



MOUNT TAMALPAIS SCHOOL

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Congratulations to the graduating class of 2020!



MTS

IN PRINT

SUMMER 2020



Celebrating **A LEGEND!**
NANCY TRACY'S 40 YEAR TENURE AT MTS

IN THIS ISSUE



01
WELCOME
A Note from Andrew Davis



02
LIFE AT MTS
A Peek Into Our Classrooms

05
PETER PAN
Performing Arts at MTS



08
FEATURE
Celebrating Nancy Tracy

14
FEATURE
Project-Based Learning

18
FEATURE
A Community That Cares

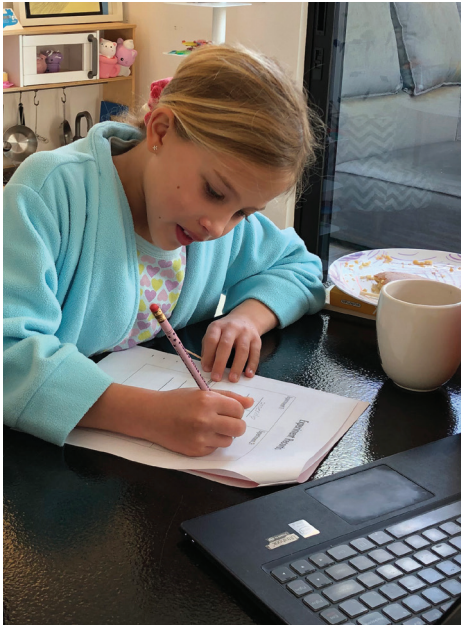


23
PARENT PERSPECTIVE
Social Emotional Learning

24
ATHLETICS
Highlights from the Year

28
ALUMNI
Alumni Spotlight

30
ALUMNI
MTS at Harvard



31
DISTANCE LEARNING
MTS Response to COVID-19

32
TEACHERS
Introducing Meagan Andrews

33
TEACHERS
New Faces and First Impressions



34
STORY QUILTS
Visual Arts Highlight

36
COMMUNITY
Class Notes

38
TEACHERS
Milestones

“
WELCOME
 to the inaugural issue of
MTS In Print,
 the annual magazine of
Mount Tamalpais School.

I hope that this magazine will remind you of the joys of Mount Tamalpais School while informing you about how we continue to grow as a school, whether you were last on campus fifteen years ago, or earlier this year.

——— Andrew Davis, Head of School

”



A COMMUNITY

that Cares

The name of this publication, “In Print,” draws attention to the fact that it is a printed piece. We all live in a digital world where information is curated for us in the cloud or on our own devices. As a result, the digital world often feels far less communal.

While we will continue to communicate digitally – do follow us on Facebook and Instagram – our hope is that your family can share this magazine and the stories contained within it. Our current families will see highlights and deep dives from the year to date. For our graduated families, you will see traditions that have continued and new ways we are living the Mount Tamalpais School mission. I hope that we can all connect with these pages as we are all part of the greater MTS community.

This printed publication is also a tribute to the special place that the analog – printed texts and face-to-face communication – plays in the MTS education. While we have gone digital in key places such as collaborative editing on Google Docs or custom math practice via a blended learning program, much of the MTS school day is spent away from screens. Hand written stories by kindergarteners and 3rd graders line the halls outside my office. Fifth graders learn how to annotate a novel. Middle schoolers write a research paper, one note card at a time. I am fond of saying that technology is intentional, not ubiquitous at Mount Tamalpais School. Likewise with analog. We continue to value the technology of pen and paper and person-to-person communication. This is just one of the ways that Traditions Meets Tomorrow at MTS.

Finally, for those who have been away from the school for a while, please consider this first edition of In Print as an invitation to return to campus. I would love to show you how MTS has evolved. I believe you will find a school that continues to realize our Mission to “develop children who are well prepared for their future while remaining young at heart.”

ANDREW DAVIS
 Head of School



Take a peek in our classrooms and on our campus
@MTSSCHOOL

Service Learning: Middle School students making lunches for clients of St. Vincent de Paul in San Rafael.



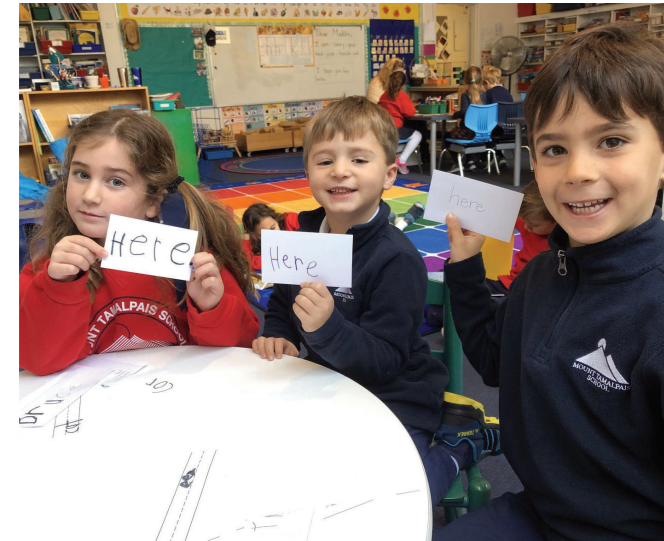
Lunar New Year activities. Thank you to Vivian and all our parent volunteers!



Congratulations to our library bookmark contest winners. There were so many great entries this year – it was hard to choose!



