

# MTS

IN PRINT

SUMMER 2022



**A FOCUS ON  
INCLUSION &  
BELONGING**

**LEADING MTS  
INTO ACTION**

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS





# MTS IN PRINT

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“  
In our journey at MTS,  
the school has given  
our daughter, Eliana,  
a sense of inclusion,  
support, and love.

— Ama Lieb, Parent of 2nd Grader Eliana (Pictured far left)

”

# YOU *Belong*

As I write this letter, Mount Tamalpais School and the rest of our country are emerging from the Omicron wave of COVID and an end of the pandemic appears possible. As mask wearing becomes optional indoors and traditions such as the Angel Island Trip and an all school graduation take shape, this third issue of *MTS In Print* documents how well-positioned we are for a post-pandemic future.

Last year's issue of *In Print* outlined our success at keeping students and teachers safely learning together in person. While the day-to-day operational challenges of COVID were many, we did not lose sight of a future beyond the pandemic. When others paused, we planned.

In addition to navigating COVID, our community came together from March 2021 to March 2022 to craft a strategic plan that will guide our next five years. The four Habits of Excellence that frame that plan outline the ways in which our school and our students will turn learning into action. As COVID restrictions wane, our implementation of "MTS Into Action" accelerates. Like a great Olympic skier or Formula 1 driver, MTS is ready to accelerate out of the twist and turns that are COVID.

We have also been responding to the racial reckoning that was brought into greater focus in the spring of 2020. This issue of *MTS In Print* documents our earliest steps to be a more equitable and inclusive school. Importantly, our successes to date are paired with key strategic commitments in the "MTS Into Action"



strategic plan. MTS has made progress, but we have far more work to do to ensure that every student and community member feels seen, valued, and heard.

Finally, the pages of this issue document the serious learning that is seriously fun at MTS. Our students are joyfully abuzz as they learn from and with outstanding educators. Yes, MTS is changing, but our focus on learning and joy remains unchanged.

Please view this magazine as an invitation to join us in shaping the future of Mount Tamalpais School. We would love to hear from you as we move "Into Action."

**ANDREW DAVIS**  
Head of School



Happy Lunar New Year! Such fun celebrations for the Year of the Tiger! Activities included a parade, martial arts, chopsticks competitions, Chinese calligraphy, dumplings, and more!



Our kindergarteners learning about cool and warm colors.



Congrats to all our students for their great performances and hard work in the fall recital!



**LIFE  
@MTS**



Take a peek in our classrooms and on our campus.

**@MTSSCHOOL**



Our 1st graders getting into the xylophone groove.



Students put on a wonderful fall concert!



Students hard at work in the deep field creating their mini cities and defending their territories.



All hands on deck keeping school open, even our kindergarteners pitched in!



Congrats to our 6th grade girls basketball team for their recent win!



Happy Hanukkah! We celebrated at school with an All School Gather and the 5th grade read "The Story of Hanukkah" and explained the rules of the game dreidel. During morning recess, students enjoyed latkes and applesauce.



# Welcome to Wonkaland

We all won the golden ticket with the 4th and 5th graders' performance of "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory" this year. Our students put on a fabulous show despite numerous Covid related setbacks, and it was an especially celebratory event after two years without any live stage performances. Our students, performing arts departments, and MTS families were so resilient, dedicated, and supportive throughout the experience.





“A Little nonsense,  
now and then,  
is Relished by the  
wisest men.”



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In the world of Willy Wonka we find ourselves longing for the magic and mystery of the unknown and the playful whimsy of childhood imagination. But arguably the most important lesson in this wonderful story lies within Charlie's song "Think Positive." Charlie takes on the weight of an adult sized problem when his father asks him what will become of the Bucket family after he loses his job. Charlie's response is remarkably refreshing as he sings "whenever I'm feeling down and out and don't know what to do, I never give way to fear and doubt, 'cause thinking positive sees me through!"

The tone of this beautifully simple lyric is one that seems to have resonated deeply within our MTS

community and the cast of Willy Wonka as time and time again we have been faced with challenges and obstacles in getting back in the classroom, the sports field, and onto the stage. Our ability to not "give way to fear and doubt" and carry on the proud tradition of the 4th and 5th grade play with a smile and a song is EXACTLY what Charlie would want us to do. Art is important. And it is hard work. Live theater is a way in which we can share with others the sense of what it is to be human. And this year our wonderful cast, volunteers, and administrators, musicians, directors, and parents put in the hard work necessary to make it happen.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

Trevor Marcom '98

Scan to watch  
highlights from  
our performance  
of Willy Wonka!



The December show dates were pushed to January to ensure a safe environment for our audience. And while we still had limited seating, our 4th and 5th grade families were able to see their students perform live on the stage and the rest of our community had the opportunity to watch the performance in a professionally edited video version. Performing arts director Trevor Marcom had to step in the first night to perform as Willy Wonka until our 5th grade star could return and steal the show for the final performance, and our director Lindsay Bercovitch kept it all together throughout every curve ball the variants sent our way.







# EQUITY AND INCLUSION

AN INCREASED COMMITMENT  
TO DEI PRACTICES

## WELCOME! This single word has been our theme for the 2021-2022 school year at Mount Tamalpais School.

One way we have embodied this theme is through an increased commitment to actively engaging in diversity, equity, and inclusion – DEI – practices. From dynamic projects in the classroom driven by student experience and interest, to older students stepping up as leaders in tackling bigger issues, to families sharing about their culture, to expanding our understanding of individuals in our community and in the larger world, concrete daily touchpoints are infusing the MTS experience. Welcome is more than just a theme, though. It is an active goal for everyone to feel a sense of belonging at MTS.

One of the most visible manifestations of our increased commitment to equity and inclusion has been the appointment of Quincy Davis, our first Director of Equity and Inclusion. Quincy joined the administrative team in August 2021 and his energy, experience, and enthusiasm is providing a catalyst for moving the community forward in this work. Quincy has been a valuable resource for teachers as well as for our students and families. He has also been involved in our admissions and hiring processes, helping us to create a more equitable experience while increasing the diversity of our student and professional community.



In his work with teachers, Quincy is focused on ensuring teachers move beyond celebrating heroes and holidays. As Quincy likes to say, “it’s more than just having minorities represented on our walls.” One example of

such work is a cross-grade collaborative project about the history of Mill Valley. In February, the 5th and 8th graders visited the Mill Valley Public Library Archives to research the roots of racism locally in Marin County. The evidence of the struggle and systemic oppression uncovered by looking at newspaper articles, photographs, and legal documents from the 1900’s until now was an eye opening and powerful experience for our students. Our teachers used the archives and documentation to highlight systemic racism and its effects. This generated conversation about the work to be done

and how we can change current systems and realities. By exploring the past, students are invited to reframe their view of the larger community today. More importantly, they are energized to debate and actively effect change and build a new future.







Professional development continues to be an important way teachers grow in their equity and inclusion work. Along with what we teach, our teachers are also focused on how we teach, our pedagogy. To this end, we have focused this year on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching gives teachers the tools to validate and affirm the culture of each student which in turn allows that student to feel valued and ready to engage in learning. Culturally responsive teaching is not a single lesson or book, but rather a mindset that asks us to welcome each student, affirm their culture – regardless of whether it is a majority culture or minority culture – and build a cohesive community of learners.

While enriching the curriculum and honing a culturally responsive mindset is paramount, we also recognize that we need to diversify both our student body and our professional community. Making changes to our admissions and hiring practices is underway. When prospective families get to know MTS, we encourage our current families, teachers, and administrators to be candid about where we are, how we hope to grow, and our dedication to change. Likewise we have revamped our hiring practices to reduce implicit bias and are partnering with a search firm that specializes in placing underrepresented candidates at independent schools.

Our commitment to equity and inclusion is also evident in the work of the Board of Trustees. For the past three



years, the Board has engaged in workshops about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). They have also formed the Committee on Community. This committee has continued Board education, worked to broaden Board recruitment, and review school policies with a lens of equity and inclusion.

