

MTS

IN PRINT

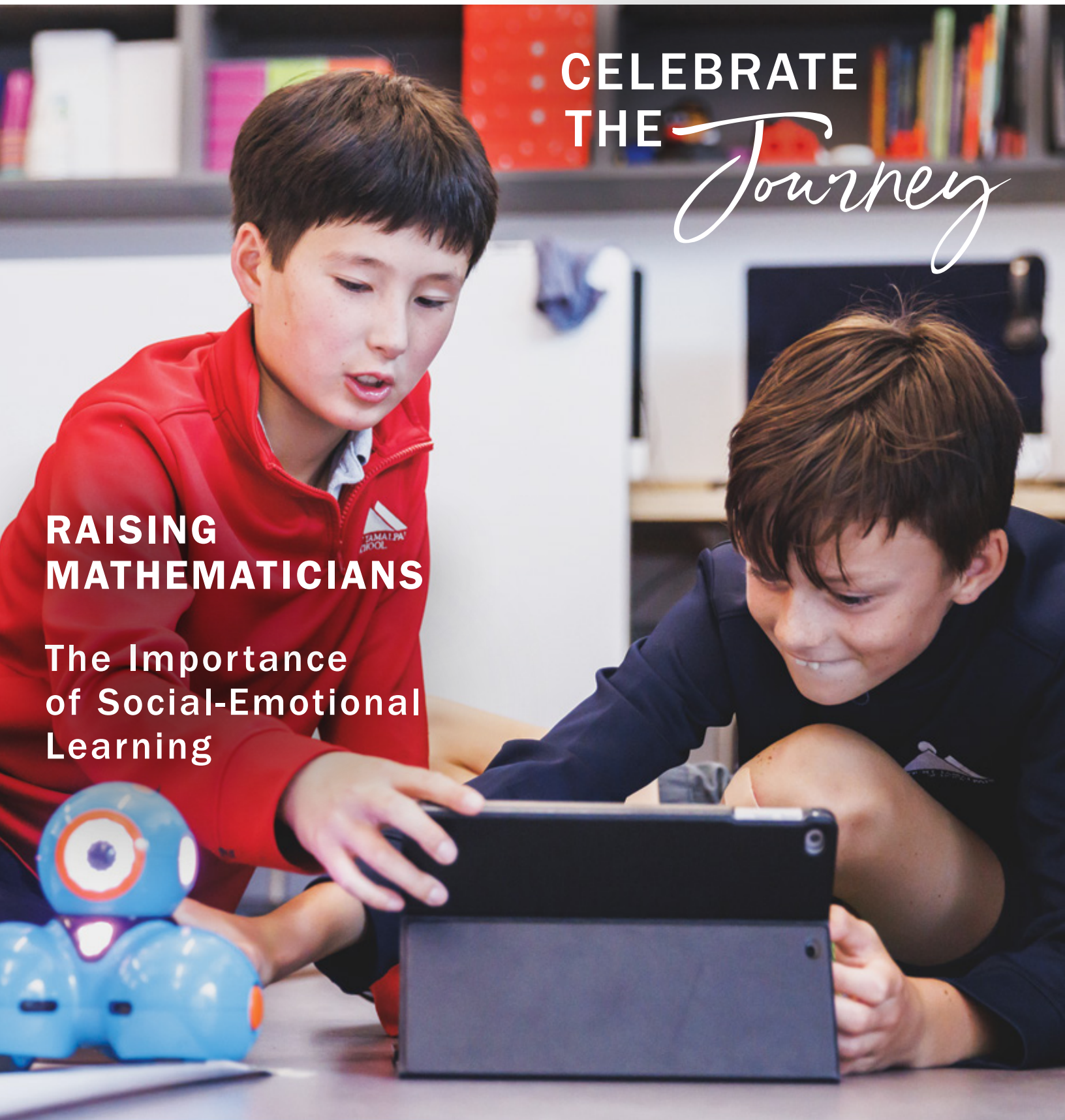
SUMMER 2023

CELEBRATE
THE

Journey

RAISING MATHEMATICIANS

The Importance
of Social-Emotional
Learning





MTS IN PRINT

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Our Mission and Our Values

“These values all start with a verb, reminding us that living our values requires action.”

AT MOUNT TAMALPAIS SCHOOL

Learning is Revered, and Education is Joyful.

Lead with kindness.

We keep an open mind and embrace our changing world with an open heart. In all that we do, in every way that we grow, we lead with kindness.

Honor childhood.

Childhood is not a renewable resource; it is a brief and valuable time of limitless potential and essential development. It should not be rushed. Mount Tamalpais School students are well-prepared for their future while remaining young at heart.

Practice active inclusion.

Everyone is welcome at Mount Tamalpais School. It’s not enough to simply accept everyone who joins our community. We practice active inclusion until it becomes instinctive.

Celebrate the journey.

Because learning is so valued, we find joy and satisfaction in the pursuit of knowledge. We welcome the successes and challenges that come with being a student.

Ask, “What’s possible?”

We want our students to be prepared to solve the challenges of their changing world. We encourage them to dream big, push boundaries, and think outside the box, and we give them lots of opportunities to practice these skills and habits.

CELEBRATE THE Journey

At Mount Tamalpais School, “Learning is Revered, and Education is Joyful.” As Head of School, I witness this – our mission – every day in MTS classrooms. The MTS Board of Trustees approved both this new mission statement as well as five Community Values in March 2022. These values (pictured left) all start with a verb, reminding us that living our values requires action.

While this year’s In Print documents the ways in which all five of these values are made real in various ways, the common thread is Celebrate the Journey. We further describe this value: “Because learning is so valued, we find joy and satisfaction in the pursuit of knowledge. We welcome the successes and challenges that come with being a student.” When we celebrate the journey, we teach students – and adults! – that “basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work,” the essence of a growth mindset.

In the pages that follow, a photo spread highlights Oliver!, this year’s 4th and 5th grade play. As every MTS alum knows, the success of that show each year comes with its own challenges. From memorizing lines, to learning choreography, to staying quiet when off stage, the process of the play matters just as much as the product. The final performances are truly a celebration of the journey.

In this issue, we dive deep into the MTS math program. One of the many things I appreciate about our approach to teaching mathematics is that the focus is on how students get the answer. The walls of MTS math classrooms are covered with posters documenting a



challenging math project. Our students fill the space with diagrams and words explaining their thinking process, and their journey to the answer. Even in math, a subject where there is often one correct answer, we celebrate the journey.

As you read this year’s In Print, please note the myriad ways in which “Celebrate the Journey” and our other four Community Values are lived each day. I feel honored and inspired to lead such a mission-driven, values-aligned school.

Enjoy!

ANDREW DAVIS
Head of School

LIFE @MTS



Take a peek in our classrooms and on our campus.

@MTSSCHOOL

Students had a blast celebrating Halloween at the pumpkin patch in the Grove.



6th graders showed off their impressive marble roller coasters created in Trisha Cahill's STEM class.



Our 5th-7th graders performed impressive original music compositions for the school in Lilianna Parker's class.



Kindergarteners hosted an all school gather to celebrate Black History in February. They led the school in singing "I Shall Not Be Moved," and hosted a West African drum/dance performance.



MTS celebrated the Lunar New Year in January with performances, dance, dumplings, martial arts, calligraphy, and more.



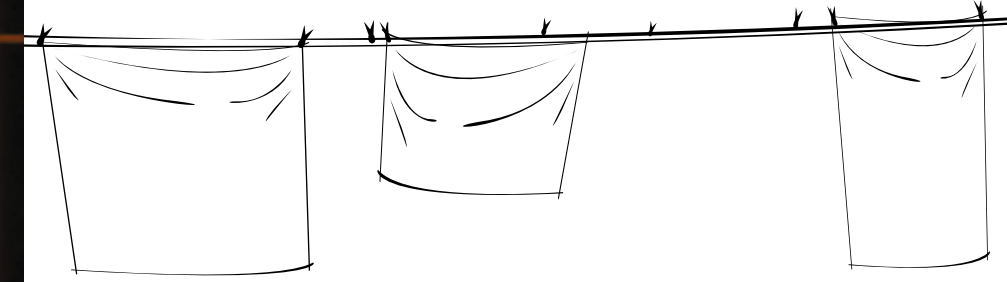
The Insect Discovery Lab came to campus, and 3rd and 4th graders got to "meet and greet" all kinds of insects and learn about their specialized behaviors that support their survival in the wild.