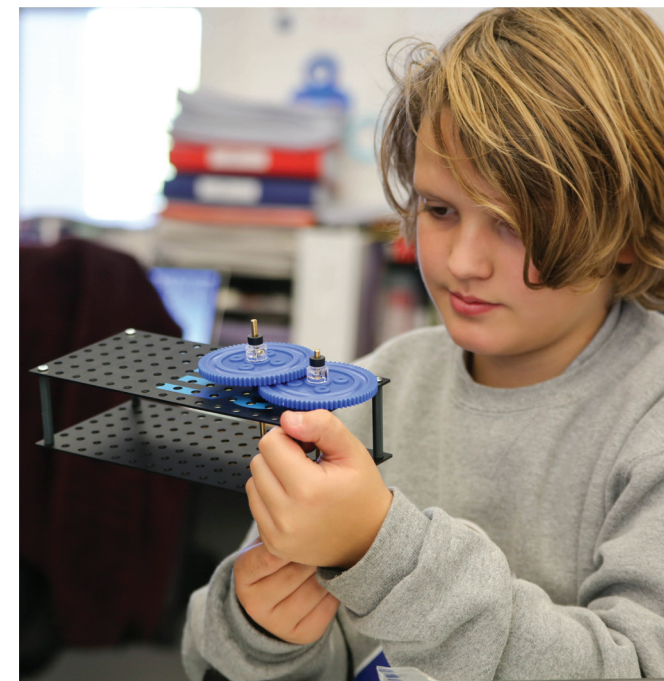
Let's make this a "maximum enthusiasm" year!



Our kindergarteners practicing "snap words" (high frequency words to memorize) and numbers 10-20.



Happy 100th Day of School! Our 1st graders have really aged!



Our 6th graders hard at work getting the gears working on their cars.



ALL YOU NEED is faith, trust, and a little bit *of pixie dust.*

MTS 4th and 5th graders put on a phenomenal performance of *Peter Pan* for this year's Winter Play.

Memorable highlights during the MTS performance included the song and dance number "I Won't Grow Up," Captain Hook's various musical numbers with his pirate crew, Tinker Bell's adorable antics, Starkey's pirate speak, and Wendy's lovely song, "Distant Melody." Every student shined in this magical, fun, and well-known play written more than 100 years ago by J. M. Barrie.



“ This was truly an ensemble piece that relied on working together to tell this magical story as all the worlds in Neverland weave through each other. The 4th and 5th grades committed their whole selves to becoming these characters, singing their hearts out and transporting the audience to another place. ”

—LINDSAY BERCOVITCH, PERFORMING ARTS TEACHER AND PETER PAN DIRECTOR



Spotlight on

NANCY TRACY

Celebrating a career at MTS that
spans over four decades — BY ROB POTTER





NANCY TRACY FIRST WORKED AT MTS

when the school was in its infancy, consisting only of a simple adobe structure along Miller Avenue that fronted a random assortment of outbuildings. At the time, Nancy taught dance and movement at various local private schools, including MTS. This was, of course, Mill Valley of the 1970's, where Gypsie caravans were parked downtown, a commune overlooked the depot, and rock and roll luminaries perused the stacks of Mill Valley Music. It was a simpler time with a free-wheeling spirit, and having an energetic young woman teaching tumbling on the top of a matted trailer home behind our school did not seem in the least bit unusual. Recognizing Nancy's competency with the children and her teaching credential, the school soon hired her full time to teach literature to grades three to five. When MTS moved up to its present

site and added a middle school, Nancy transitioned to teaching social studies and commanded the sixth grade homeroom in what she came to call "old room number seven." While our campus and student body was considerably smaller, both dramatically increased in size in the matter of a few years, thanks, in part, to a growing reputation of a strong middle school program. Much of that reputation was built in old room number seven.

Nancy has a way of sucking her students into a time period. Through a complex mixture of games, crafts, stories, debates, and projects, Nancy managed to breathe new life into history in a way that captivated her audience. (It was not uncommon to witness prospective parents become separated from visiting admission tours as they lingered to watch Nancy's class examine the Salem witch

trials.) Her students could be dressed in chiffon, reciting the pledge of Posidia to become a citizen of ancient Greece, or racing to Mecca with their classmates as Bedouin nomads. Pupils found themselves unearthing planted artifacts in the Grove as part of the Big Dig archaeological excavation, or choosing sides and debating as British loyalists or colonial separatists. Her students warmly recall traditional African music playing as they wrote and illustrated their own African tale that reflected their unique cultural beliefs and practices. Only a time machine could offer a more full immersion history experience. (Sidenote: Nancy would never be allowed to operate a time machine. Given her troubled relationship with technology, undoubtedly her class would become trapped on a glacier in the Italian Alps while investigating the death of the prehistoric iceman, Utzi.) While teachers crow about new pedagogical methods of engaging students' attention, creativity, and

thought processes with multimodal, project-based, peer-to-peer learning, it turns out that Nancy has been employing these methods for over forty years.

Of the many qualities that make Nancy such a special teacher, most important is the enthusiasm, patience, and follow through that she brought to bear on instructing what has come to be known as "study skills." Every teacher envisions themselves in Robin William's professorial character in Dead Poet Society, dramatically guiding a class's heady exploration of the realm of ideas. While Nancy certainly could and did play that role, it was in the considerably less glamorous trenches of middle school skill building where she really imparted her greatest gifts. Vigorous with her encouragement and prodding, Nancy led her charges through the minefields of outlining, highlighting, and study packet creation. Over the years, a lot of talk has been made about

Nancy's infamous card box, both as an amazing organizational tool and as a torture technique. In truth, the card box exercise was no picnic for Nancy either, but she never shied away from teaching even the most taxing of lessons if she thought it would be of value to her students. Year after year, alumni would return to MTS with the benefit of hindsight to express their gratitude for her tireless efforts. I have witnessed countless times the same middle school students who chafed severely about creating a cue list before writing their exam essays return to MTS years later to describe how Nancy's study skills got them through grad school.

Capturing a career that spans over four decades in a handful of paragraphs is an impossible task, and I cannot even begin to cover the breadth of the seen and unseen contributions that Nancy has made outside of the classroom over the years. But if I had to choose one, it is that Nancy has always been a wellspring of sage advice for students, parents, and teachers alike. With a strong natural intuition, good judgment, and hard-earned experience, Nancy gave guidance with

Only a time machine could offer students a more full immersion history experience.