While “Welcome” is our theme for this year, we recognize that equity and inclusion is an ongoing, long-term endeavor and central to our success as a school. For this reason, diversity, equity, and inclusion is woven into our new strategic plan, “Into Action.” Not a box to be checked, but rather DEI priorities are woven into each of the four MTS Habits of Excellence. We are excited about the work we are doing together, and we welcome you to join us on this journey of discussion and growth.



**“Working with MTS on DEI initiatives has at times been challenging, but it has also been empowering, healing, and very positive. MTS is not afraid to examine itself, try something new, and put every effort into encouraging staff, students, and families to show up every day as their most authentic selves, no matter their skin color, family background, faith, nationality, or the many other ways that make a community beautifully diverse.”**

— ANN LE, PARENT OF A 2ND GRADER





# CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

What is it, and  
Why is it Important?

How do we create an environment where every student feels 100% included with adults engaging in a culturally responsive mindset? As Dr. Sharroky Hollie at The Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning (CCRTL) would say, only with “outrageous love” can we get through to every student. The main goals of Cultural and Linguistic Responsive (CLR) Teaching are to 1) increase student engagement, 2) address inequities, and 3) give outrageous love. CLR teaching is meeting students where they are culturally and linguistically for the purpose of bringing them where they need to be academically. It’s the opposite of the sink-or-swim approach typically associated with traditional schooling.



## CCRTL Says, VABB, VABB, VABB!

- VALIDATE** - Make legitimate that which the institution (academia) and mainstream media have made culturally and linguistically illegitimate
  - AFFIRM** - Make positive that which the institution (academia) and mainstream media have made culturally and linguistically negative
  - BUILD** - Create the connections between the home culture/language and the school culture/language through instruction (teaching necessary skills) for success in school and the broader social context
  - BRIDGE** - Create opportunities for situational appropriateness or utilizing appropriate cultural or linguistic behaviors
- LEARN MORE: [CULTURALLYRESPONSIVE.ORG](https://www.culturallyresponsive.org)





# CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

MTS is taking this work seriously - we understand this work is more than simply a diversity statement on our website. We understand that providing a truly diverse and equitable environment is more than honoring Black History Month. It is about shifting our community mindset and teaching through this viewpoint. While we continue to provide professional opportunities to our teachers, we are also continually evaluating and adapting our curriculum to ensure it is meeting every students' needs. Here are examples of some curriculum highlights from the past year.



## "GOOD TROUBLE" MIDDLE SCHOOL ENRICHMENT CLASS

This year was the first that we offered Good Trouble, an optional enrichment course taught by Marianne Kabir and Quincy Davis on Thursdays to middle school students. In the class, students discussed the change they would like to see on campus and in the world and then brainstormed possible solutions. The students divided up into three groups – one focused on issues

revolving around the environment, another with gender inclusion, and one focused on mental health issues here on campus. They shared their ideas for change with Andrew Davis and followed up with requests to others at the school as appropriate, working with our librarian and the Student Community Board, succeeding in highlighting gender issues in the library collection and joining in the larger school conversation on picking up garbage. In learning about how change is made, the students also joined the Seniors for Peace weekly protest at the Redwoods Retirement Community in Mill Valley. Joined by their friends, over 20 students made signs, sang protest songs, and protested along Miller Avenue on a Friday afternoon in March. In the coming semester, they hope to research additional solutions and move forward with ideas that they can reasonably accomplish.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



## FOURTH GRADERS' BLACK HISTORY MONTH PODCASTS

Learn about various Black Americans and their many contributions through the fourth-grade Black History Month Podcast. Students worked as individuals, pairs, and in small groups to first study and then create a podcast episode that features an influential Black American as part of Rachael Guercio's Humanities class. In addition to creating the podcasts, the fourth graders participated and invited other grades to join them in a Black History Month (BHM) podcast scavenger hunt. Students toured the school, scanning the BHM banners marked with a QR code. Each code led to a specific podcast they got to listen to and write facts about each influential person.

## SERVICE LEARNING "TREATS FOR THE STREETS"

MTS sixth graders Justus, Jasper, Jahan, and Azalaïs, dubbed the Treats for Streets Team, spearheaded a "Snacks Drive" at the school to help the San Francisco unhoused population. What started the project? The sixth grade class met two field nurses on Zoom, Tim and Sophie, who work with unhoused populations in San Francisco. In the conversation, Tim and Sophie described their work and the "street medicine" they practice. They have a mobile health clinic van that they drive around in the city and help unhoused people who might need medical attention.



Tim and Sophie have learned over the years that the best way to get folks to talk with them is by offering them snacks. Once they get into conversation, they are then able to learn more about the individuals and what they might need. After learning about their work, the sixth grade Treats for Street Team put together a presentation, which they shared with other grades and the MTS community with a request for individually wrapped snacks to donate to Tim and Sophie to support their efforts. The students were able to gather a large assortment of snacks during morning drop off.





# COMMUNITY GROUPS



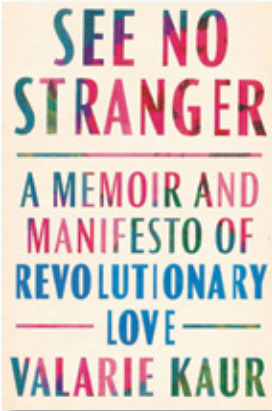
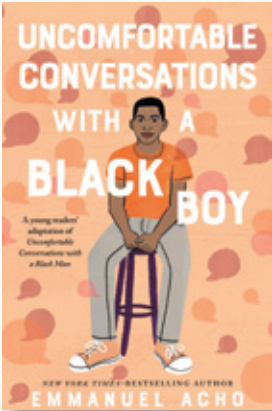
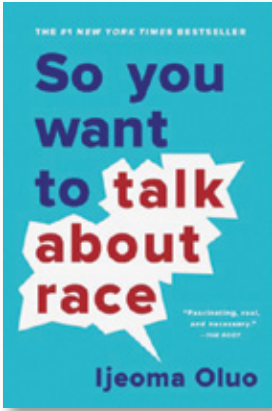
**Students**  
**COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND INTEREST GROUPS (CIIG)**

In March, we launched our Middle School Community Identity and Interest Groups (CIIG). This year we are offering an activism group, environmental interest group, gender and sexuality alliance, and mentoring for young women group, to name a few. The Community Identity and Interest Groups support the affirmation of identity, empowerment of the individual and of the group within the larger community. Students will be able to attend more than one group, and students can visit and rotate through various groups to find the best match for them. While each group is facilitated by a faculty member, the groups are student driven.

**Faculty**  
**CRITICAL FRIENDS GROUP (CFG)**

This year, faculty members Anastassia Radeva, Talia Rhodes, and Michael Sullivan came together to organize more faculty conversations about the craft of teaching. Using the Critical Friends Group (CFG) structure from the National School Reform Faculty, teachers meet once a month to problem-solve common educational challenges. In February, we kicked off our first meeting with the topic of how to best support introverted students. Future topics may include how to design student-centered classroom spaces and how to gather, assess, and share artifacts of student work. All faculty and staff are welcome to participate.

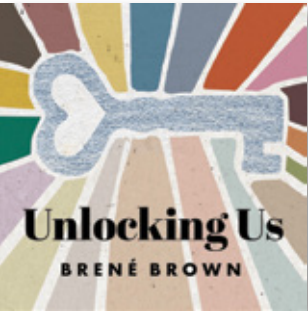
Curious about expanding your DEI horizons?