Below: Students received letters from President Biden in response to their advocacy for protecting the environment.



Middle Photo Above Left: MTS 8th grader, Maya, taught some of our kindergarteners how to fold origami birds.

Lower school students having fun during new Friday morning exploration clubs, including rock climbing, American Sign Language, martial arts, paper airplanes, Rubik's Cube, photographing nature's patterns, and more!

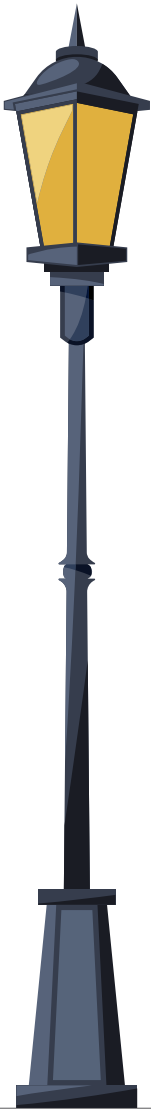


OLIVER!

There is no other experience quite like the 4th and 5th grade play at Mount Tamalpais School.

Students spend three months preparing for it — starting before auditions even begin — with learning how to audition. Every year our students celebrate this journey together, embracing the long and hard-earned process leading up to the final, culminating performances. The project is a full-on community effort, with all members of the performing arts team working with our students, and the entire faculty and staff flexibly changing schedules as needed to accommodate practices. MTS families contribute time and energy working with students behind the scenes to provide costumes, create and find props, decorate scenery, and assist with hair and makeup. While the final performances amaze year after year with astounding singing and acting skills developed by these young performers, it's the magic of the time working and bonding together as a class, as a family, and as a community over the months that makes these productions truly memorable for our students.

“
Consider
yourself
at home.



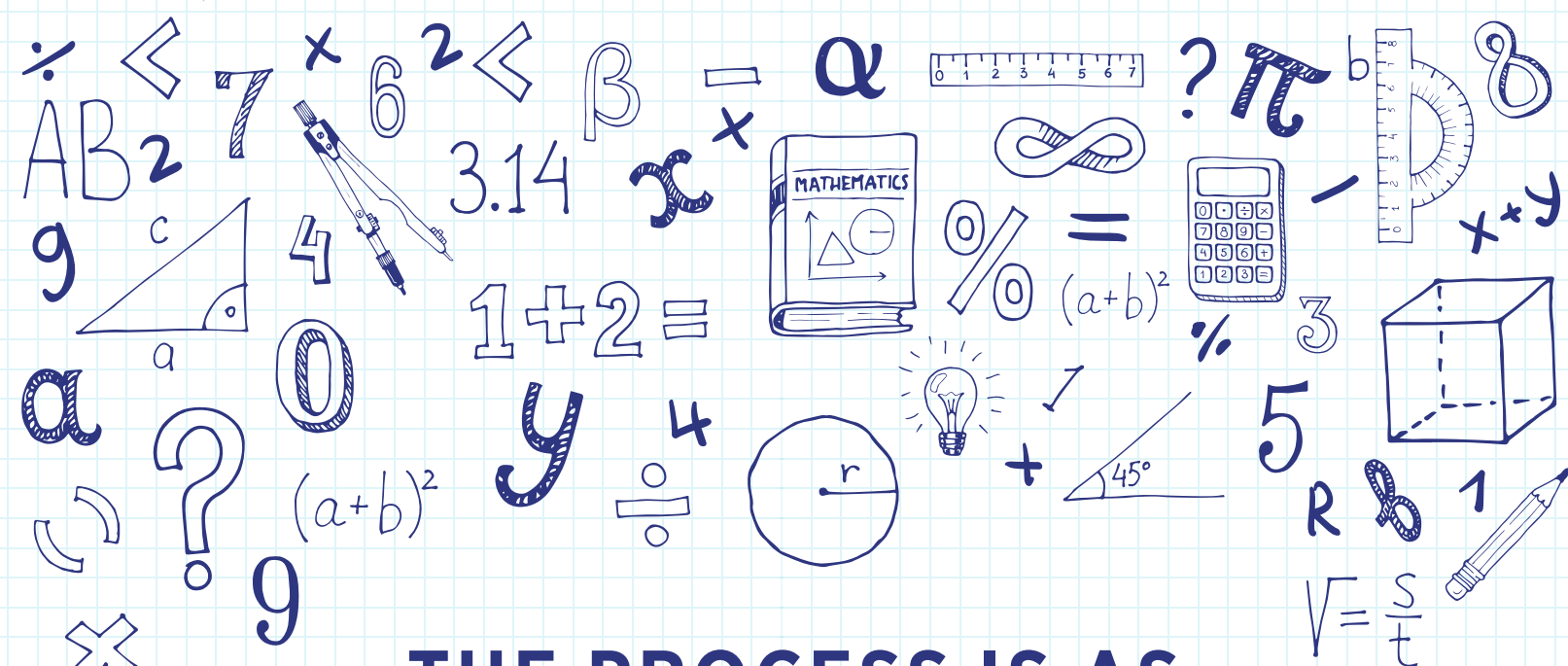
A Note from the Directors

Oliver! is the epic tale of a young boy struggling to grasp onto the innocence of childhood despite the abject conditions around him. He must bravely navigate through an emotionally complicated and treacherous world of adults in order to finally uncover what it feels like to be loved and accepted. Family, he discovers, can take on many different forms.

This winter, our 4th and 5th graders performed a beautiful rendition of this classic musical on the MTS stage where their amazing acting, singing, dancing, and storytelling came to life and showed everyone just how brave kids can be. The process of putting on a polished theatrical production as a creative ensemble took dedication and teamwork. With *Oliver!*, our students continue to remind us that we are all truly better together.

DIRECTORS
Lindsay Bercovitch & Trevor Marcom

MUSICAL DIRECTORS
Alex Taylor & Jeanette Tietze



THE PROCESS IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE SOLUTION

— MATHEMATICS AT MTS —

The philosophy behind the way we teach math at Mount Tamalpais School is exemplary of one of our community values, “Celebrate the Journey.” As Nick Wilsey, MTS Head of Middle School and math teacher, describes it, how our students derive their answers is as important as the solution. Our focus on math at MTS centers on raising students as mathematicians, which expands beyond how math programs were designed in the past. The way that we support students to identify and develop as mathematicians begins with a focus on number sense.



Students in Kindergarten develop number sense by exploring combinations that make ten.



Eighth grader Audrey Rosauer evaluating the efficiency of strategies for solving linear equations.

NOT YOUR PARENTS' MATH CLASS

In traditional programs, what mattered most was getting the right answer. Students were taught to memorize algorithms, repeat, and reproduce. Today in “new” math, students are taught different strategies to solve a problem and to think about which solution would work best in a given situation. It is not about memorizing algorithms. It is about understanding how and why algorithms work. What do numbers mean? “We want our students to struggle with real problems because that’s how you learn,” says Nick. “If you don’t fail at it, you’ll never learn it.”

According to Cathy Fosnot, a leading voice in mathematics education, in developing numeracy, “students learn that mathematicians look at the numbers first and then choose the most efficient and elegant strategy that works best for the problem.” At MTS, students are taught different ways to break down numbers – that numbers can be composed and decomposed in a multitude of ways. For example, the basic facts, the ones we all memorized growing up, are simply a starting point. Say, $8 + 2 = 10$, but also $4.5 + 5.5 = 10$ or $x + y = 10$. Or, in another example, 13×7 is also 10×7 combined with 3×7 . Our students learn that there are multiple ways to approach and solve problems. Flexibility in thinking, creativity, debate, and risk-taking are all valued and considered inherent in new math.

“MANY PARENTS HAVE ASKED ME: WHAT IS THE POINT OF MY CHILD EXPLAINING THEIR WORK IF THEY CAN GET THE ANSWER RIGHT? MY ANSWER IS ALWAYS THE SAME: EXPLAINING YOUR WORK IS WHAT, IN MATHEMATICS, WE CALL REASONING, AND REASONING IS CENTRAL TO THE DISCIPLINE OF MATHEMATICS.”

—JO BOALER, STANFORD PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

TEACHING KIDS HOW TO THINK, NOT WHAT TO THINK

Why use strategies and models instead of algorithms? “When you’re working from this philosophy and approach to math, it takes the ceiling off what students can learn and be taught in a single year,” says Meagan Andrews, MTS Head of Lower School and previously a math instructor. In other words, so-called “low floor/high ceiling” math problems allow students of different abilities to engage in the same problem at their own level. When students are focused on the process and not on getting the right answer, there is also rich learning in making mistakes. Students then have the opportunity to learn why and where things went wrong. And in gaining the ability for problem analysis - not just in math, but in all problems - students develop perseverance and develop a growth mindset.