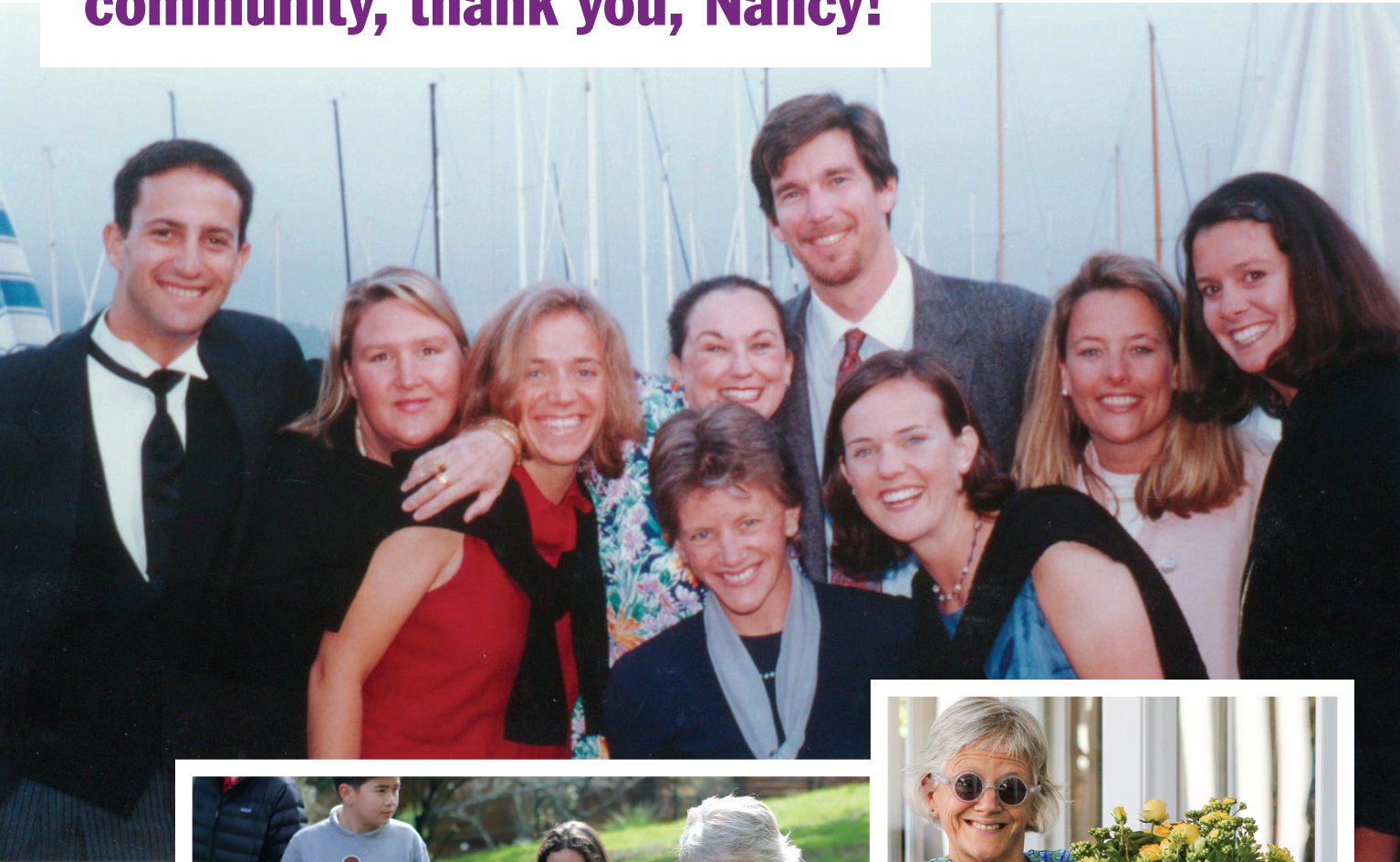


a loving hand, but also unwavering honesty. She always knows just what to say. I count myself one of those lucky enough to have been the regular recipient of her guidance.

Many times over the past two decades, I have returned to school late to find the lights still on in old room number seven. From the darkened courtyard, you could see Nancy, head down, pen darting as she sat among teetering piles of binders, card boxes, or research papers. Sometimes,

if only for a brief moment, I would watch, silently admiring her diligence and dedication. Soon, Nancy will be turning that light off for the final time in old room number seven. For hundreds of students and teachers, that room will always be a place where we witnessed mastery - where we honed our crafts as researchers, writers, thinkers, and learners. It is a place where we worked hard and laughed hard. It is a place where we tried to emulate the curiosity, wit, and grace of a Mount Tam legend.

On behalf of the MTS community, thank you, Nancy!



IN THEIR OWN WORDS



“I REMEMBER GETTING TO COLLEGE AND THINKING TO MYSELF, ‘NANCY TRACY PREPARED ME FOR THIS!’”

—KATIE HOCH (HALSTED) ‘03



“I STILL USE NANCY TRACY STUDY SKILLS IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE! THE CARD BOX DOES NOT FAIL.”

—SOPHIA KELLEY ‘10

“I went to a funky high school, and I didn’t take any humanities tests between eighth grade and my first year of college. Presented with my first test in college, terror turned to pride as I realized that the skills Nancy taught me all those years ago were not only still relevant, but also the key to a perfect grade! I also remember fondly the great times Nancy orchestrated in the classroom. Every activity we did with her was equal parts fun and intellectual challenge—think archaeological digs and colonial cooking and pilgrimages to Mecca! Nancy was one of my formative teachers. She emboldened me to think of myself as a critical thinker and a scholar, and I am forever grateful.”

—MABEL TAYLOR ‘10



“I have great things to say about Nancy Tracy. If it wasn’t for the highlighting and outlining skills she taught me in 6th grade, I wouldn’t have graduated law school and passed the bar to be a lawyer.”