- BOOKS**
- SO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT RACE**  
by Ijeoma Oluo
- UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS WITH A BLACK BOY**  
by Emmanuel Acho
- SEE NO STRANGER**  
by Valarie Kaur

**PODCASTS**

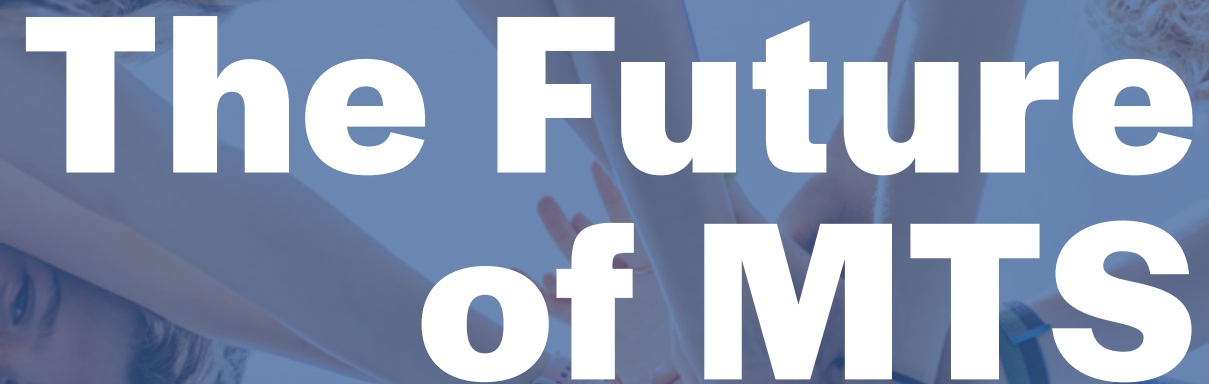
- EMMANUEL ACHO**  
Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man
- BRENÉ BROWN**  
Unlocking Us
- IBRAM X. KENDI**  
Be Antiracist



WHAT DOES  
COMMUNITY  
MEAN TO YOU?

LOVE TOGETHERNESS  
FRIENDSHIP  
SHARED PURPOSE  
TRUST  
BELONGING  
LOCAL INTERACTION SUPPORT  
SPACE WHERE YOU CAN BE YOURSELF  
CONNECTED  
CONNECTION





# The Future of MTS

## Strategic Plan for the Next Five Years

—BY ANDREW DAVIS

## “What are your hopes for the future of MTS?”

Nearly every admissions tour includes a prospective parent asking this question. In my first years as Head of School, the answer was clear – strengthen the core program while further developing the social-emotional well-being of our students. Emerging from the COVID-pandemic, with great progress made on those two fronts, my answer now is less succinct. Yes, we want to increase the diversity of our student and professional community populations. Yes, we want to make meaningful connections with the world beyond our campus. Yes, we want to hire and retain outstanding teachers. The connection between these “yeses” and, in turn, the reason for saying “no” to other initiatives, was not yet clearly defined.

**In February 2021, we launched a strategic planning process to inspire, focus, and align the work for our next five years.**

One year later we have a revised Vision, Mission, and Values and “Into Action,” a plan that outlines our shared work for the next five years. Working with Mission Minded, a brand and strategy firm with nonprofit and independent school clients across the country, we created an inclusive process with multiple points for all constituents – parents, professional community members, alumni, Board members, and students – to share their hopes for our future. A broadly representative Steering Committee incorporated this feedback with an analysis of the Southern Marin independent school market and traditional SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to define our path forward. While not every idea was ultimately included in the final plan, we hope that the MTS community sees this as our collective plan as it will drive our work and, most importantly, our students’ experiences.

Before defining our strategic priorities, Mission Minded led us in a process to clarify our Mission. Through an iterative process, we moved from a 68 word, three-sentence paragraph to a three-word Vision, a seven-word Mission, and five values. Our Mission now reads, “Learning is revered, and education is joyful.”

With Vision, Mission, and Values – our “why” – approved, the Steering Committee turned its attention to the strategic priorities. One of the main reasons we selected Mission Minded as our planning partners is their track record of writing plans that disrupt

**Scan to watch** a short video about how our new vision and mission capture MTS today and inspire our future.



the typical format of school strategic plans that are organized around facilities, program, staff, and community. Instead, Mission Minded guided us to center the student experience and allow the priorities to be driven from this viewpoint.

Our Steering Committee quickly determined that there is a tremendous amount of uncertainty about the student experience over the next five years. The impact of technology, the global pandemic, and the racial reckoning are just three variables that have broadened the conversation in determining what our current third graders will need when they head off to high school. Despite this uncertainty - and in some ways because of it - we identified four habits that we feel will be critical for our students as they tackle the still unknown challenges of their time and allow education to inspire action: the MTS Habits of Excellence.



# MTS Habits of Excellence



## Committed Exploration

Successful students and change-makers will need to thirst for new experiences and persevere in the face of challenges. Committed exploration leads to broader perspectives and empowers students to push through the discomfort of the unknown.



## Critical Reasoning

Now more than ever, our students need to hear and value multiple perspectives and have the critical thinking skills to determine the best path to a better world.



## Conscientious Citizenship

The future requires that our students understand their role as citizens in local and global communities. We hope that their actions will inspire stronger, happier, healthier communities.



## Collective Wellness & Belonging

As the global pandemic continues to teach us, a bright future demands we attend to the mental, physical, and emotional needs of our community.



Stated as habits, all four are presented above in no set order as they are interdependent. It is impossible to reason critically if your mental well-being is not attended to. Being a conscientious citizen requires that we explore beyond the comfort zone of our campus and are undeterred by challenges.

**While our Habits of Excellence are meant to focus and align our work for the next five years, I hope that they will endure far longer as they serve as an important reminder of the far-reaching work that we do as educators.**

Each Habit of Excellence is tied to three priorities that will define our actions as a school over the next five years. In turn, we are now detailing the implementation of each priority with initiatives and action steps. Like schools with a more traditional strategic plan, we are focused on



hiring and retaining an outstanding, diverse faculty and staff. Similarly, we are working to ensure our campus and facilities meet the needs of our evolving program. These priorities, however, are codified in a framework that explains why we are doing each one. I encourage you to explore our Into Action Microsite and engage with me, our Board, and our professional community about ways you hope to see MTS realize our Habits of Excellence and their priorities in the years to come.

On the final admissions tours of the 2021-22 season, I was well prepared for the inevitable question about our future. In response, I told prospective families that MTS will be focused on even better realizing four Habits of Excellence that will prepare their children to meet the undefined challenges of their future. Briefly describing each Habit, I was met with head nods of parents who, like us, want the best for their children and our world during a time of uncertainty and possibility.

My work for the next half-decade as Head of School - and our work as a community - is focused, aligned, and inspired by MTS Into Action. By engaging in this work and reimagining our future together, I believe we can create a spring board for our students and a brighter world ahead. I hope you are similarly inspired and join me to ensure education inspires action.



### VISION

**We envision a world where education inspires action.**

### MISSION

**Learning is revered, and education is joyful.**

### VALUES

**Lead with kindness**

**Honor childhood**

**Practice active inclusion**

**Celebrate the journey**

**Ask, “What’s possible?”**



# Welcome

Every year Mount Tamalpais School selects a theme to guide activities and provoke thought within our community. The theme for the 2021-22 school year is “Welcome.”

## HOLIDAYS & FAMILY TRADITIONS



Celebrating holidays and MTS family traditions is a great learning experience for our students; it’s also a lot of fun and builds community.

In September, we enjoyed celebrating Rosh Hashanah and the Harvest Moon Festival. For Rosh Hashanah, parent volunteers brought honey and apples for all our students to eat during recess, and parent Matt Kovinsky brought and played the shofar. Our 2nd graders celebrated the Harvest Moon Festival with mooncakes and stories, and lower school students learned how to make paper lanterns. This special holiday is celebrated in many East and Southeast Asian nations in different ways, and often involves lighting and carrying lanterns, eating special treats, and staying up late to celebrate the full moon.

In December, we learned about and celebrated Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Christmas. At an All School Gather, the school community came together to celebrate Hanukkah. The 5th grade class read "The Story of Hanukkah" and explained the rules of the game dreidel. Students enjoyed latkes and applesauce. In kindergarten, a student’s grandmother, Rahima, and her mother, Thembi, visited the kindergarten class to talk about Kwanzaa. Students learned about the history and seven principles behind the celebration and

listened to a story about unity. Finally, three parents, all clergy members, presented to the full school about the nativity story to share the religious significance of Christmas. With parent narration, students were called to the front to act out the nativity story.