Eighth grader Garrett Murray explaining his reasoning on solving systems of equations by elimination to math teacher Nick Wilsey.

INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING & TECHNOLOGY

Students are able to find personal success since they decide which solution works for them based on the strategies they've learned. In middle school, MTS has three math teachers for each grade, allowing for maximum mathematical thinking and confidence building. The goal is for students to be skilled at math, not to be the fastest. Students are regularly asked 1) what do you notice in this problem, and 2) what do you need to solve this/how does it work? Students may come up with five different ways to solve a math problem, but ultimately, they can decide which solution is going to work best in a given situation.

Our use of technology, especially in lower school, allows for further individualized instruction. Resources like Dreambox develop student skills and fluency by working with different math models and strategies that complement the work happening in the classroom. Dreambox grows in complexity as the students grow in their abilities. It also gives teachers instant feedback about when a student may have gotten tripped up, and it has assignability features, allowing teachers to target extra practice in certain areas on an individual level. In addition, Dreambox and other math apps can give visual representation to concepts students are learning.

PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE

The MTS professional community works hard to ensure our students are ready for the world in high school and beyond. Key components of the MTS math program include effective communication of ideas, embracing struggle and mistakes as opportunities for growth, and practicing collaboration. Kindergarten through 5th grade focuses on numeration, operations, computation; data and chance; geometry and measurement; patterns, functions, and algebra. Students in middle school build on these foundational concepts and concentrate on application, problem-solving, data analysis, geometry, and a more in-depth study of patterns, functions, and algebra.

In the school's Strategic Plan, one of our key Habits of Excellence that we commit to is "Critical Reasoning – valuing and seeking multiple inputs and considering all facets of a topic to understand, analyze, and effect change." So much of what we do revolves around critical thinking. "An MTS student can question and defend answers. We want them to leave MTS knowing how to collaborate, take risks, and leave school more curious," says Nick Wilsey. "A resilient MTS student is one who knows how to struggle through setbacks in math. Ultimately, we want our students to think of themselves as mathematicians and to leave MTS with confidence."



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
THIRD GRADE "MUFFLES' TRUFFLES"

Each year our third grade class works on a unit titled, "Muffles' Truffles." This unit focuses on developing the open array as a model for multiplication and division through investigations based on the context of the Muffles' Truffles Shop. The question posed in the first investigation allows students to explore place value – the multiplicative structure of our base-ten system and quotative division. In the second and third investigations, students build two-dimensional blueprints of one-layer boxes and use these arrays to explore some of the big ideas in multiplication (the distributive, associative, and commutative properties.) In the fourth and final investigation, students work with open arrays in the context of labeling and pricing wrapped boxes of truffles. To figure out the dimensions of the wrapped boxes (open arrays) and the cost, students need to apply several ideas previously developed in this unit. The unit culminates with making and decorating truffles to take home.

CURIOSITY AND JOY IN LEARNING

MTS teachers hear and see the joy of rigorous thinking when MTS students, in finding a solution that works and gaining an ability to describe that thinking because of a deep understanding of the strategies available, are engaged and excited. They see the purpose and the way that it connects to their lives. Math is astrology, math is dance, math is the play structure and the beauty of nature. "When you see kids start viewing their world through a lens of math through the way math is being taught today with opportunities to be curious, it's motivating," says Meagan Andrews.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF IDEAS

What is really exciting about how math is taught today is to walk into a kindergarten or third grade classroom and hear the students describing their thinking with accuracy and depth well beyond getting the right answer. Students create learning videos, which is a great way for teachers to hear about how they're solving a problem. Through these videos, teachers can gain an understanding of where students are in their math reasoning development and the efficiency of their strategies.

"MY STUDENTS TRANSFORM
MATHEMATICAL THINKING
INTO DAILY DISCOVERY. THIS
CULTURE OF CURIOSITY AND
EXPLORATION PROVIDES
LIFELONG TOOLS AND A
CONFIDENCE STUDENTS TAKE
BEYOND THEIR TIME AT MTS."

—DJ THISTLE, LOWER SCHOOL MATH TEACHER

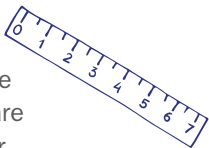
Scan to watch
3rd grader Violet
explains the strategy
"constant difference"



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT
FIRST GRADE ADVENTURE TO ANTARCTICA

In first grade, students embark on a virtual trip to Antarctica as research scientists to study penguins. This thematic unit is centered around measurement: finding the height and weight of different types of penguins, feeling how cold various weather temperatures feel, recording daily air temperatures in Antarctica, and comparing it to other places around the world. Throughout the unit, students reference the number line and gain an understanding of the scale of numbers from -30 (Antarctica temperatures!) to 100.

In a typical first grade math standard, students work with numbers through 200. However, because of a connection to the real world, such as in the Antarctica Adventure unit, students are exposed to negative numbers. The students have a purpose for utilizing those numbers with a concrete example of the daily air temperatures in Antarctica. They need to know geography – where penguins live and why – and this analysis and depth of thinking applies to the real world. Students are engaged and excited when their curiosity is piqued, and the lessons can be designed around the questions they have; this is when powerful learning happens.



MATH! STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

MTS MATHLETES ARE COUNTY CHAMPS!

Congratulations to our 7th grade Mathletes team for winning the Marin County Mathletes competition in the 2022-23 school year! After competing in four meets, the 7th grade team had the highest cumulative score after the final competition in March. Seventh graders Luca Cedolin, Riley Gu, Brian Shkurovich, Sebby Suarez, and Will Zuercher competed in all four of this year's competitions along with support from Daniel Burstein in November and 6th graders Charlotte Cohen in February and Anna Klimchalk in March. These Mathletes did an amazing job working together and supporting each other during club practices on Tuesday mornings.



Mathletes is a series of four county-wide competitions hosted by the Marin County of Education that challenge participating Marin middle school students to solve individual and team math problems. Schools may enter two teams at each competition, one eighth grade team and one seventh grade team. Students may participate at grade levels above their current grade. Typically, 15-16 school teams participate in the competitions.

MTS has participated in Mathletes for over ten years, and it is now offered to our middle schoolers as part of our “clubs” enrichment program. Students meet Tuesday mornings to practice and prepare for competitions under the guidance of long-time MTS math teacher, Dave Baker, and Gerry Guarriello. The problems in the competitions are non-traditional, problem-solving-

“I LOVE SEEING HOW COMPETITIONS HELP STUDENTS APPLY THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND HELP THEM THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX. THE POSITIVE ENERGY IN A ROOM OF 250+ STUDENTS DOING MATH PROBLEMS IS AMAZING!”

—DAVE BAKER, MATH TEACHER

type challenges. Students are given two to three minutes to solve each of the five individual problems. In the team component, a group of up to five students at each grade level is given ten minutes to solve five more involved/challenging problems.

During Mathletes competitions, which are held at Davidson Middle School in San Rafael, school teams accumulate points for correctly solving problems. Each school sends a five-member team and one alternate for a 7th and 8th grade team. Team awards are given after the final round, and individual awards are also given at the end of each meet.

SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL QUESTION

A company decreased the weight of its heart-shaped box of chocolates from 1 pound (16 ounces) to 13.5 ounces. They lowered the price by \$2, and the price per ounce of chocolate stayed the same. How much does the 13.5 ounces of chocolate cost?

SAMPLE TEAM QUESTION

Quadrilateral SKEW has vertices at S(-3, 2); K(3, 4); E(5, -2) and W(-5, -3). What is the area of Quadrilateral SKEW?

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT MATH!

7TH GRADER COMPETES IN GLOBAL CHESS TOURNAMENTS

In November, MTS 7th grader, Sebby Suarez, was contacted by PlayMagnus to meet World Chess Champion, Magnus Carlsen at the Meltwater Cup hosted at the Shack15 in San Francisco Ferry Building, the last competition in the Champion Chess Tour 2022 featuring some of the world's top chess players. Magnus Carlsen, who participated along with other top grandmasters in the tournament, is considered the best chess player in history. Meeting Magnus and watching him play was a highlight in Sebby's life.