—DYLAN PORTER ‘06



“Nancy Tracy is a force of nature, a pillar of the MTS community, and a treasure to all fortunate enough to know her. As a current law student, I still rely on some of the outlining organizational principles she taught my class nearly 15 years ago. While I remain immensely grateful for the practical study skills she imparted, I most appreciated the many times Nancy challenged us to be kind, empathetic, and purposive in our actions.”

—DUNCAN HOSIE ‘08



“IT HAS BEEN 18 YEARS SINCE I SAT IN NANCY’S CLASS, AND I WOULD NOT BE WHERE I AM TODAY WITHOUT HER GUIDANCE. NANCY REPRESENTS WHAT A TRUE EDUCATION IS ALL ABOUT: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT THAT CONTRIBUTES TO LONG TERM SUCCESS AND JOY IN CAREER AND LIFE.”

—COURTNEY BIGONY ‘04

Project-Based Learning



“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”

— JOHN DEWEY

BY HEATHER BRUBAKER

WITH A DESIRE TO ADVANCE PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL) at Mount Tamalpais School, Head of School Andrew Davis recently instituted our PBL Fellows Program. Our first nine Fellows attended the PBL World Conference to receive PBL training with the expectation that they would then introduce project based learning opportunities with students as part of the curriculum in the 2019-2020 school year. The group has met every month to talk about their project designs, providing opportunities for feedback and collaboration, and upon project completion, to review the success of projects and discuss problems and ideas for improvement with support from colleagues.

The excitement around these PBL projects among faculty and students has been palpable. From opera performances and museum exhibits, Andy Goldsworthy

inspired natural installations, book writing, costume production, parades, and plays, the results have been dramatic. MTS students are more engaged than ever, as our faculty continues to sharpen their PBL prowess, which in turn evolves the MTS curriculum.

What's all the buzz about PBL anyway? While PBL is not a new idea in education, it is becoming recognized as an increasingly relevant way of preparing our students for their future. Rather than passively absorbing information from a lecture, students are posed a complex question and are required to investigate it through critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. The benefit of PBL is that it provides greater student voice and choice, creating authentic connections between school and the greater world.



Our first PBL Fellows pictured left to right: Megan Kuykendall, Rachael Olmanson, Whitney O’Keefe, Lilianna Parker, Barbara Guarriello, Evy Packer, Tyler Bewley, Ally Svirksy (Not pictured: Anastassia Radeva)

PBL is a very specific method of instruction. The difference in PBL projects with what some call “dessert projects” is that the student is not simply echoing knowledge learned at the end of a unit in a final project, but instead the project itself is the learning unit. In PBL, students gain knowledge and skills by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects. It is hands-on, experiential learning, that ends with a product or presentation to a

Students gain knowledge by engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects.

real audience. Projects are typically open-ended, giving students more choice when it comes to demonstrating what they know. The so-called “driving question” that guides the projects requires critical thinking, inspiring students to come up with their own further questions for research, only deepening understanding and motivating

continued learning. These projects sometimes last a week or even an entire trimester.

Ultimately, Mount Tamalpais School wants to promote a growth mindset amongst both faculty and students – the idea that intelligence can be continually developed rather than a fixed trait. This growth mindset creates a passion for learning rather than a need for approval and promotes the belief that intelligence and creativity can be cultivated through deliberate practice. The active learning in PBL feeds this mindset and is the future of education as we head into the third decade of the 21st century, a time when interdisciplinary and collaborative teamwork requiring creativity and flexibility is paramount.

Diving deep into topics where students have voice and choice in both what is studied and how understanding is demonstrated is more engaging and will give students the skills to be successful in high school, college, and beyond.



2ND GRADE
Bringing Words to Life

During the 2nd grade vocabulary unit, Whitney O’Keefe and Anastassia Radeva joined forces and asked students the driving question, “How can you use everyday materials to bring words to life in an extraordinary way?” Inspired by the book *Miss Alaineus* by Debra Frasier, the 2nd graders spent time brainstorming interesting and challenging words, and then each chose one word to inspire a costume design. Students then used the engineering design process to create and build costumes based on tricky vocabulary words. They experimented with different building materials, such as cardboard, fabric, felt, leaves, and cotton, and different attachment strategies, such as duct tape, plastic connector parts, and weaving. After testing and refining costumes in class, the 2nd graders then presented their final costumes in a Vocabulary Parade to Lower School students and families on the MTS playground. It was in this culminating event that they shared their rich understanding of vocabulary and the engineering process in a joyful and active way.



3RD GRADE
Biology in Four Acts

Suzanne Beard, Lower School Science Teacher, and Megan Kuykendall, Humanities Teacher, led students in a PBL initiative wherein students wrestled with the driving question, “How can we improve our understanding of the Water Cycle?” 3rd graders investigated and demonstrated their understanding through a play titled, *The Water Play in 4 Acts*. Students wrote, produced, directed, and performed the play for the Kindergarten Class, faculty, and family members. The characters in the play explained the water cycle through its four cycles: Evaporation, Condensation, Precipitation, and Accumulation. Students spent over two months collaborating on the set design, painting a large backdrop, and designing and creating props, using an array of materials including cardboard, paint, cotton balls, mesh, string, tape, and dry ice.



4TH GRADE
Creating A Cultural Museum

As part of the 4th grade Humanities curriculum, every year students read and learn about the vast Native American cultures that existed in the Americas prior to the age of European exploration. This year, inspired by the PBL framework, teachers Megan Kuykendall and Rachael Olmanson asked 4th grade students the driving question: “What would a modern museum of California and Native Americans history look like and why?” Over the course of a month, the students investigated this question by researching their ideas and developed expansive projects, which culminated in their own version of a Native American museum. The MTS community was invited to the museum opening where visitors were treated to presentations that included informative and interactive exhibits about types of shelter, games and ceremonies, farming practices, symbols, and transportation. The results exceeded expectations and students demonstrated creativity, problem solving, collaboration, and meaningful learning.