Our Mandarin teacher, Vivian Dai, planned a wonderful Lunar New Year celebration in February for the entire school, bringing in The Year of the Tiger. After a parade across campus led by a middle school band and kindergarten tigers, students participated in several different activities including Chinese calligraphy, martial arts, and a chopsticks competition. The entire community enjoyed eating dumplings at recess, and students displayed their free dress clothing in red and traditional Chinese garb.

We also enjoyed many Spirit Days when students were able to wear free dress around various themes such as Dyslexia Awareness Month, International Women’s Day, and Saint Patrick’s Day.

## BUDDY BEARS

We were so excited to welcome back our beloved Buddy Bear program this year! Our younger and older students who were paired together as “Buddy Bears” were able to meet in person again. What a difference it made to have our students back together during Teddy Bear Day. Older students read books to the younger students, shared letters with one another, played Teddy Bear Day bingo, and colored together. Our buddy bears continued to get together throughout the year during different celebrations, such as El Día de Los Muertos to look at the tombas together, play games during Halloween activities, and play Valentine’s Day bingo in February. The students also supported each other by attending class presentations. For example, when the kindergarten class shared a Coastal Redwood Trees presentation, their buddy bears came to view and learn about their research. Finally, and perhaps best of all, our buddy bears once again enjoyed spending time together during recess. From basketball games, tag, gymnastics, duck duck goose, nature explorations, quiet conversations, and lots of “make believe” joy, both our lower and middle school students could be found beaming with excitement as they played with one another.

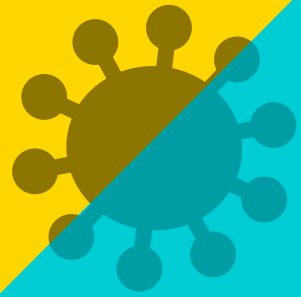


## ALL SCHOOL & LOWER SCHOOL GATHERS

Getting the entire school together for gatherings has always been an important community builder at MTS. With revised Marin County requirements, we were able to have our All School and Lower School Gathers again, first outside and then later in the year we were able to gather in the gym. These moments give us an opportunity to collectively celebrate, give students opportunities to present and perform to a larger group, offer the ability to honor students and the professional community when merited, and provide time for thoughtful group contemplation in a welcoming, joyful environment.

At the start of the year, we were able to welcome back returning students, as well as welcoming in students and faculty who were new to the school. Head of School Andrew Davis led summer-camp inspired activities to introduce our new professional community members, as well as a blindfolded logo-drawing contest amidst much laughter. At our first Lower School Gather in September, our 5th grade leaders stepped up to the microphone to guide the group to think about expectations for the year, how to be good school citizens, and to explain the traditions of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Gathers have also played a key role in our favorite MTS celebrations including Teddy Bear Day and Halloween, as well as providing a time for school wide learning during Black History Month and International Women’s Day. During these assemblies, students connect with others beyond their own classroom, find inspiration and school spirit, and feel a sense of belonging and connection to the broader school community.





## RIDING THE WAVES OF COVID-19

Despite our optimistic projections, the roller coaster of running a school during a pandemic did not let up in the 2021-22 school year. In May of 2021 we planned and looked forward to the following school year with the hope that we'd take masks off, and school would resume as it had in a typical year. Increasing numbers of the population were getting vaccinated and a child vaccine was on the way. Instead, based on the number of cases, masks stayed on both inside and out at the start of the school year. After last year, the school was more than prepared to handle the safety precautions and yet, while we felt nearly victorious after completing a school year without any community spread in 2020-21, we hadn't really expected to be doing it for a second year. Additionally, the uncertainty made event planning and community-building extremely difficult, with a number of events moved online or postponed until a later date.

Spirits went up when vaccinations were available to our student population and with the arrival of our modular classrooms, which allowed us to remove the temporary tents. With the onset of Omicron, however, things tightened up yet again. The entire professional community pitched in, jumping in where needed to take a class or recess duty, often wearing two masks, and kept the school open – no small miracle given the number of staff and student absences in January. In the spring, sentiment was improving again, and we were able to host our first in person events, including the 4th/5th grade play and a Parent Education event.

In March, with COVID numbers rapidly decreasing, the Marin County Office of Public Health removed the mask requirement both indoors and outdoors. Students and staff alike embraced the new rules with some excitement and also trepidation, unsure of what might happen next. We can be proud as a school that throughout it all, our dedication to educate our students and keep them safe has been at the center of our decision making and been our highest priority. We have not only kept our doors open all year long, we have also continued to innovate and launched our Five Year Strategic Plan. We're looking forward to getting off the COVID roller coaster, and turning our attention to riding the wave of our plan "Into Action" and making the school even stronger.



## CAUGHT MASKED UP!

In early February, the Student Community Board (SCB) presented Caught Masked Up! – a celebration of mask wearing and the ways we've been helping each other stay safe at school. As the SCB stated, "Wearing a mask sometimes feels annoying, but the SCB wants everyone to remember that we're doing a kind, thoughtful, welcoming thing every time we mask up." To celebrate mask wearing at MTS, the SCB members handed out "Caught Masked Up!" tokens to students and adults to acknowledge their expert masking with the goal of bringing a little fun to the tiring pandemic routine and showing appreciation for the efforts we've all been making to keep each other safe. The tokens were laser cut masterpieces designed by the SCB and fabricated by Keo and Kailan Robinson's own ClassGlass.co.





## PARENT EDUCATION

After two years of navigating the ups and downs of a pandemic, we are discovering that now more than ever, one of the most important emotional tools we can practice as parents is self-compassion. This theme emerged as a common thread in our Parent Education offerings this year, from Polly Ely’s “Parent School,” to Valarie Kaur’s “revolutionary love,” to our SPEAK event with Kristin Neff, an expert on self-compassion – finding a healthy love of self is central to being able to fully love others and especially to love and parent our children.



### HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR PARENT EDUCATION EVENTS

#### POLLY ELY, “Parent School” Series



Zoom to get a deep dive into her parenting methodology.

Polly Ely is a family therapist, speaker, author, and creator of The LAB Method, a practical set of tools that help families connect and thrive. In monthly Zoom sessions, Polly shared actionable, immediately helpful approaches to leading our kids peacefully, without power-over tactics, threats, bribing, or begging. Polly emphasizes the need to be kind to yourself and practice self-compassion. “Parents can’t understand why parenting is so hard. ‘Why is this so hard for me?’ This

With generous underwriting from an MTS family, the parent community was invited to a six-part series with parenting expert Polly Ely. Once a month from December through May, MTS parents were able to tune into Polly on

is a negative way of thinking. Of course it’s hard. As parents we need to first be kind to ourselves, and then we can be kind to our children.”

The LAB Method breaks down parenting into three main categories of focus: Language, Attachment, and Boundaries. According to Polly, children really need only two things: boundaries and attunement, and there are three principles of boundary setting: 1) Be consistent, 2) Be in agreement as parents, and 3) Follow through on consequences. These seemingly easy rules are not always as simple in practice. The series format allowed Polly to go deeper into her ideas and methodology, giving many specific examples from her own experiences as a parent along the way. She provided scripted responses to behavior, structured guides for categorizing child transgressions to help keep discipline consistent, and worksheets to reference. She also gave attendees the opportunity to describe their own parenting roadblocks and coached them through possible solutions.

LEARN MORE: [thelabmethod.com](http://thelabmethod.com)



#### Keynote Speaker Valarie Kaur Welcoming With Revolutionary Love



On Wednesday, March 9, Mount Tamalpais School welcomed Valarie Kaur, renowned American activist, documentary filmmaker, civil rights lawyer, and educator to speak with our parent community. She is the founder of the Revolutionary Love Project, a non-profit aimed at reclaiming love as a force for justice. She is the author of *See No Stranger – A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love* in June 2020. Kaur earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies and International Relations from Stanford

University, a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School, and a Juris Doctor from Yale Law School.

