. Most of our students are local, and Spanish is their first language, so social conversations outside classrooms are often in Spanish. International students attend a small group Spanish-as-a-Second-Language classes each day. You can see our 2023-24 fees and tuition at <https://mfschool.org/study-abroad/> .

Who Can Volunteer?



*Kenna Manos of
Halifax, Canada*



*Ellen Cooney of
Monteverde, Costa
Rica*



*Don and Liz Tanner from Canada and
Maureen Dobbie from the U.S.*



*Kathy
Githens of Deere
Island, Maine*

With Monteverde as a much-desired travel destination for international travelers, we get many offers to volunteer at our school. We hate to say no to such generous offers, but with our limited space and overloaded teachers, we have learned to be very careful in determining which of those offers we select.

Six volunteers are currently working with us – many of whom have volunteered for many years. Each of these volunteers has made wonderful contributions, not just of their time but also of their expertise that applies directly to our needs. In addition, each of these volunteers stays for long enough – from three months to year-round – to be able to step into roles without needing much guidance from teachers or staff.

Let's introduce them:

Kenna Manos, from Canada, spends 6-8 months in Monteverde during the school year here, applying her background in teaching as the assistant for the 5/6 class. She has been volunteering at MFS since 2007.

Ellen Cooney from the U.S. is here year-round and brings skills from her career in nonprofit management to do outreach and fundraising for the school.

And here are our January through March volunteers:

Don and Liz Tanner from Canada retired from teaching in 2011 and have volunteered with us each year since. Don focuses on math, while Liz works with primary students.

Maureen Dobbie from the U.S. has become a much sought-after volunteer in our kinder classroom. She uses her experience as a preschool teacher, a nurse practitioner, and a nursing school instructor to assist in our kinder area since her first trip in 2019.

Kathy Githens from the U.S. is new to us this year. She is a retired school psychologist and is a much-needed resource for our students.

Paul Angell, a retired special education teacher from the U.S., usually volunteers during this time but thankfully has stepped in as a staff member for 2023-24 when our previous special education teacher resigned.

As you can see from these examples, it is the combination of expertise and time available that makes these volunteers invaluable to us.

If you have expertise relevant to our school, whether classroom-related or administrative, and you can spend a few months with us, we would be delighted to have you join us. If you would like to see whether this might be an opportunity for you and us, please read our web page on [volunteering](#) and drop us a note through the [Contact Us](#) page on our site.