A COMMUNITY *that Cares*

EVERY YEAR

Mount Tamalpais School selects a theme to guide activities and provoke thought in our community. The theme for the 2019-2020 school year is "A Community that Cares." This theme has been a guiding principle throughout the year and has been a topic of many All School Gathers and other programs including the Buddy Bear Program, Lower School Gathers, and Character Day.

CHARACTER DAY



“Character Day got me thinking about all the ways that I can strive to be a better and more kind me and what characteristics I could work on myself. The day’s activities broadened my thinking and helped me to be able to teach the younger kids to the best of my ability.” — CAROLINE, 8TH GRADE

THIS YEAR, MOUNT TAMALPAIS SCHOOL PARTICIPATED IN OUR FIRST CHARACTER DAY.

Founded in 2014 by the organization Let it Ripple, this annual global initiative brings together millions of people of all ages in schools, classrooms, companies, homes — anywhere people already gather — to engage in conversation and action around character (strengths like empathy, self-control, grit, gratitude, creativity, and leadership).

We started the day at MTS with an all-school assembly in the gym to introduce Character Day to the school. A team of 8th graders welcomed and inspired students, and we watched a short film called “The Science of Character” by the Let it Ripple group. The 8th graders then engaged students in a short exercise encouraging everyone to consider positive character traits in others. Lilianna Parker, Music Teacher, and an expanded group of 8th graders then led a school-wide song before heading off to further activities.

Next, Buddy Bears worked together to design superheroes with superhero character traits, aka. superpowers. With their older Buddy Bears, younger Buddy Bears made life sized posters of their superhero with words related to the positive character traits that they imbue, which were then hung on the wall in a gallery. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders went back to their homerooms to develop a superhero and corresponding “trading card” for said hero. Meanwhile, an 8th grade film crew interviewed students and the professional community in the “Character Corner” during recess to find out how our community members define character.

Concurrently with the activities at MTS, the Let it Ripple team hosted live programming throughout the day. This sixth annual Character Day focused on the relationship between character development and our use of technology and screens. We recommend watching the organization’s relevant videos to get inspiration on the topic for your own family and thinking about ways to manage technology in your own home. (www.letitripple.org)

THE BUDDY BEAR PROGRAM IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE MTS STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

At MTS, the relationships forged between students remain one of our biggest priorities. We pride ourselves on creating initiatives that help children step outside their grades to build friendships. The MTS Buddy Bear Program is foundational to that effort and provides the building blocks for friendship and mentorship across all grades.

HOW IT WORKS: Students are partnered into groups of three, each in a different grade. (For example, one group would include a kindergartener, a 5th grader, and an 8th grader). These buddies spend time together in a variety of different ways – at monthly Buddy Bear lunches, during

special activities woven into key celebrations such as Teddy Bear Day, El Día de Los Muertos, Winter Wonderland, and at regular Gathers (student assemblies).

WHY WE DO IT: Special bonds form between students across grades. The older students, while feeling the responsibility of being role models, also maintain a sense of mature innocence. At recess, we often see joyful 8th graders playing alongside, hugging, and taking care of their kindergarten buddies. The resulting relationships create a sense of belonging while fostering our strong, caring, and inclusive community.

BUDDY BEARS



“My buddy bears are fun. They are funny. They have fun with me. I love them.” — ALBIE, KINDERGARTEN

“I think it's really fun that you get to know someone from a different grade who you can play with and hang out with.” — ALEXANDER, 5TH GRADE

“I enjoy being a 5th grader in the Lower School Gathers because we get to be seen as the leaders of the Lower School. I enjoy the presentations and learning about new and different topics. I enjoyed being able to do a “Community that Cares” presentation to the Lower School about animal extinction.” — AUDREY, 5TH GRADE

LOWER SCHOOL GATHERS



EVERY TWO WEEKS THE LOWER SCHOOL (GRADES KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 5TH) MEET IN THE GYM DURING 1ST PERIOD. These Gathers provide an opportunity for the lower school community to come together and share as a collective, recognizing each other’s contributions in their individual classes and exploring how they connect together. The activities students participate in often revolve around a common theme, such as the school’s annual theme (this year is “A Community that Cares”), Black History Month in February, or current events.

The students have fun together, share songs (every gathering starts with Lilianna Parker, MTS Music Teacher, leading the students in a song), and recognize one another with shout outs. Students will share what they are learning in class, such as talk about a book they’re reading

and then read a favorite paragraph from it. Other days, students practice mindfulness and breathing tools, as they might in Morning Meeting, but together across the grades.

These gatherings empower younger students to stand up, introduce themselves, and get experience with public speaking. Fifth graders, as leaders of the Lower School, give personal presentations on topics they care about. Kindergarteners have the opportunity to demonstrate the tools they’re learning in SEL class with photo slideshows. In one Gather, younger students stood up and took turns telling the 4th and 5th graders why they loved their Peter Pan production. These Lower School Gathers are yet another great way we build community across the grades at MTS.

Social Emotional Learning

The Toolbox Comes Home

“The SEL tools that MTS uses in the classroom provide a common language for us as a family to work through challenging situations at home. The look of surprise and delight on our children’s faces when we suggest the same tools as their teachers is priceless. We put the “Toolbox” on our refrigerator and refer to it to help us figure out which tool will get us to a peaceful solution. It’s amazing when they suggest we use the tools for our own purposes. Weaving these life skills into both school and home reinforces the SEL concepts and makes them tremendously useful.”