We were thrilled to have Valarie Kaur visit us on campus. It was our first in person Parent Education event in two years, and it was also Valarie’s first in person speaking engagement in two years. Head of School Andrew Davis led a conversation with Valarie for the group followed by a Q&A. She discussed the evolution of The Revolutionary Love project and how the framework for revolutionary love – love of others and opponents– is grounded in a love of self. Without loving ourselves, we cannot expect to sustain a love for others, let alone our opponents.

LEARN MORE: [valariekaur.com](http://valariekaur.com)

#### SPEAK with Kristin Neff



Mount Tamalpais School is a member of the SPEAK (Speakers for Parents, Educators, and Knowledge) consortium, a group of independent schools located in San Francisco and Marin County. SPEAK is a wonderful resource for its member schools, sponsoring parent education events throughout the school year. Any parents from consortium member schools may attend these events. On March 22, SPEAK hosted acclaimed psychologist, author, and speaker Kirstin Neff as she discussed why practicing self-compassion is a necessary precursor to happiness for all of us. When we are kind to ourselves, we model for our children

how to relate to human imperfection in a healthy way. During her presentation, Neff explained a practice to help parents and educators to be self-compassionate while maintaining a sense of balance in challenging interactions with our kids. Dr. Neff has authored the books: *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself* and *Fierce Self-Compassion: How Women Can Harness Kindness to Speak Up, Claim Their Power and Thrive*. Her work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, and *Harvard Business Review*, among others, and her TEDx talk has been viewed over 1.7 million times.

LEARN MORE: [self-compassion.org](http://self-compassion.org)



# RESILIENCE. TEAMWORK. PERSEVERANCE.



We were elated to be able to offer our athletics program again this year given that last year, in the height of the pandemic, we had to put our athletics program on hold. What a year it turned out to be! We are incredibly proud of our talented young athletes. From undefeated seasons to championship winners – we were all winners this year.



Our 8th grade volleyball team went into the semi-finals undefeated and narrowly lost in the finals to another undefeated team to come in 2nd place overall.

Our 4th grade basketball players cheered on the 8th grade girls' team after their own championship game.

The 8th grade girls basketball team won the CYO Championship for the third year in a row under the coaching of Gerry Guarriello. The girls won the game 28-19 against the Panthers.





In the Track and Field Championship 4x100 Meter Relay race, the team featuring middle school students Annika Hakes, Lucy Robinson, Serena Payne, and Ellie McCuskey-Hay took 2nd place. Ellie also won the 100m, 200m, and Long Jump competitions. She broke the Marin County record in the 100 Meter Dash with a time of 12.4 seconds, and her times in the 200 Meter Dash and the Long Jump during the qualifying meet were also county records. She broke three county records this season!



The 4th grade girls basketball team made it to the CYO Championship game and lost in a hard-fought game leaving with 2nd place trophies.



In boys soccer, the Bears won the Mill Valley Soccer Club Rec Jamboree 7th/8th grade Championship with a score of 1-0 in sudden death overtime. (14 of the 16 boys on the roster were MTS 7th graders.)



GO BEARS!





ALUMNI PROFILE

# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

TAYLOR GRIFFIN '06

## Taylor Griffin wants to inspire you to “lean in” to community engagement.

—BY ANDREW DAVIS

The newly approved Mount Tamalpais School Vision Statement reads, “We envision a world where education inspires action.” Taylor Griffin, MTS Class of 2006, embodies this vision. Now the Communications Manager for the Global Affairs team at Spotify, Taylor previously served as the Press Secretary for Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. From a young age and throughout her time in DC, Taylor has been deeply involved in activism and social justice movements. Reflecting on her life story, I am struck by the parallels between Taylor’s education and career and the four Habits of Excellence.

### Committed Exploration

After graduating from MTS, Taylor attended The Branson School. There she continued to develop the foundational academic skills that began at MTS. “MTS gave me a strong foundation that carried through to high school. I was prepared to be in those challenging classes, knowing sources, and knowing what to trust.” Though not quite as useful on a day-to-day basis, she can still sing the grammar songs that Mitch Bostian, a long-time MTS middle school English teacher, taught her. During high school, Taylor was also a singer, basketball player, and student government leader, three interests she discovered at MTS. She fondly recalls, “MTS allowed us to explore our passions. I attribute so many of my passions to those early years at Mount Tam.”

Taylor continued to sing and play club-level basketball at Georgetown where she studied Government with minors in French and African American Studies. Studying political science – or “nerding out” as she puts it – in our nation’s capital provided incredible access and exposure that shapes Taylor’s career to this day.

### Critical Reasoning

Politics and communications are in Taylor’s blood. Her mom, Cindy Meyers, has worked with numerous political campaigns and media outlets. After working as a Teaching

Associate for Aim High here in the Bay Area, Taylor spent her next summers of college interning for Nancy Pelosi. Once she graduated from Georgetown, Taylor spent six years working for Pelosi moving from Press Assistant to Deputy Press Secretary to Press Secretary. She was both the youngest and first black Press Secretary for the Speaker of the House.



Taylor with Vice President Biden in 2007

In this role, Taylor helped craft key messages for both Speaker and the Democratic Party during the later years of the Obama administration and throughout the Trump presidency. The Trump years were especially important and challenging for her “role in protecting and preserving democracy.” She recalls that “every day was a battle. It was a battle of words, which largely fell to our communications team.” At age 25, Taylor would also regularly brief 200 plus senior staff members of the Democratic party leadership and recalls that she had little stage fright because of the comfort of being on stage that she developed at MTS.

Griffin explained that Pelosi looked to her because she was a young Black woman. “The Speaker understood that she did not have the knowledge, and she needed to hear from other voices. She cared less about what degree I had or whether I had worked on the Hill for 25 years, than the experience I had as a black activist. It was a remarkable moment for me.”





Taylor with  
Speaker of  
the House,  
Nancy Pelosi.

**“It is part of my blood, a non-negotiable to be out in the streets, forcing change.”**

### Conscientious Citizenship

Taylor’s family has a deep history of activism. Her grandfather, close friends of the King family, first moved to California to open the NAACP’s Western Regional Office. It was during high school that Taylor first developed her own interest in social change. Taylor cultivated her “social justice muscle” as a member of Next Generation Scholars throughout high school. Taylor worked for the NAACP throughout the academic year in college and then became involved in the nascent movement for Black lives after the death of Trayvon Martin in 2012. Speaking to her activism, Taylor shared that she “felt a higher calling to be out and making her voice heard in what would become a movement.”

Taylor’s social justice work was incredibly challenging both personally and professionally. “It was scary. I was receiving death threats.” In her work world, she had become “the ire to conservative blogs.” The Black Lives Matter movement was very new with lots of misunderstanding, even within her own political party. Though it added complications for Speaker Pelosi, Taylor continued to be active in the movement.

### Collective Wellness and Belonging

After six years working for Speaker Pelosi and near the end of the Trump presidency, Taylor decided to leave Congress and work for Spotify in a new role focused on government affairs communication as well as trust and safety communication. Taylor had “checked off everything I wanted to do on my congressional bucket list.” She was also deeply exhausted from both the physical and emotional demands of the job. She had extraordinarily full weeks in Washington with work travel internationally or to multiple states every weekend. “The work was tiring, and it tested me in so many different ways.”

Taylor has been using her time at Spotify to “reset, unwind, and focus on self-care” while still “aiding in the healing of the black community through music.” With a newfound semblance of work-life balance, Taylor has time to read, travel, and do the typical things a late twenty-year-old takes for granted.

Taylor is not finished with advocacy. When asked what impact she will make next, Taylor responded “I am still figuring it out. This is the first time that I am not directly making change.”