Sebby was invited as a local chess talent to be interviewed and comment on the Championship games. Last summer Sebby qualified to play in the 2022 Intercontinental ChessKids Candidate Tournament in Madrid. Chess.com is the world's largest website which held the global tournament where only six kids qualified to play representing three areas of the world: The Americas, Europe and Africa, and Asia & Oceania. Sebby qualified first for the Americas with second place to the Pan American Chess champion. Parallel to this tournament was the FIDE Candidates Tournament where he got to meet the next top eight chess players in the World.

Sebby started playing chess with his father, Yvan, when he was five years old. Yvan noted that after about five months, Sebby began beating him. “Math and analytical thinking come very naturally to him” his father relates. Sebby worked with Lannete and Jeff Gordon, from Corte

Madera, who taught him their love for the game. He won the Scholastic Marin County Chess Championships consecutively at ages eight, nine, and 10 years old.

When the pandemic hit, Sebby started to spend more time honing his chess skills. He won a number of online national chess tournaments. In the summer of 2021 in his first official Over the Board (OTB) “in person”

tournament he got first place in the U.S. Chess National Open - U1300 in Las Vegas and Mixed Doubles with WGM Carla Heredia. This is the largest chess event in the U.S. That year he also tied for second in the U.S. Chess National Scholastic K-12 in Orlando, Florida.

The young chess star is now 12 years old and plays competitions both online and in

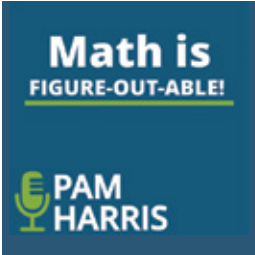
person. He is coached by two former FIDE youth World Champions. Sebby travels once or twice a month for tournaments. Last summer, he competed internationally, playing the FIDE School World Chess Championship in Panama, The Intercontinental Chess tournament in Madrid, U.S. Open in Palm Desert, and the North American Youth Chess Championship in Calgary, Canada.

Sebby is a member and frequently plays chess at the Mechanics Institute in San Francisco, which is the oldest running Chess Club in the U.S., founded in 1854.



GROWTH MINDSET IN THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Our MTS teachers are role models for our students by teaching a growth mindset and practicing it themselves. In the last year, lower school and middle school math teachers have engaged in rich, creative professional development. Last spring, Dave Baker, Rob Potter, and Jennifer Adams attended an all-day workshop at Stanford University that was led by Dr. Jo Boaler. The workshop focused on teaching mathematics through big ideas which engage students and increase achievement. At the workshop, MTS teachers explored how to engage all students through open, in-depth, and connected content. In the last few years, lower school math teachers have participated in numerous Pam Harris, *Math is Figure-out-able* workshops and regularly



listen to Pam’s weekly podcast by the same name. Pam Harris is changing the way our math teachers view and teach mathematics. She is a mother, a former high school math teacher, a university lecturer, an author, and a mathematics teacher-educator. She believes that Real Math is thinking mathematically, not just mimicking what a teacher does. Pam helps leaders and teachers to make the shift that supports students to learn Real Math.

Last summer Robin Davis, Kevin Markovich, and Jennifer Adams attended several of Cathy Fosnot’s workshops. Cathy Fosnot is a leading voice in mathematics education.

She is Professor Emerita of Education at the City College of New York and the founder of Mathematics in the City, a national center for professional development located



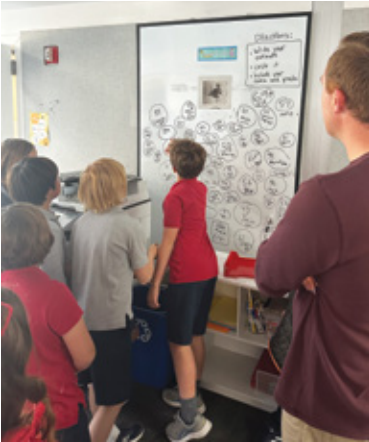
MTS math teacher Jennifer Adams with Cathy Fosnot.

at the college. Cathy devotes her time to speaking around the world, fostering school change through professional learning and support, and producing new resources and materials. MTS math teachers felt lucky to be at Cathy’s *Context for Learning: A Deeper Dive* workshop in San Francisco, where they focused on how to engage students in examining structure and regularity, how to support generalization and the development of proof, and how to use tools for formative assessment that truly provide insights for teaching. Jennifer Adams also participated in a *Learn-to-Lead* workshop with Cathy at her home in Connecticut. The *Learn-to-Lead Seminar* is designed for coaches, math curriculum leaders, and administrators. The topics of study included how to assess in powerful ways during conferrals when examining students’ work samples, how to record critical formative data, and how to use developmental rubrics to pick up data that will genuinely inform teaching.

at the college. Cathy devotes her time to speaking around the world, fostering school change through professional learning and support, and producing new resources and materials.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT THE "ESTIMATION STATION"

Every week our 4th grade students post a new estimation problem on the Math Board in the hallway, and all students are welcome to contemplate and add an estimate on the board. Placed in front of the board is a jar with items in it - marshmallows, rice, or small fidgets, for example. The students come up with different ways of guessing how many items are in the jar, and the 4th and 5th grade classes discuss possible strategies for estimating: calculate the area of the cylinder, count rows and multiply, or something else? The beauty of the estimation station is the creativity involved in coming up with an answer.



Scan to visit MTS graduate Finn McKibbin’s website for the "Date-O" math game!



DATEO-MATH-GAME.COM

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT "DATE-O" MATH GAME

Dave Baker has been teaching math at MTS for 34 years. Over 20 years ago, Dave came up with a math game for his students called “DATE-O.” To play the game, students draw five numbered cards from a deck that Dave created with numbers ranging from -19 to 25. The challenge is to make the current day of the month using as many of the selected numbers as possible. The game is played as a warm-up activity in Dave’s math classes at the beginning of the week. There are multiple equations for making the target date, and students learn to get very creative utilizing many different strategies, including factorials, summation, and square roots. At the end of the activity, students share their equations with one another on the board.

This fall, MTS graduate Finn McKibbin (2019), created a website for the game. Now, students even play it on the weekends!

FUN MATH GAMES TO PLAY AT HOME WITH YOUR FAMILY!

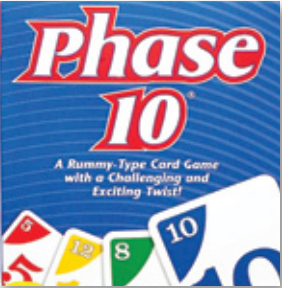
Math is fun, and math is everywhere! Math is a subject for curiosity, discussion, and growth. Creating opportunities to connect with math at home is important to help foster a relaxed dialogue about math, provide real-life math experiences, and decrease math anxiety. Here are some fun games to play with your family at home.



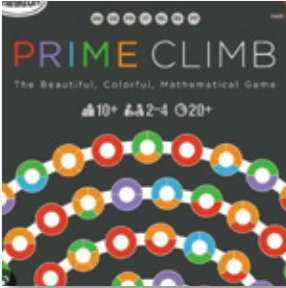
BATTLE SHEEP AGE 7+



CHOCOLATE FIX AGE 8+



PHASE 10 AGE 7+



PRIME CLIMB AGE 10+



SLEEPING QUEENS AGE 8+



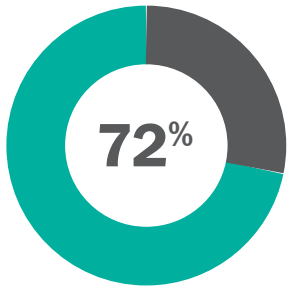
SPLENDOR AGE 10+

THE IMPORTANCE OF

Social-Emotional Learning

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) IS A CENTRAL TOPIC IN EDUCATION TODAY. While it’s hardly a new concept, the importance of and interest in our children’s emotional well-being has notably increased after the stresses of the pandemic. Studies are showing large increases in rates of depression and suicide in our adolescents. According to the 2021 Educator Confidence Report, from 2019-2021, 72% of educators cited students’ social and emotional needs as a top concern, and 82% said that an integrated approach to SEL in the classroom can improve students’ outcomes.

Some parents might feel uncomfortable with the idea of spending school time talking about emotions and may view it as an additional activity that distracts students from their academics. In fact, social and emotional learning is viewed by educational experts as foundational to the learning experience. As Elizabeth McLeod of IFSEL puts it, “Social-emotional learning is the content.” In other words, SEL must be infused in every aspect of



Educators cited students’ social and emotional needs as a top concern.