— KRISTIN LEMASTER
PARENT OF KAIA (1ST GRADE) AND
KADAN (2ND GRADE)



MTS PARENT EDUCATION SPEAKER SERIES

Cultivating Caring Communities: The Science and Practice of a Civil and Kind Society

Dacher Keltner, PhD, renowned writer and UC Berkeley psychology professor, visited MTS in February to discuss science-tested practices for cultivating kindness in schools, families, and communities. This insightful discussion was part of the MTS *Bringing It Home* Parent Education Speaker Series. Past speakers have included Michael Thompson, Ana Homayoun, Wendy Mogel, and Julie King.

See the speakers coming in the 2020-2021 school year!
mttam.org/parent-education



ATHLETICS AT MTS

Our coaches, educators by training, teach the fundamentals of each sport as well as the strategy. This emphasis on skill pays off in each sport as MTS teams develop throughout the season, often excelling as they head into playoffs. MTS teams are known for their good sportsmanship and positive attitude.

The MTS Athletics program fosters and reinforces the joy and strength of community that are hallmarks of the school. Runners smile as they cross finish lines and basketball players high five and laugh together. The stands are often filled with parents supporting their children and the school, further strengthening our community.

SPORTSMANSHIP TEAMWORK COMMITMENT

Community





TRACK & FIELD



BASKETBALL



VOLLEYBALL



ALUMNI PROFILE

BRINGING CARING TO COFFEE



Schneider’s experience with One Acre Fund taught her the importance not just of caring, but also humility. One Acre Fund, with their “Farmers First” model, puts the needs of the people they serve, farmers, first in every decision. Rather than provide outside “answers,” Schneider and her team learned from the locals and equipped them with the tools – such as seeds and best-practice training – to reap even higher yields. She says, “We were in the field with the farmers we were serving three to five days a week. Our work was led by them.” Like at MTS, caring with One Acre Fund is an empathic and compassionate act.

Though Schneider has since returned to the States, her work remains focused on equity and justice, on caring. First with Fair Trade USA and now Enveritas, she works to ensure that the coffee we drink is environmentally and ethically sourced. Reflecting on her MTS education, Schneider is grateful for the accountability she learned from her teachers and the realization from outdoor education trips that learning can extend beyond the classroom. She hopes that the school further exposes our students to the problems they will have to solve in their lifetime.

“WHETHER ENDING HUNGER OR PRESERVING NATURAL HABITATS, MTS STUDENTS AND ALUMS CAN FIND A MODEL OF CARING AND A MENTOR IN LAUREN.”

—ANDREW DAVIS, HEAD OF SCHOOL

MTS Yearbook Moments



Lauren Schneider during her 8th grade year at MTS

BY ANDREW DAVIS

LAUREN SCHNEIDER ‘98 has spent much of her professional career living and working in the fields of rural Kenya, Ethiopia, and Malawi. Her journey from MTS to Malawi and now the corporate headquarters of major coffee brands reveals a graduate who is living our school theme this year: A Community that Cares.

After MTS and then Branson, Schneider discovered a passion for disaster relief while on a Stanford undergraduate service fellowship to India. She studied civil engineering and gained three years of professional experience with the goal of working on large scale disaster prevention and relief in developing countries. While retrofitting schools in an earthquake-prone area of India, Schneider heard from local families that the disaster they were already facing was hunger. With three years of work under her belt, Schneider evaluated her opportunities to put her training to work. “Ending hunger,” she says, “is a fundamental and urgent need. The scope of the problem felt foundational.” For that reason, she joined One Acre Fund and moved to rural Africa to help farmers triple crop yield and thereby reduce global hunger.



MTS@HARVARD

We caught up with two MTS Alums who are currently attending Harvard University

CHRISTIAN CARSON

Mount Tamalpais School, Class of 2014
Branson High School, Class of 2018
Harvard University, expected 2022



LILY CUNNINGHAM

Mount Tamalpais School, Class of 2013
University High School, Class of 2017
Harvard University, expected 2021



WHAT ARE YOU STUDYING?

CHRISTIAN: I study English, with a secondary in Classics. My extracurriculars are predominantly musical: I sing with the Krokodiloes, Harvard’s oldest a cappella group and am a Choral Fellow in the University Choir, singing five to seven services a week.

LILY: I am studying History and Literature with a secondary in Art, Film, and Visual Studies. I am on the varsity sailing team and just ended a term serving as Freshman Captain. I am a staff writer for The Harvard Crimson’s student life publication, *Fifteen Minutes*, which I contribute to every week. I am also a DJ for the Harvard Radio (WHRB 95.3FM) in the jazz department and host a show on Tuesday mornings.

WHAT ASPECTS OF MTS HELPED YOU MOST IN YOUR ACADEMIC LEARNING?

LILY: Nancy Tracy’s history class was the most important class for me. She taught me the essentials of studying and writing research papers. Being able to bring these skills to high school allowed me to take higher-level history classes earlier on in my high school career and prepared me well for a concentration in History and Literature.

WHAT ASPECTS OF MTS HELPED DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER OR INSPIRED INTERESTS?

CHRISTIAN: MTS encouraged strong individual responsibility in holding its students to high academic and personal standards, but supplemented that with a recognition that students who had lapsed in either front needed understanding and help, not necessarily strong discipline, to return to the straight and narrow. That combination, I think, is a correct one.

WHICH MTS TEACHER IS PARTICULARLY MEMORABLE TO YOU?

CHRISTIAN: Eric Kielich. He was an excellent teacher of science, of course. But having had Eric for three years, I had many opportunities to learn from the way he behaved. He was easy-going, soft-spoken, quite funny (in an understated way), and deeply wise. I also saw Eric’s love for nature, manifested most strongly in his passion for the Yosemite trip that so many eighth graders took. The impression I got was that of someone who strove to live lightly and kindly on the earth, and of someone who succeeded in both regards.

WHAT WAS THE BEST PART ABOUT ATTENDING MTS?

LILY: Meeting my best friend and discovering my love for learning.

CHRISTIAN: My favorite part of MTS was learning from the faculty, both as educators and as deeply compassionate people.