### Into Action - Taylor’s Hopes for MTS

From her strong writing skills to her comfort on a stage to her love of singing, Taylor greatly appreciates so much of what MTS gave to her. She hopes that future MTS graduates will be similarly well prepared and passionate. Her hope is that MTS will move even more “into action.”

Life in Marin “can be so insulating. It can be a challenge to access broader understandings, viewpoints, and lived experiences.” It is for this reason that Taylor hopes we lean even more into community engagement. “I would love for student engagement that goes beyond service hours and be meaningful rather than a chore.”

As we embark on our “Into Action” strategic plan, Taylor’s story and hopes for the future of MTS beautifully align with our future. Now that she has slightly more personal time, we also hope to have Taylor back to campus to speak to all of our students. I left our forty-five-minute conversation incredibly inspired and look forward to others sharing in that experience.



Top: Taylor singing with her cappella group in college.  
Right: Taylor with her family at her brother Alex’s graduation.



## From The MTS Archive



Top: Posing with classmates at MTS.  
Bottom: Taylor at her MTS spring graduation in 2006.



## A CHAMPION FOR WOMEN

CLAIRE PACKER '08

**Claire Packer's ambition for a career in medicine has always been a driving force in her life.**

Claire Packer has had a passion for science, women's health, and service for her entire academic career, starting at MTS. She recently graduated from Oregon Health & Science University and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health with her MD/MPH and will be starting her Obstetrics and Gynecology residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital/Massachusetts General Integrated Program this summer.

Eric Kielich and Nancy Tracy were instrumental in her development as an academic, in both science and research. Her eighth-grade research project was on the history of abortion care in the United States, which

according to Claire, she still occasionally references with her colleagues. She continued to develop her passions at Branson and majored in Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology at Washington University in St. Louis, where she led a swim program for children with cerebral palsy, volunteered

at the St. Louis Crisis Nursery, conducted research in a neuroimaging lab and was recruitment chair for her sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma.



During medical school, she thrived as a budding clinician, researcher, and leader in academic medicine. She led the ob-gyn research group and has herself published 12 full length manuscripts and presented over 50 projects investigating adverse outcomes of pregnancy, social determinants of high-risk obstetrics, and health care economics. During her MPH year, she worked with the Population Counsel in Zambia investigating the predictors of teenage pregnancy, a major public health issue in the country, and is currently working on writing policy backed by her published data. In addition to her academic work, she created a program to provide women's health education and resources to houseless women in the Portland area, volunteered at the local free clinic and spearheaded a program to vaccinate parents of hospitalized children. She was elected into Alpha Omega Alpha society and will be graduating at the top of her class in June.



While her ambition for a medical career has always been a driving force in her life, she maintains the importance of work-life balance. For Claire, this means spending time with her family in the Bay Area and her friends across the country, doing the athletic activities she loves, and traveling the world. She attributes the foundation of this balance to her time at MTS and how her teachers fostered not only her brain, but her creativity, hobbies, and interpersonal relationships. Her friendships from MTS and the community that brought her up have continued to be a meaningful presence in her life. She is excited to continue her clinical training in Boston with hopes to pursue a career in high-risk obstetrics and research back in the Bay Area after training.

## AUTHOR | ENTREPRENEUR | ACTIVIST

ANNIE KRABBENSCHMIDT '07

"I always felt torn by the two very distinct sides of my brain, balancing what I believed were competing career desires: On the one hand, I want to help solve problems of social inequity and on the other, I want to make art. In fact, I've never felt more seen than when Dave Baker wrote in my eighth grade report card that I was often more interested in making the class laugh than solving problems.

What I didn't realize was that allowing these two sides of my thinking to work together would lead me to build a truly fulfilling career for myself. While I was at Duke getting a master's in public policy with a focus on social policy, I realized that my role in influencing social change would be in impacting culture. Creating art, whether it is in writing, storytelling, comedy, or cartooning, is my way of connecting to people and telling them why they should care about important cultural issues.



My first book is coming out this June, and with it I'm starting a press called Radical Queer Dinner Party Books (RQDP Books). My goal is to build a press that specializes in supporting queer and marginalized writers so that we can do the work of uncovering narratives that have been (and in many states still are) intentionally suppressed. It's hard work, and I am still working on building something sturdy and long-lasting. But I know the project is one that will sustain me, because of how much it matters at this time in history."

**"Creating art is my way of connecting to people and telling them why they should care about important cultural issues."**





# INTRODUCING QUINCY DAVIS

Inaugural Director of Equity and Inclusion

**MTS WELCOMED QUINCY DAVIS TO OUR PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY IN AUGUST 2021.**

With the support of the Board of Trustees, Head of School Andrew Davis created this role as an important step for MTS to commit to diversifying our program in multiple ways. Quincy has been instrumental in coalescing the staff, student, and parent communities around equity and inclusion work, and his energy and enthusiasm are unparalleled.

Understanding, forming, and strengthening community is what Quincy is all about. “Community is many things. Growing up in Los Angeles, for me, community was all about family,” Quincy relates. Understandable, given

that Quincy’s mother and her five siblings, as well as his grandparents, all lived in the area and got together for every holiday. “We didn’t just get together for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We had family gatherings for any conceivable holiday – Memorial Day, Labor Day – you name it. Community to me was about a time to share food, and spend time together.”

Quincy’s experiences in many different communities – his family community, a strong church affiliation, different school communities including small independent schools and then a large charter school for high school – taught him that community was a lot of different things. As Quincy puts it, “I realized that everyone in a community doesn’t have to

all look alike. People in a community don’t have to share the same religious beliefs. In fact, we don’t all have to have the same viewpoints. People in a community can learn from each other.”

According to Quincy, the most important aspects of community are trust and love. In order to fully love someone, you have to trust them. And in order to trust someone, you have to truly know them. What Quincy saw at MTS and an important reason why he agreed to join the MTS community, was he saw a place where the community is fully invested in creating a space where every student is seen and heard. Learning can’t happen – students can’t thrive and become their best selves – unless they feel seen, valued, and heard.

**STUDENTS NEED TO FEEL COMFORTABLE BEING THEMSELVES, BEING VULNERABLE, AND STILL FEELING ACCEPTED AND VALIDATED, BEFORE THEY CAN SHINE ACADEMICALLY AND SOCIALLY.**

“A community is a group of people that want the best for you. A community creates a space where you can be yourself, and everyone knows who you are. As educators, we just want the best for students and that affirmation piece is crucial.”

While MTS has made strides in promoting equity and inclusion at the school in the past few years, there is still much work to be done, and Quincy’s arrival and experience has come at an optimal time. Previously a teacher himself, he also comes to the school with a decade of

are having a ‘growth moment.’ And we have to recognize those growth moments in ourselves as educators and as a community. We are all striving to be a place where every member of our community – students, teachers, and families – can feel they can be who they are. We are not always successful at that – we are not going to pretend we are perfect. Instead, we can continue to acknowledge that we are continually working on it. We can recognize when



experience in cultural responsiveness work with CCRTL, the Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning, where he traveled across the country working with different schools. Students need to feel comfortable being themselves, being vulnerable, and still feeling accepted and validated, before they can shine academically and socially. What he sees as paramount is “not just the what, but the how” – it’s not just what we’re teaching, but how we are teaching it. As Quincy puts it: “We love telling our students that they

we’ve made mistakes, learn from them, and do better. We are all trying to be the best version of ourselves and the school that we can be.”

Quincy moved up to Marin from Los Angeles with his wife, three year old son, and one year old daughter. He is excited to get to know the area better, and as luck would have it, he came to the Bay Area already a long-time, die-hard 49ers fan. Go Niners!



# NEW FACES

## First Impressions from their First Year at MTS



◀ **NANCY KEHOE**  
Advancement Director

I've been delighted to be in the mix and hear the laughter, play, and learning that goes on every day at MTS. I am having so much fun working with the Administrative Team and all of the professional community here. Traffic, recess, and lunch duties have been a great way to get to know our families...even if I do tend to talk too much with families at drop-off in the morning. It's rewarding to build community and raise money for this special school, where we are all motivated to do our best and meet the needs of our students and the mission of MTS.