With the establishment of Mount Tamalpais School’s "Into Action" Strategic Plan last year, one of our key Habits of Excellence is “Collective Wellness and Belonging,” where we “commit to actively nourishing the mental, physical, and emotional needs that allow individuals and the collective to thrive.”

As part of this commitment, MTS partnered with the Institute of Social Emotional Learning (IFSEL) in the 2022-23 school year to strengthen that focus. IFSEL leads professional development workshops with schools in order to “empower educators, young people, and parents to transform their schools into caring, inclusive communities.” The partnership entails a “whole community approach,” with administrative leadership workshops, professional development institutes for faculty, and a parent and caregiver series offered throughout the year, including tools, resources, and ongoing support.



Kindergarten students during Morning Meeting participating in an SEL activity.

the academic experience in order for it to be successful. Rather than seeing it as an “add-on,” SEL is a lens that can be applied to everything in the classroom. Only with the foundation of SEL in place can learning truly begin. In fact, studies show that students’ academic learning significantly improves when guided by an effective SEL framework. A meta-analysis conducted in 2011 evaluating over 200 SEL programs by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, found an 11% point difference on standardized tests between those who have SEL in their school and those who don’t.

What exactly is social and emotional learning?

According to IFSEL, social and emotional learning is “a lifelong, dynamic process through which people acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and mindsets to understand and manage emotions, develop healthy identities, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, achieve personal and collective goals, and make responsible and caring decisions.”

Students, and all adults, need to learn how to choose how to deal with emotions, rather than be at the mercy of them. It’s an ongoing, lifelong endeavor, not just a class. It’s the practice of learning how to “act, and not react.”

It makes sense, then, that students in an integrated SEL program perform better. These students can handle stress and anxiety better, do better socially, and they have a better attitude about others and themselves. The healthy relationships they develop with students and teachers alike allow them to thrive. And by feeling connected in their relationships, they have a sense of belonging. When a student feels seen and heard, they are better able to focus on academics because they are not distracted by the background noise of social anxieties and other emotions. And if something does come up, they are better equipped at addressing conflict.

In a school with an intentional social and emotional learning program, topics are structured such that the focus scaffolds up over the years to connect with students’ maturity levels. The components of SEL start with helping everybody understand and manage their own emotions. Students need to be able to name their own emotions in order to handle them along with understanding a sense of their own identity.



Once students understand themselves, they can begin to build empathy and connection with others. Then students can learn how to resolve conflicts and repair those relationships when conflicts arise.

This process of understanding ourselves, and others, and how to resolve conflicts is a lifelong endeavor. Students learn that it’s OK to make mistakes and that it’s all part of the learning journey.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES

Self Awareness	Recognizing feelings as they occur; having a realistic assessment of one’s own ability and values; developing a well-grounded sense of self-confidence.
Self Management	Handling emotions so they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; delaying gratification to pursue goals; persevering in the face of set-backs.
Social & Cultural Global Awareness	Sensing what others are feeling; being able to take their perspective; appreciating and interacting positively with diverse groups.
Relationship Skills	Handling emotions in relationships effectively; establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; negotiating solutions to conflict; seeking help when needed.
Responsible Decision Making & Action	Accurately assessing risks; making decisions based on a consideration of all relevant factors and the likely consequence of alternative courses of actions; respecting others; taking personal responsibility for one’s decisions.

IFSEL (Institute for Social and Emotional Learning) and CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning)

Mental Health Awareness Day



Students feel more comfortable seeking help when there is an established culture around talking about emotions and feelings. This is where the importance of the community comes in. As the entire community learns to speak the language of SEL and share this common language, the mindset of the school culture shifts. Teachers who go through professional development training in order to promote social and emotional learning with the students at school can also share this information with parents and caregivers, so that parents can utilize the same ideas and strategies at home. As more people begin to understand and accept social and emotional learning as a normal part of our world and societal practice, the more likely our students will be willing to engage in the work themselves, allowing the whole community to thrive.

The MTS partnership with IFSEL is the first step in our work on the Habit of Collective Wellness and Belonging. This program will serve as a strong foundation as we layer other initiatives onto this work. Ultimately, MTS will be able to better realize all four habits of excellence because of our focus on social and emotional learning.



On April 6, 2023, MTS held its second annual Mental Health Awareness Day. During this day-long event, the entire school participated in activities solely focused on understanding mental health challenges and the tools that we can access to support our own well-being as well as those of others. Lower school students rotated through various stations including movement, yoga, and mindfulness sessions. Middle school students attended a panel discussion led by community members to talk about real, lived experiences with mental health issues, rotated through journal writing, yoga, and mindfulness sessions, and watched relevant videos with group discussions.

STUDENT COLLABORATION

BETTER Together

Every year Mount Tamalpais School selects a theme to guide activities and provoke thought within the community. The theme for the 2022-23 school year was “Better Together.” In so many ways, we are better together as a community – working together to solve problems, brainstorming new ideas, and simply having fun.

A perfect example of how we are Better Together is the prevalent group work our MTS students participate in as part of our program. From the sixth grade roller coaster project in Trisha Cahill’s STEM class, to the songs collaboratively written by fifth graders, to partner reading in kindergarten humanities classes – our students are better as a result of working together.

KATE MOEN
Kindergarten Humanities
Teacher on Partner Reading

"To foster agency in our youngest learners, kindergarteners are introduced to a wide variety of resources to help them learn and quickly realize that a friend could be one of their most treasured resources. With a book in between them and sitting knee-to-knee, students engage in partner reading by taking turns and sharing connections. We all learn in a variety of ways, but doing it alongside someone really brings our own stories to life."



TRISHA CAHILL
STEM Teacher on Engineering
Collaboration

"Collaboration is a hugely important part of STEM class, and this is especially true in our engineering design projects. In order to solve these kinds of complex problems successfully, students need to be creative and willing to iterate. By working together, students have the opportunity to hear, consider and learn from the ideas of others as they come up with innovative solutions to achieve a shared goal."

LILIANNA PARKER
Music Teacher on Collaborative
Musical Composition

"As a team, the students create and compose a song using their individual strengths and talents. When one student has confidence with an instrument such as the ukulele or guitar, another is a confident singer who can create melodies, and another is good with lyrical expression; together, they can more confidently create a meaningful song that they are excited to share and present."



A DEEPER “CONNECTION”

In the fall, MTS introduced a new diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiative called Connect, spearheaded by our Director of Equity and Inclusion, Quincy Davis. With our theme for the year, Better Together, we kickstarted our Connect sessions, which is a time when we provide space to talk, listen, and gain a better understanding of how the world looks and feels for many inside and outside the MTS community.

Each month the school community pauses and discusses DEI topics and issues that are impacting our communities, country, and the world. We set aside 30 minutes during a homeroom or advisory period for Connect co-leaders in the Professional Community to work with students in each grade to discuss a predetermined topic. Topics have included: segregation in education, family structures, MTS values, religion, and women's history. We also encourage the adults in our community (parents and guardians and our Board of Trustees) to find time on the same day to pause and read a book, listen to a podcast, or watch a Ted Talk related to the topic that was discussed at school.



THE MTS “GREEN TEAM”



One of the MTS Habits of Excellence in our strategic plan is “Conscientious Citizenship,” in which we aim to “expand our program and facilities to ensure students and the school are responsible stewards.” A passionate advocate for the environment, teacher Kevin Markovich took the lead on an initiative this year to teach our students how to sort and dispose their trash appropriately.

From the first day of school, students began their “trash-sorting-training.” During morning and lunch recess, each eating area was equipped with multiple, well-labeled bins where students could place their compost, recycling, liquid waste, or trash. Students were not allowed to start recess play until they could show the teacher on duty that they had properly thrown out their food waste and packaging.

In addition, teachers collaborated in joining the 4th and 5th grades to form the “Green Team” whose job was to oversee and guide other students in the trash sorting initiative. At a Lower School Gather, the 5th graders led a session about the program. After first highlighting why it’s important to take responsibility for our trash, 5th graders then took turns testing the group with examples of trash and asked audience volunteers to determine which bin the trash should be placed in and why.