Homeroom Gets a Whole New Meaning

THE MTS RESPONSE TO COVID-19



Marin County of Education (MCOE) recommends against gatherings of over 100 people. Our Performing Arts Department quickly pivots and records and presents the entire Spring Concert to MTS families digitally online through video and photography.



MTS donates over 200 N-95 masks to the medical staff at the San Francisco VA in support of our medical professionals on the frontline of the COVID-19 response.



4th graders present their final Mission Projects virtually over Zoom

March 10

March 20

MTS Bear 1st Grade Mystery Reader reads Daniel Pinkwater’s *The Big Orange Splot*.



Fiona studying in her new “classroom.”

March 17

Shelter in Place directive put in place for 7 Bay Area Counties. MTS launches its first Distance Learning Program put together in a matter of days. Parents positive testimonials pour in.



April 13

Release of “Distance Learning Program 2.0” as a result of:
50 parents surveys +
9 family interviews +
9 faculty +
5 administrators +
3 days of meetings +
1 week of refinement

“Once again the teachers and staff at MTS have stepped up with their ability to adapt to change. Never has the motto “where tradition meets tomorrow” been more appropriate. While nothing about the past few weeks has been seamless, the transition to distance learning has been made much easier for Macey and Serena by having the continuity of their school work.”

— CHERITY PAYNE, PARENT OF MACEY (8TH GRADE) & SERENA (6TH GRADE)

“Love our distance learning program. Thanks to the faculty and staff for working so hard.”

— BZUR HAUN, PARENT OF HAMER (6TH GRADE), TEMPO (4TH GRADE), ZIGI (2ND GRADE)



INTRODUCING MEAGAN ANDREWS

New Head of Lower School

Meagan Andrews is a teacher and leader with fourteen years of experience in the classroom. Prior to MTS, she taught for seven years in both the 2nd and 4th grades at The Hamlin School in San Francisco. As a teacher, Meagan has deep knowledge and experience with many of the programs and curricula that we use at MTS. It is also clear that her classroom is a place where “tradition meets tomorrow.”



Meagan knew from the minute she stepped on campus that MTS was the place where she wanted to continue her career as an educator. The combination of Mount Tamalpais School’s caring community, vigorous academics, and a forward looking mindset are foundations for an educational environment that allows students to thrive, and discover a joy and passion for learning. What impressed her in the first 100 days spanned across several key areas: People, Program, and Project-Based Learning.

Meagan loves the connections that are shared across the K-8 grades. The students clearly adore each other and provide care and support for one another. Meagan has appreciated the collaborative discussions and work being done to improve the academic program at Mount Tamalpais School, focused on creating a vigorous, process-driven, growth mindset experience that engages and inspires students. The focus on process versus end product allows students to tackle new problems with confidence. Project-based learning in the Lower School is growing and she looks forward to supporting and promoting continued use of PBL tenets that provide more opportunities for student voice and choice starting in the lower grades.

This year, Meagan established the Lower School Gathers as an opportunity to bring students together to share their voices and celebrate learning and each other. The Gathers have proven to be a great forum for students to express compassion, empathy, and pride for self and others, connecting deeply to who we are as individuals and as a community. We look forward to continuing these events as a safe and joyful time where we learn and grow together.

NEW FACES

First Impressions from their First Year at MTS

VIVIAN DAI, Mandarin

One thing that really struck me is that MTS not only teaches academic subjects, but places an even greater focus on educating students to be good people with great attitudes and manners.



MELODIE DEL RIO, School Counselor

I was surprised how friendly and welcoming the children were from my very first day. Kids waved to me on campus!



TALIA RHODES, Humanities

I always look forward to Morning Meeting with our 2nd Grade Homeroom. Their kindness and love for one another is unmatched!



TONI BRAND, Science

Students across grade levels are friends and know each other by first name! I love the interconnectedness among grades.

Reflection Through Story Quilts

FEATURED VISUAL ART

Faith Ringgold’s story quilts from the second half of her career, speak to the lack of equality and representation in American Art History while working to shape a future of progress, inclusion, and hope in America. In this all-school project, the students examined Faith Ringgold’s role as an artist and storyteller focused on creating positive change. Using the concepts in her art as a foundation, the students examined the ideas shared between Ringgold’s work and our schoolwide discussion of what it means to be a “community that cares.” Each student reflected on how they care for their own community, and through Ringgold’s artistic process they created a deeper understanding of our own roles, hopes, and aspirations.



4th and 6th Grade Students, A Community That Cares

Story Quilt inspired by Faith Ringgold. Colored pencil, acrylic, and tempura on paper



7th and 8th Grade Students



Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grade Students



Art Detail

CLASS NOTES

2020



Shoneree Michael, Alumni Parent (Grayson Michael ‘20, Giselle Michael ‘23)

Hello MTS! The Michael family misses our beloved MTS community and school. What a treasure our time was there. We moved to Nashville, Tennessee in July 2018 after 22 years in San Francisco. Although we left pieces of our hearts in San Francisco, we are enjoying a new chapter for our family. Grayson would be in 8th grade (graduating!) and Giselle in 5th grade at MTS this year. The kids now attend Ensworth School, which is a private K-12 and are proud Tigers. Grayson enjoys tennis, basketball, advanced chorale, guitar, and was recently cast in the middle school musical, “Into the Woods.” Giselle enjoys dance, piano and voice, and performs and competes with the Ensworth Tiger Stripes dance team and the Singing Tigers. She is also enjoying service projects with the Mother Daughter Serving Circle of Nashville. We visit the Bay Area often due to my J.Hilburn business and would love to connect when we do. We would also love to see you in Nashville!



Nadia Zaabar, Alumni Parent (Ian Hashim ‘20, Aaron Hashim, ‘21) The boys left MTS in 2018 when our family moved to Malaysia, and I wanted to let you know what the boys have been up to since MTS.