▲ **TRICIA GARCÍA**  
Advancement Associate

I've been impressed with the amount of parent involvement at MTS. Whether it is behind the scenes or on campus, everyday MTS parents are contributing in many meaningful ways.



▲ **KAITLYN MCKENZIE**  
Lower School Learning Specialist

As a new person on campus, students, teachers, and parents alike have been so welcoming. Everyone and anyone is willing to lend a hand or answer any questions. In the beginning days of the school year, students went out of their way to say hello and introduce themselves to me.

**KELLI WILLIS**  
Registrar

The campus is beautiful, the students are kind and engaging, and the faculty has been warm and welcoming.



**CHRISTINA ZARICH**  
Operations Manager &  
Assistant to Head of School

I've been delighted to discover the number of staff who are foodies like myself. We all bond over our love for pastries and treats, and we share recipes with each other to try.

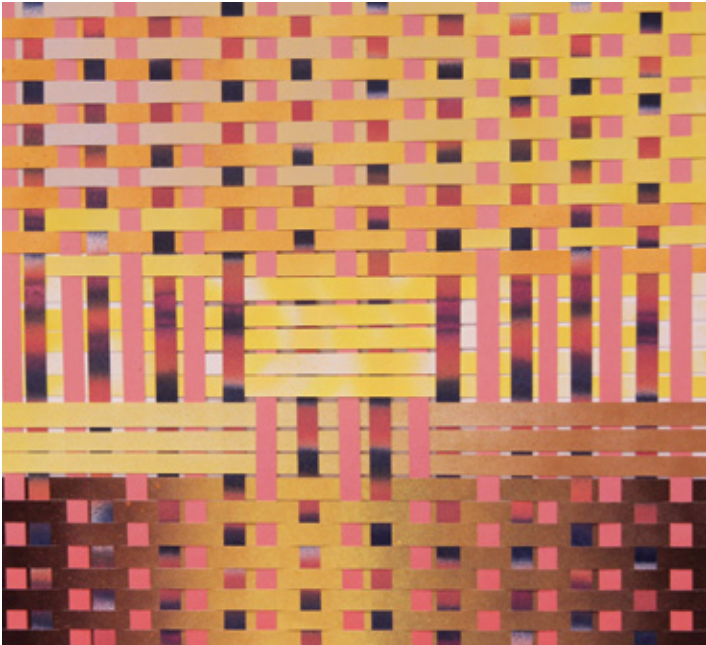


◀ **MAGGIE SANTINELLI**  
3rd Grade Homeroom &  
Humanities Teacher

One thing that has excited me at MTS is that as a teacher I am able to create an impactful curriculum for my students based on their needs and what they want to learn about. The flexibility and choice I am given as an educator allows me to empower my students.



Taylor, 6th Grade



Elyse, 6th Grade



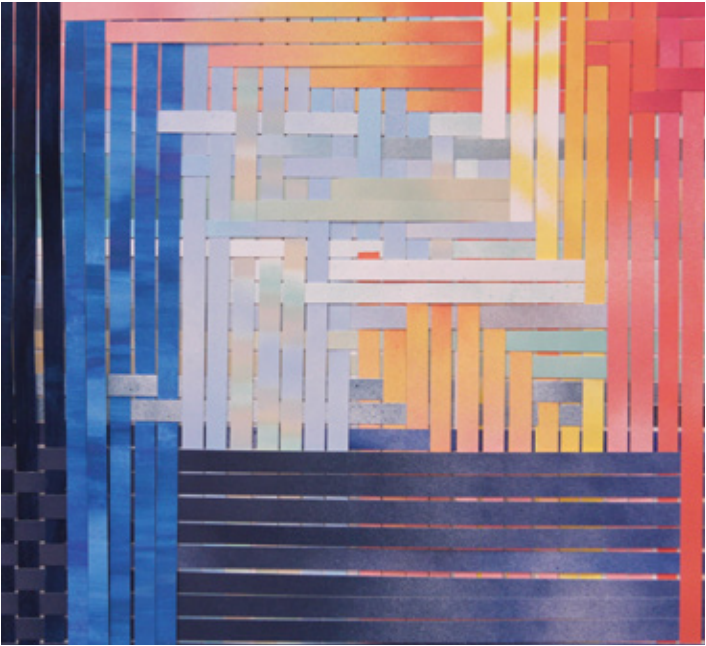
# INTERSECTIONS

FEATURED VISUAL ART

This year studio art teachers Evy Packer and Tyler Bewley led their middle school enrichment students in a project inspired by the artwork of Alicia McCarthy, an American painter from Oakland, California. Her compositions, whether painted or drawn, are constructed through a repetitive process of mark making, a sensitivity to hue and pigment density, and an openness to the distinct character of each gesture.



Sebby, 6th Grade



Grady, 6th Grade



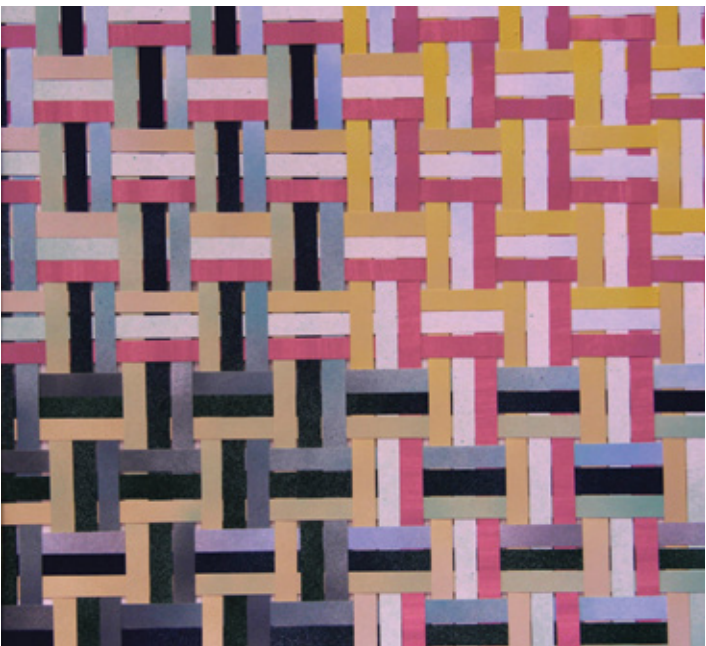
McCarthy was a member of the Mission School underground movement in San Francisco in the early 1990's, and she is best known for her abstract paintings that are influenced by punk and queer subcultures, graffiti, and folk art, and often incorporate found elements or recycled materials that pay homage to the surrounding community. These works—often featuring a nexus of interwoven, multihued lines—are at once entropic and controlled, intimate and tough. “I want my work to reflect all the beauty and pain of everyday life. All woven together and interconnecting to create [images] based in line and color.”

## ALICIA MCCARTHY'S PAINTINGS FEATURE COMPLEX INTERACTIONS OF FORM AND COLOR.

Inspired by her well-known intricate weave paintings, MTS students set out to create their own color weave compositions. Students started out by exploring color theory and thinking about the interaction between colors. Next, they thought about the feeling they wanted to evoke and came up with a color palette to focus their weave patterns around. Then, using strips of brightly colored paper, students wove the strips into beautiful, intricate patterns.



Alia, 7th Grade



Mhairi, 7th Grade



# CLASS NOTES

## 1984

**Dan Murray** is living in Mill Valley with his wife, Eleanor, and kids, Shade and Hank.

## 1988

**Ryan Nelson** writes, “I split my time living in Larkspur and Palm Springs with my wife, Cheryl. I started a new job at Salesforce last year and enjoy that very much. I got a chance recently to catch up (online) with my classmate **Mei-Ming Casino** who is working at Netflix in the LA area. If anyone ever wants to see the June 15, 1988 graduation video, I'm happy to send the online links!”