PEOPLE OF COLOR CONFERENCE

Every year we send faculty and staff to The NAIS People of Color Conference (POCC) to gain invaluable professional development. The People of Color Conference (POCC) is the flagship of the National Association of Independent Schools' (NAIS) commitment to equity and justice in teaching, learning, and organizational development. Over 7,800 adults and students from independent schools nationwide gathered last November in San Antonio, Texas, to learn, collaborate, and support one another. The various workshops and excellent speakers provide many opportunities for reflection, introspection, and awareness. This year, six of our professional community members had the opportunity to attend the conference, and they came back with glowing reports.



JOSUE CAMACHO
Apprentice Teacher

"My experience at POCC was inspiring. I felt energized after attending sessions where I felt represented and shared common difficulties that I could relate to as a Mexican immigrant. I acquired knowledge that gave me a greater ability to support my students, taught me strength-based lessons towards people of color, and provided stronger tools to challenge oppressive systems. POCC gave me the reassurance and confidence to be an educator of color."

VIVIAN DAI
Mandarin Teacher

"This conference was an eye-opening experience for me and really influenced the way I think about my teaching. I feel like I got a lot out of the "Beauty of Brown" workshop, which had great insights and a lot of practical suggestions. I also especially enjoyed the affinity workshops, and it was great to share experiences with many other teachers who have similar experiences."



KELLI WILLIS
Registrar

"It was wonderful to be able to attend POCC in November 2022. The conference left me feeling refreshed, energized, and hopeful. One of the goals of the POCC is to make everyone, regardless of their background or experience, feel seen, heard, valued, and welcome. This is also what I hope to bring to my work at MTS, making everyone I interact with at MTS feel seen, heard, valued, and welcome."

Learn more about a few of the POCC speakers who inspired our teachers:



J LUKE WOOD
is an American social scientist, author, and the Dean's Distinguished Professor of

Education at San Diego State University.



NIKKI GIOVANNI
is an American poet, writer, commentator, activist, and educator. She is one of the world's

most well-known African-American poets, and her work covers topics ranging from race and social issues to children's literature.



MARIANA ATENCIO
is a Peabody Award-winning journalist, currently a national

correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC. Jorge Ramos wrote: "Mariana is the next-gen voice for Latinos breaking all barriers."

Conversations with Quincy

One of the Community Values that MTS has committed to in our Strategic Plan is "Practice Active Inclusion." We celebrate the diversity of experiences that make up our community through a bi-annual newsletter called MTS Voices. The newsletter features a video series called Conversations with Quincy. In this video series, our Director of Equity and Inclusion, Quincy Davis, sits down with community members to explore why diversity, equity, and inclusion are important to MTS.

AMA LIEB
Culture & Identity

In this episode, MTS parent Ama Lieb, talks to Quincy about her journey from Ghana to Canada, to the Caribbean, and to multiple locations in the United States. Ama, a writer, artist, and musician, reflects on the benefits and challenges of continually living in different cultures, and how this has influenced her sense of identity.



BRENDA CONLAN
Drug Prevention

MTS hired Brenda Conlan, an Alcohol and Other Drugs Educator, to work with MTS seventh and eighth grade students as part of the school's health and well-being curriculum. She has been leading workshops and working with students across the globe in the field of drug prevention for 20 years. In this conversation with Quincy, she highlights that young people are working hard to understand relationships and friendships, and any kind of substance abuse can interfere with that process. She offers parents advice on how to talk to their teenage children and emphasizes the importance of focusing on health and safety first during this period when kids are particularly vulnerable to addiction.



DR. DARWIN MASON
Cultural Competency

Dr. Darwin Mason is the Head of Middle School at Ensworth, an independent K-12 school in Nashville, Tennessee. With a life-long focus on education, Dr. Mason was invited to MTS to speak with the Professional Community about Cultural Competency as part of our continued work to provide a culture that allows all students to feel like they belong. Dr. Mason has been recognized for his ability to create a positive school culture that encourages educators, students, and parents to fail, learn, and grow together. To have cultural competency means creating a nurturing community and taking the time to understand the diversity of cultures within it in order to make every individual feel safe and celebrated.



MTS EDUCATORS
Social and Emotional Learning

In this episode, Quincy discusses the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) with several leaders at MTS. He speaks with Melodie Del Rio, School Counselor, as well as the Head of Lower School, Meagan Andrews, and the Head of Middle School, Nick Wilsey. Quincy and Meagan delve into the partnership that MTS has had with the Institute of Social and Emotional Learning (IFSEL) during the 2022-23 school year and the importance of a whole community approach.

Watch the full episodes at
[MTTAM.ORG/NEWS/VOICES](https://mttam.org/news/voices)

MTS SPORTS TEAMS SHINE!

We are clearly *better together* when it comes to athletics! This year on the courts, fields, and tracks, MTS teams excelled at working together under the guidance of top-notch coaches. We are proud of our MTS athletes for their teamwork and appreciate our dedicated community who support them every day.



Congratulations to our 5th grade girls' basketball team for winning the final CYO championship game! While the team led the entire game, it was a close, hard fought victory given the height advantage of the St. Raphael Bobcats team. Shout outs to coaches Gerry Guarriello and Ben Sharp!



6th grader Isla Kirkley driving toward the basket.

The MTS crowd goes wild after the 5th grade girls' team scored at the final championship game.

GO BEARS!

During the winter sports season, our 8th grade boys' basketball team won two tournaments in December.



6th grader Chase O'Connell moves the ball down the court.

Congratulations to our soccer players for winning the MVSC championship! These 5th and 6th grade girls went undefeated in the season with a 12-0 record and 53 goals scored. They also only allowed 4 goals all year! Shout out to Head Coach Chris Chouinard and Assistant Coach Gerry Guarriello.



The 5th/6th grade MVSC boys soccer team (7 out of the 11 players were MTS students) won the MVSC Jambore. Congratulations to our players and parent coaches Jeff Miller and Kevin Kneafsey!

Fourth grader Tyler Krems.



Above: The 7th grade girls basketball team.
Above right: Fifth grader Joy Williams serving during a fall volleyball game.



MTS cross country runners had a great season this year! There were many personal bests as well as ribbons earned. Pictured: Reggie Robinson, Harrison Davis, George Hueser.



Seventh grader Justus Kabir at the Blackie's Pasture meet in October.



Above: MTS fans Avery Levin and Norah Cohen rooting for our athletes.
Left: Third graders Mimi Cohen, Sadie Corzine, Inka Roner, and Tabitha Sparkman at a track and field meet in May.

FINDING YOUR PASSION

Creativity & Problem Solving as the Keystone for Success

GRACE ALTREE '14



Having graduated from UC Berkeley in 2022 with a degree in Data Science and Cognitive Science, Grace Altree '14 is now working at Google as a Search Quality Analyst. While her team of 25 at a company of over 130,000 is far from her Mount Tamalpais School experience in many ways, lessons learned during her eight years on our campus still inform her daily work.

PLAYING WITH MATH

Like many graduates, Grace has fond memories of MTS traditions, including Teddy Bear Day, Field Day, and the Angel Island trip. She also fondly recalls her MTS math classes, including 8th grade math with Dave Baker. “At the start of every class he did a math game. The most memorable was date-o. It was so fun and a great way to start the class.” Dave and the whole MTS math department, she recalls, fostered both a love of math and a passion for being creative with math. Creativity and comfort playing with numbers is essential to her work at Google. “In the younger years, the creativity with math is critical. Being creative keeps you from getting discouraged or boxed in trying to find the ‘right way.’ I found in high school and college that there was less focus on playing with numbers. Instead, we focused on algorithms, formulas, and passing the AP test. Now that I have started in the working world, creativity is expected. It is actually the creativity that makes you good in the quantitative fields.” The MTS focus on understanding numerous ways to solve a problem is a competitive advantage in the working world.



Grace Altree's strong foundation in math fuels her professional confidence and creativity as a data scientist.

ALUMNI PROFILE

ON TRACK & POWERED WITH CONFIDENCE

Grace entered high school with the mathematics foundations needed to take the most challenging classes offered, taking BC Calculus her senior year. Her strong math foundation was complemented with self-confidence. “I went to high school from a very small class size at MTS where I knew my teacher well. That helped me be confident in my math skills and then be ready to go for a bigger class in high school. I was on a track for success.” That confidence that Grace attributes to MTS continued to inspire her studies in college and now at work. Grace reflects that “one thing I got out of MTS was a confidence in my ability and a conviction that I am good at this and this is something that I want to do going forward. This has been really invaluable being in classes and then a workplace where it is predominantly male.” She hopes that MTS “continues to foster confidence and conviction in whatever [students] are passionate about.”