Ian is in 8th grade, and Aaron is in 7th grade in Cempaka International School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Since moving back to KL (as the locals call it), the boys have been busy acclimatizing to the local food, language, culture, and of course, making new friends from this diverse community. Since they’ve been back, they’ve also been lucky for the chance to travel around Asia and Australia to see this half of the world.

Ian and Aaron have been playing a lot of tennis lately, and have immersed themselves into competitive swimming. Ian’s main form is the breast stroke while Aaron is a backstroke champion. They did well enough that both qualified for the elite swim team training at the National Aquatic Center and are swimming for the KL team. In March and April 2020, Aaron will be competing in two major national meets representing KL to qualify for the Southeast Asia Games Age Group competition.

Although swimming is their main activity, the boys are still active from playing basketball - a game they picked up from playing with all their wonderful friends at MTS. Both boys are actively in touch with the MTS classmates, thanks to FaceTime,

WhatsApp, and social media. So strong is their link to MTS that they’ve helped to establish an initiative similar to the Buddy Bear program at their new school.

2018



Elle Spencer
I’m now a sophomore at Oxbridge Academy in West Palm Beach, FL. My varsity soccer team just finished first in our district – we are very proud. This season has been a lot of hard work and a huge time commitment. In April, my choir group will be singing with the New York Symphony at Carnegie Hall in NYC. This is a trip we are all looking forward to because we get to sing and practice with the symphony in a historic and famous music hall - exciting - and what a privilege!

2011

Elias Schwartz
After graduating from UC Berkeley in December of 2019, I embarked on a journey to Ghana to work at an elite soccer academy. While I spent my last few summers interning and working at real estate related companies, my excitement and passion for soccer ultimately landed me in a small village roughly 2 hours outside of Accra, capital of Ghana. Since I arrived in early January, I have been working on the academic side as well as the football (soccer) side, teaching English, helping to prepare the US-bound high school students for their next adventure, and coaching the U13 boys. Right to Dream, which is a fully residential academy, recruits kids from all across West Africa, and is made up predominantly of boys and girls from Ghana and Ivory Coast. With its youngest students around 9 & 10 years old, and the most senior students being the U18, the range of soccer ability as well as education background is quite wide. By the time the students are 14 or 15, they are typically either placed on an elite football path (with the goal to play professionally in Europe), or a US-bound high school path. I am excited to follow these young men and women as they head off to all corners of the globe to live out their goals and dreams over the next few decades!

2009



Connor Clark
I’m living in Boston, Massachusetts training with a professional running group called the Boston Athletic Association (BAA). I just returned from a month of training with the BAA in Flagstaff, Arizona to prepare for a Spring and Summer of racing the 5k on the track. Prior to arriving in Boston in September 2019, I completed a two-year graduate program at the University of Oregon. While getting my master’s in urban planning, I completed my NCAA eligibility in cross country as an Oregon Duck. In addition to training with the BAA for the upcoming track season, I work part-time for a local housing authority, helping them manage and operate affordable housing units in Brookline, Massachusetts.

2008

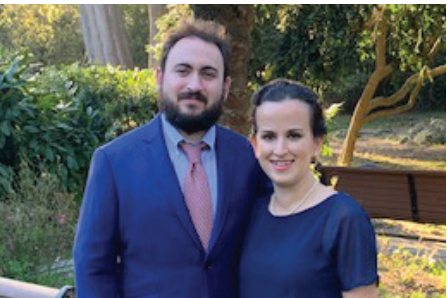
Duncan Hosie
Currently in his second-year at Yale Law School.

2004



Alexandra Stallone
Currently lives in San Francisco and is the Ecommerce Marketing Manager at Benefit Cosmetics. Alexandra will be joining our Board of Trustees as our first Young Alumni Trustee. She’s pictured with Nicola Beaumont (MTS 2004).

2002



Daniel Gardner
I have an English Bulldog named Milo, and I got married a year and a half ago. My wife, Annelys, and I currently live in San Francisco, and I work as a software engineer at a start-up.

1991

Dana Ross
I live in Cambridge, MA with my two children, Caroline and Fletcher. I’ve been a history and language arts teacher for 16 years, which means I’ve taught Nancy Tracy’s card box research method 16 times! My dear MTS classmates and teachers are never far from my mind.



TELL US WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!
Email alumni@mttam.org or visit mttam.org/alumni

MILESTONES Thank you to our passionate teachers who continue to educate and inspire our students.

5 YEARS



AILEEN MARKOVICH
Humanities
2nd Grade Homeroom



KEVIN MARKOVICH
Math
4th Grade Homeroom



MICHAEL SULLIVAN
English
7th Grade Homeroom

10 YEARS



JULIA ESSER
Humanities
Kindergarten Homeroom

20 YEARS



JENNIFER BENNETT
Physical Education
Current & Alumni Parent

25 YEARS



CATHAL MURRAY
Physical Education

30+ YEARS



JENNIFER ADAMS 30 YEARS
Dean of Curriculum
Math
5th Grade Homeroom
Alumni Parent



ELLIOT HAYNE 30 YEARS
Humanities
1st Grade Homeroom
Alumni Parent



DAVE BAKER 31 YEARS
Head of Middle School
Math
Alumni Parent



MARCIA GIESEN 38 YEARS
Physical Education

40 YEARS



NANCY TRACY
Social Studies
Alumni Parent



If you are interested in supporting Mount Tamalpais School, or would like to make a gift in honor of Nancy Tracy, please visit mttam.org/donate or contact Mimi Van Son, Director of Development at mvanson@mttam.org or 805-798-0720.

“

What an unforgettable year it has been at MTS!

The dedication and resilience of the faculty, the unfailing enthusiasm of our students, and the support of our community continues to surpass my expectations. Thank you for helping to make MTS the very special place that it is today.

—— Katrina O’Connell, Parent of Luke ‘22 and Chase ‘25, MTS Board President

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MTS
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