## 1990

**Jason Horn** lives in Manhattan with his family and owns an orthodontic office in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York. He enjoys surfing wherever there are waves, and skateboarding through the streets of NYC when he isn't making smiles... and can't believe his daughters are already in third and sixth grade.

## 1997



We heard the following from **Ben Horn**, “I recently graduated from the University of Maryland School of Dentistry and will begin a residency in periodontics this summer. Our three kids are growing fast and we found them a school that reminds me of MTS. I wish you all the best!”

*Pictured: Ben Horn with his wife, Caitlin, and their children, Kendall (7), Parker (6), and Cullen (3) on vacation on Ana Maria Island.*

## 1998

When **Abigail Kell Sutcliffe** wrote in March, she was looking forward to visiting the Bay Area in April. She updated us with the following news, “I'm living north of Boston with my husband Greg and 2 kids, Finley (4) and George (18 mos). I work at Boston Children's Hospital as an NP in General Surgery.”

## 2001

**Joe Armao** visited the MTS campus in March. Joe is currently living and working in New York, in financial tech and cryptocurrency. He spends most of his time in East Hampton, NY.

**Rebecca Haskell** (she/her/hers) is living in Oakland with her partner, Mike, and their dog, Thea. Rebecca is Principal Consultant at Just Design Consulting, where she is currently supporting clients such as Oakland Public Education Fund and TFA Baltimore. Rebecca founded Just Design Consulting in 2015 where she helps social justice organizations confidently deliver on their mission and vision through strategic operational support and innovative program design. Rebecca specializes in program & training design, project management, content management, and leadership coaching. Her work has mainly been focused in the sectors of education and criminal justice reform. In her free time, Rebecca enjoys road cycling, cooking plant-based meals, swing dancing, backpacking, and continuing to grow through building community. Rebecca has stayed in contact with **Sami Feld** ('02) over the years and recently got together with **Sammi Curiale** ('01) and **Beatrice Thornton** ('01), both local to the Bay Area.

**Ryan McCauley** sent in this note: “I am currently a Manager of Student Success at Guild Education, an education start-up I have worked at for 5.5 years. I live in Denver, Colorado with my husband of 3.5 years. When I'm not working, I spend time rock climbing or volunteering as a



mountaineering instructor at the Colorado Mountain Club. This past year I was ecstatic to be selected for the US National Ice Climbing Team and to have the opportunity to participate in the Ice Climbing World Championships in Saas-Fee, Switzerland.”  
*Pictured: Ryan McCauley with her husband, Jay.*

## 2002

**Samantha Field** lives in Santa Rosa with her partner, Andy, and two kitties. In spring of 2020 at the start of the pandemic, she co-founded the COVID Grief Network (<https://covidgriefnetwork.org/>), a mutual aid network that provides free grief support to young adults who have lost a loved one to COVID-19. Since launching nearly two years ago, they've connected over 800 young adults in over 25 countries to free grief support. This work was inspired in part after losing Samantha's mom, Jeannie, when she was in her 20s, and recognizing the gap in available resources for young folks in grief, who are often the first among their peers to experience significant loss.

In her day job, Samantha works for the County of Sonoma in the Probation Department, supporting the development and evaluation of services for people involved in the criminal justice system.

**Kevin Fugaro** writes, “my wife and I have a 19-month-old boy, Gavin, and after a decade in Manhattan we recently moved to Katonah, a suburb of NYC. When I'm not changing diapers or watching *Encanto* on repeat, I work in software design, and this year I started a new position

at Afresh, which uses AI to reduce retail food waste and its associated carbon emissions. Wishing everyone a safe and healthy year!”

## 2003



Congratulations to **Kate Green Ball**, who had a baby girl, Bennett, in June 2021. Kate works at Serena & Lily and lives in Marin.

## 2006

**Laura Venner** graduated from veterinary school at the Ohio State University in 2021 and is currently enjoying the long hours as an emergency room veterinarian in Boston, Massachusetts. She is looking to pursue a residency in medical oncology.

## 2013

**Macquarie Simon** recently graduated from Lafayette College (BA Environmental Studies, BA Social Justice), and is now living and working in New York City.

## 2018

Congratulations to **Will Bennett** for being named first team in basketball in the Bay Counties League West.

Congratulations to **Halle Hanna** and **Ella Klingelhofer** for being named first team in Bay Counties League West for girls soccer.



**Katelyn Welding** taught a free architecture class at MTS in early March. Katelyn writes, “I taught classes to lower school kids

as an introduction to architecture. Each class was about tapping into your creative mind and drawing and building whatever you can imagine. They learned the importance of size, shape, scale, and structural balance. Architecture exists to create the physical environment in which people live, but architecture is more than just the built environment, it's also a part of our culture. It stands as a representation of how we see ourselves, as well as how we see the world. Architecture is all around us!”



**Piper Fleece** capped off a terrific high school basketball career as the starting point guard for the state champion San Domenico Panthers (CIF Division V), leading her team to a 38-27 victory over Shalhevet. Additionally, Piper's skill and commitment were recognized, as she was awarded by CIF as the outstanding athlete for the championship game, and was named outstanding female student athlete for San Domenico by the Marin Athletic Foundation.



## 2019

Congratulations to **Jaclyn Rogers**, who was a member of the CIF Division IV state championship basketball team at Branson.



## 2020

**Grace Michel** was a member of the San Domenico Panthers team with MTS alum **Piper Fleece**. Let's hear it for our MTS alumni athletes!



## 2022

It was so great to have **Sophie Nicholson** and **Lila** ('24) back visiting the MTS campus! They have been attending school

in Barcelona for the past year after their family moved to Spain. The two visited 6th and 8th grade Spanish classes to talk about their experience living in another country. They shared cultural differences and also how much faster they are learning the Spanish language. We're impressed by how much they've changed and matured in their travels, and we have loved hearing about their expanded culinary palates and new friends!



TELL US WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!

Email [alumni@mttam.org](mailto:alumni@mttam.org) or visit [mttam.org/alumni](http://mttam.org/alumni)



# MILESTONES

Thank you to our passionate and dedicated staff!

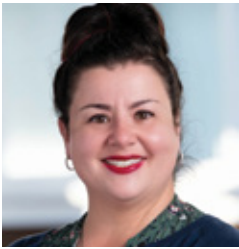
## 5 YEARS



**HEATHER BRUBAKER**  
Director of Communications



**JOELLE DODGE**  
Director of Finance & Operations



**MARIA PEVZNER**  
Learning Specialist

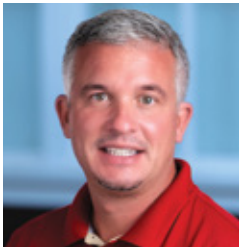


**MIKE TAVERNA**  
Director of Technology

## 10 YEARS



**BARBARA GUARRIELLO**  
Spanish



**GERRY GUARRIELLO**  
Spanish & Latin



**TYLER BEWLEY**  
Studio Art



**RACHAEL GUERCIO**  
4th Grade Humanities

## 20 YEARS



**MEGAN KUYKENDALL**  
Kindergarten Science & Engineering



**ROB POTTER**  
Geography & Math

# NEW BABIES

Welcome to the MTS community!



**LILA ANNEMARIE MARKOVICH**  
Born Thursday, November 4, 2021  
Aileen Markovich, 2nd Grade Humanities  
& Kevin Markovich, Math



# MTS

IN PRINT

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!  
Please send comments to Heather Brubaker, Director of Communications, hbrubaker@mttam.org or Mount Tamalpais School Communications, 100 Harvard Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941. For more information, please visit us at mttam.org.

INTERESTED IN APPLYING?  
Contact Amy Pearson, Director of Admissions, apearson@mttam.org.

WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM ALUMNI!  
Please stay in touch through alumni@mttam.org or visit mttam.org/mts-alumni.

INTERESTED IN MAKING A GIFT?  
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