DIVERSITY NEEDED

Grace’s academic and work communities have been quite homogenous. “It was not until the second semester of my Junior year of college that I had a woman as a teacher.” Successful technology, she posits, is going to require a change. “With the industry changing, we need diversity in who is contributing to these systems. It feels really important.” Grace, like many of us, has been thinking quite a bit about the future of artificial intelligence and hopes for the development of responsible AI, which requires diverse input.

“With all the language models that are coming out too, we need diversity. We need a diverse team testing these systems to truly have responsible AI. Everyone’s experience enables them to approach a problem with a different lens that helps build something safe and inclusive.”

From The MTS Archive



Grace hopes that we are able to develop the passion for math and self-confidence she experienced for future, more diverse generations of MTS students.

Whether she continues to improve the search experience at Google or returns to a preseed-stage start-up environment, Grace is a wonderful example of the impact of the MTS math program in the working world.

From top left clockwise: Grace running in a Track & Field race. Grace performing at a MTS recital. Grace with a classmate on Teddy Bear Day.

FROM STORYTELLING TO FILMMAKING

DAVID MARKUN '05

Mount Tamalpais School waters run deep for David Markun. He stays in touch with other alumni and recently collaborated with Graham Goldstein '06 on a short film. David says that while his passion for film and cinematography came later, he credits MTS with helping him build a foundation for storytelling.

David spent some time at MTS in front of the camera, so to speak. He was Daddy Warbucks in *Annie*, and even shaved his head for the role (which he regretted quickly, having a very cold head in the ensuing weeks!). An avid and talented athlete, David played lacrosse, but his love was basketball. He played on many competitive teams in Marin, including Southern Marin Lightning in Marin City. That club team traveled a lot, and was the first AAU Marin team to play internationally; he found those experiences and coaches like Jerry McIntosh to be very impactful. He continued to play at Branson, but an injury made him rethink college play, and he brainstormed with his father about schools that appealed to his other interests. He had been making a lot of videos and enjoying that process and decided to apply to film school. At Chapman, he says he “wrote his way into school” and initially found it intimidating to come into a program of artists. Ultimately, though, David said the film program at Chapman was inspiring. Chapman uses an experiential approach and David saw his time in college akin to playing in a sandbox; students would regularly choose to spend their weekends on sets for 12-hour days. This not only gave them experience in creating films, but also a taste of what the industry work environment would be like.

With so much practical experience, David - along with



three close friends from Chapman - started a company together, Rafiki Creative. At Rafiki, David started as a creative producer, but says he always had a camera in his hand. They filmed music festivals and convinced friends with businesses to let them create commercials. Now, all four founders are specialized in their own fields and working for other production companies. David has become a successful cinematographer and believes that it's his job to make the story come to life. He sees the cinematographer role as that of “head tactician” working closely with anyone on the visual side of creating the film - directors, gaffers (lighting), etc. And broadly, David believes that filmmaking is an artform where, “all the artists are painting on the same canvas - others are shading while you're outlining. It's a big symphony happening at once.”

While David says there's a special place in his heart for narrative and scripted storytelling, when given the choice, he prefers working on documentaries, and is passionate about going in depth on a subject or part of a person's life. He describes the work as getting a mini master's degree, and he now knows a lot about criminal heists, chili pepper farming, rodeos, and tequila,

David Markun's love for storytelling paved the way for his work as a cinematographer on documentary films.

among other things. As an athlete, he has found it particularly fascinating to tell stories of phenomenal athletes like Simone Biles, Tom Brady, Russell Westbrook, and Draymond Green. “Documentaries are an inch wide and a mile deep, and as a filmmaker [one] is a fly on the wall and can't interrupt the flow of what is happening. It's flexing a different muscle to tell the story,” David notes.

David has a deep interest in every project and truly appreciates the craft of what he does. When pressed on sharing some favorites, he noted *Dream Chaser*, a documentary which tells the story of Austin Thurman. A gifted baseball player, Thurman served a sentence in San Quentin. He played baseball at San Quentin and vowed to pursue a career in professional baseball when he was released. The project gave David the rare opportunity to see Austin on the day he was released from San Quentin and met by his father at the gate of the prison. “It was incredibly impactful and profound, and I felt lucky to be there to witness

that.” The documentary follows Austin training, playing in the minor leagues, meeting a woman, becoming a father, and having a stable job. “The whole experience was so satisfying.” Additionally rewarding was working on this film with Liam Hughes, who is a director and went to Branson as well. Other memorable projects include filming Netflix's *We Are the Champions*, Oscar-winning film *Two Distant Strangers*, as well as having the opportunity to travel to several continents for work.

Recently, David partnered with fellow MTS graduate Graham Goldstein on *Mouthpiece*, as well as *The Conductor*. Graham was the writer and director of both of those short films. Upcoming projects include a documentary on HBO called *BS High* - the Bishop Sycamore Story, about a conman who created a fake high school and fake football program and which is premiering at the Tribeca Film Festival this summer. David lives in LA with his wife, Teal

Thomsen, whom he met at Chapman. To learn more about David's work, visit davidmarkun.com.



David working on a scene for *Mouthpiece*, which he made with Graham Goldstein '06.

From The MTS Archive



From left to right: David Markun at MTS in 2005 on campus. David in Yosemite for outdoor education.

FINDING HUMOR IN THE DRAMA

Using Comedy as a Lifeline in Screenwriting and Filmmaking

An interview with GRAHAM GOLDSTEIN '06

Tell us about your recent short film called, “The Conductor.” What was the inspiration for the project?

In Los Angeles, working in the service industry, most of your colleagues are also trying to make it as writers, actors, directors. There’s a sense of community but there’s also a sense of futility that you have to fight against: how am I going to keep my dream alive when there are so many other talented artists? So that’s where the idea for the film came from.

I made the film because I wanted to make something, and I think ultimately, to connect with others. Not only through the subject matter, but by working with my friends to make the thing.

How did you end up working with David Markun? Were you friends at MTS? Have you always stayed in touch or did you recently reconnect?

Partnering with David to bring this idea to life was awesome. Working with people you love and care about makes all the difference. From the basketball courts at MTS to the film sets of Los Angeles, it’s been exciting to maintain our friendship.

Especially as a new director, working with someone I trust allows me to be vulnerable in my insecurities, which ultimately makes the work better. It’s not good, I believe, to hide what you don’t know. Except maybe in a job interview? Still, I’m not sure.



Graham Goldstein on the set of a recent film.

ALUMNI PROFILE

It seems that humor plays a big role in the work you create. Can you talk about that a little bit?

From a young age, people have told me I was funny. I ran with it, which is a good reminder that complimenting someone on something that they’re doing well could change the direction of their life.

I write comedy because it engages us. It helps make more serious dramatic elements more palatable. I’d rather feel the intensity of a situation with a touch of levity than to be punished with sorrow and miserableness. Humor is the lifeline. It’s the hope.

Your website says you are working on a feature film right now. What’s it about?

I’m working on a buddy comedy. I’ve decided to take a different route with this one, and I’m filming, editing, and directing the first act all on my own with two actors. My hope is to then use this beginning to raise money to then be able to hire a fuller crew. So, if you’re reading this and want to support my next movie, this is my shameless plug.



Graham with David Markun '05.

You went to the University of Southern California to obtain a master’s in screenwriting. How did you get into filmmaking?

I started writing screenplays in college and took a few screenwriting courses that I loved. I’d written a little bit here and there when I was younger but college and post college was when I really hit it.

What’s a favorite project you’ve worked on?

The last short film I worked on called *Mouthpiece* was at another level than the

rest I’ve done so far. I’m still in the editing process and it was a bigger budget and a challenge to do, but amazing. It’s about a ventriloquist working out her relationship issues, which backfires when her partner’s in the audience. Ultimately, it’s about authenticity and using your art as a crutch for what you truly want to say to the people in your life. Oh, and David Markun filmed this one too!

Any advice for our graduating MTS 8th graders?

My advice would be to try everything. This applies to more than just film. Anything we pursue will be enhanced and supported by the multitude of experiences we have. For example, competitive soccer taught me discipline, which I apply to sitting down in a chair and writing. And start meditating. Even if you’re bad at it. In fact, we’re all bad at it. But just start meditating.

From The MTS Archive



Graham Goldstein from the 2006 MTS Yearbook.



BIG NIGHT OUT



THE SECOND ANNUAL BIG NIGHT OUT WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

More than 275 members of the MTS community gathered at Sweetwater Music Hall in Mill Valley on April 22 to celebrate the school. Three bands played: "Deep Field," a group of Professional Community members including Tyler Bewley, Isaac Jacobs-Gomes, Trevor Marcom '98, and Alex Taylor; Nya Jade, featuring Ama Lieb, who is a kindergarten and third grade parent; and Hall Pass, featuring Joe Maciariello, who is a first and third grade parent. A large number of MTS Professional Community members attended as well, adding a special and meaningful element to the night. Special thanks to the event co-chairs Jessica Gast, Lauren Maciariello, Meg Shackleton, and Michelle Young.

NEW FACES

First Impressions from their First Year at MTS



◀ **LISA BARNES**
School Receptionist

"I am surprised by the level of nurturing and caring at MTS. Middle school teachers checking in on kindergartners. Lower school teachers assisting 8th graders. Kids being inclusive of kids from all grades. Everyone really looks out for each other."

LAURA LAMPASSI ▶
7th and 8th Grade English Teacher

"One thing that surprised me about MTS is how quickly I connected and bonded with all of the professional community members. Our professional community members bring me so much joy throughout the week!"



◀ **ERIN RUDSENKE**
Kindergarten Homeroom Teacher

"Our buddy bear program is incredibly special and has truly created a community where students across different grades form very strong bonds. On any given day you are guaranteed to see older students genuinely playing with younger students during recess time, teaching their buddy bears new moves on the basketball court, or giving each other high-fives as they walk through the hallways."

KATE MOEN
Kindergarten Homeroom and Humanities Teacher

"Every day I excitedly anticipate each student's greeting of 'Hi Kate, can I tell you something?' which is then followed by that morning's news. Some days the news is lost teeth, and other days it's a funny story from home, a show & tell item, a new bandaid (and the story of how they got it), or a quick morning therapy session full of feelings and acceptance. Kindergarten is a truly magical and transparent place to be."



◀ **ALEX TAYLOR**
Performing Arts and
6th Grade Math Teacher

"In my role in both the math and performing arts department, I get to see students in two very different classroom contexts – and it's amazing how much they support each other across the board. It doesn't feel like there are 'math kids' or 'theater kids' or 'soccer kids' or any other cliques along those lines. Even if kids have certain subjects that come to them more quickly, I see a lot of well-rounded students pushing themselves to grow in all areas. I attribute a lot of that to how interconnected and supportive each class is of all its members - they seem to really deeply know and appreciate each other."

STEPHANIE VASQUEZ
Aftercare Director and
Apprentice Teacher

"The thing that surprised me about MTS is the support I get from staff and the parents of my students. Continuing the ease of sharing ideas and creating solutions is unmatched here at MTS!"



GEOMETRY COMES TO LIFE

PATTERNS INSPIRED BY INCAN TEXTILE DESIGN



This year, MTS fifth graders in Evy Packer and Tyler Bewley’s studio art class learned about the Inca culture from the 15th century and the importance of textiles for communication and trade. The Incan weavings were highly valued and used as a form of currency in exchange for necessary food, medicine, and building materials. They used wool mainly from llamas and alpacas and created dyes from local minerals, plants, and insects. Most of their textiles were woven together by hand, and larger pieces were made using looms.

The most common design element used in Inca fabric patterns were repeated geometric shapes, which served as a rudimentary form of communication with each individual design conveying information in an organized fashion.

Other fabric designs included abstract depictions of animals such as jaguars, snakes, birds, and fish. Students in fifth grade learned about the patterns and colors used by the ancient Inca people to create beautiful patterned compositions with colored pencil on paper. Students worked on individual patterns that were then combined in a final, collaborative work.



CLASS NOTES

1988

Paul Walker lives in Marin with their two boys, Asher (2) and Soren (8 months). Paul has spent 20 years in the wine auction business and works at WineBid.

1998

Nik Karlsons is approaching his 10th year as an expat in Latvia and is expecting a baby girl this June, along with his wife, Linda and son, Vilhelms. Nik was recently elected president of the Latvian Lacrosse Federation and continues to volunteer as a youth coach and organize the junior national team.

2000

Mat Mullen lives in Mill Valley with his wife, Madeleine, and two kids, Marlowe (5) and Maclane (3). He is running a web and app development agency called Presidio in Mill Valley, specializing in building ecommerce brands and websites. Marlowe is loving her first year of tee-ball and Maclane is getting ready to kick off his first year of soccer.

2008



Madeleine Kelley visited with Advancement Director Nancy Kehoe in New York City in March.

2017

Caitlin Bain is currently going to the University of Denver and majoring in Studio Art with minors in Italian and Art History. She is a member of the Taekwondo Club and the Asian Student Alliance, and she has been competing in Taekwondo this spring. She notes that she lives with five suitemates and that she adopted a lynx point Siamese cat. Next fall, Caitlin is planning to study abroad in Italy.

2019

Congratulations to **Max Goldman Rudman** for a great tennis season. He and the Branson tennis team won the MCAL championship; Max played first doubles in the victory over Redwood.

2020



Last August, **Bo Gable** did his Eagle Scout project at the Yick Wo School

vacant lot garden to get it reinvigorated, by making the planter boxes and other renovations. Several MTS alumni and current students from his Troop helped with the project.

Sofia Lopez is currently living in Massachusetts and partly in Arizona and notes that she has been in touch with **Isabel Knott**. Sofia has worked at the Nantucket Catering Company and planned to work at Bartlett's Farm. She is starting the college search process and is interested in majoring in criminal justice with the idea of becoming a FBI Special Agent or Detective after college.

2022

Madison Marlin is finishing her first year at San Domenico and says it's been great. She says that she loves seeing her fellow classmates out in the world and is, "always treated with smiles."



A fun surprise reunion in September at Stinson Beach, with members of the class of 2022. Pictured left to right:

Justus Kabir '24, MTS Social Studies Teacher Marianne Kabir, **Finn Hall, Joshua Guarriello, Lucy Robinson, Ashley Wang,** and **Stella Bailey**.



It was great to see **Ashley Wang** and **Elsie Chamberlain** on campus on International Women's Day on March 10.

ALUMNI HAPPY HOUR

On March 15, local alumni gathered at The Junction in Mill Valley for a fun and casual happy hour. MTS Bears connected with each other as well as veteran faculty. Head of School Andrew Davis regaled the crowd with great stories of MTS happenings, as well as a glimpse into what the future holds for the school. MTS Young Alumni Trustees, Allie Stallone '04 and Emma Jesberg '05, coordinated the event with the Advancement Office. Thank you, Allie and Emma!



Pictured left to right: Andrew Davis, **Liz Murray '82, Chris Paras '84,** Suzanne Beard, **Claire Healy '08,** Advancement Manager Tricia Garcia, **Kate Alper '04, Allie Stallone '04,** Dave Baker, **Emma Jesberg '05, Zachary Adams '06,** and Jennifer Adams.



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

MILESTONES Thank you to our passionate and dedicated professional community!

5 YEARS



JOSUE CAMACHO
Apprentice Teacher



TREVOR MARCOM
Performing Arts Teacher



LILIANNA PARKER
Music Teacher



ANASTASSIA RADEVA
2nd Grade Homeroom
Lower School STEM

15 YEARS



ERNESTO CHAVEZ
Custodian



EVY PACKER
Studio Arts Teacher



SUZANNE BEARD
4th Grade Homeroom
Lower School STEM Teacher



TRISHA CAHILL
5th Grade Homeroom
5th & 6th Grade STEM
and Math Teacher

40 YEARS



MARCIA GIESEN
Lower School P.E. Teacher

NEW BABIES Welcome to the MTS community!



OWEN MCGAREY GUERCIO
Born July 18, 2022
Rachael Guercio, 4th Grade
Humanities Teacher



SIMONE NORI TAYLOR
Born August 23, 2022
Anastassia Radeva, Lower School
STEM & Alex Taylor, Performing Arts
and Math Teacher



CAMDEN LINNELL DAVIS
Born April 16, 2023
Quincy Davis, Director of
Equity and Inclusion



Ice cream cones created by MTS students in grades K-8 inspired by California artist, Wayne Thiebaud. Our studio art teachers, Evy Packer and Tyler Bewley, put together an exhibition of the cones, which was displayed during Grandparents and Special Friends Tea in October.

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 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?
Please contact Nancy Kehoe, Advancement Director, nkehoe@mttam.org, 415.272.4618

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CONGRATULATIONS
to the graduating class of 2023!

