

Connection ²⁰²⁰₂₀₂₁

AN ANNUAL PUBLICATION for FAMILIES, FRIENDS and ALUMNI
of MOUNT MADONNA SCHOOL



OUR MISSION

We are a community of learners dedicated to creative, intellectual and ethical growth.

We support our students to become caring, self-aware, discerning and articulate individuals. We believe a fulfilling life includes personal accomplishments, meaningful relationships and service to society.

WE VALUE:

Our learning community, which includes our students, faculty, administrators, staff, families, alumni and local, national and international peers communities

Each individual, and all of their unique qualities which weave into the tapestry of our shared humanity

Intellectual inquiry that fosters a love of learning, open-mindedness, curiosity, self-discipline and perseverance

Commitment to practices that support equity and racial, social, economic and environmental justice



Read more:

COVER PHOTO: Seniors watch the sunrise from the MMS campus.
By Ward "SN" Mailliard

We gratefully acknowledge and thank the photographers whose work is included in this issue:

Angela Willetts, Danielle Barr, Devin Kumar ('06), Emma Monclus, Erik Howley, Hema Walker, Hilary Alvarado, Jessica Cambell, Jose Lopez, Josie Moran, Kami Pacheco, Leigh Ann Clifton, Lisa Catterall, Logan Shaw, Michelle Gunsky Photography, Monique Smith, Natalie Turner, Nick Cabassa, Nicole Silva Culbertson, Peter S., Prema Gammons, Preston Merchant, Sara Sobkoviak, Shmuel Thaler, Sophia Manzur, Stevan Manzur, Ward "SN" Mailliard, and other volunteers.
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CULTIVATING FAIRNESS

Editor's Note: Earlier this year, MMS shared a statement articulating its commitment to equity and inclusion as part of its core mission. Work on crafting the statement began in July 2020. The school's Equity and Inclusion Committee included school administrators, faculty, staff, parents and alumni. The committee members are Shannon Kelly ('92), AnMei Dasbach-Prisk ('20), Chrislaine Miller, Christie Orozco, Jen Astone, Jill Kayne and Masina Hunnicutt.

"While I consider Mount Madonna School to be a loving and inclusive environment, through speaking with community members, I realized that we needed to be more explicit in stating this intention and doing the difficult work of evaluating where we are successful and where we fall short," commented Director of Upper School Shannon Kelly. "The work of the equity and inclusion committee is to help align our intentions as a school with the experience of our students, faculty, staff and families. The equity and inclusion statement is the first step in making this a reality."

MMS EQUITY and INCLUSION STATEMENT

Mount Madonna School is committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment. This is an inherent core value of our school. As a diverse community of learners, we believe that an inclusive and equitable education system is critical in unlocking the full potential of each and every student, faculty and staff member.

What we have learned in over 40 years is that we cannot have equity without inclusion. We also recognize that creating an equitable and inclusive school is an iterative process. We are committed to engaging in this important work in several ways:

- By continually exploring the ways in which teaching and learning are used to bring awareness of unjust and harmful systems of oppression, and how they can also be used to help develop empathy and compassion
- Exploring the structural ways that MMS can actively support equity and inclusion
- Helping our students and ourselves reflect on our own knowledge and experience of race, color, ancestry, culture, religion, ability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and socioeconomics
- Focusing on developing behaviors, forms of communication, and relationships that reinforce our commitment to equity and inclusion
- Dismantling conditions that prevent everyone from inhabiting the educational space, and feeling seen, heard and valued

Equity is generally defined as "fairness." At MMS this means that students can access the same quality education regardless of their socioeconomic status, race, gender or other facets of their identity. Because of Mount Madonna's small class sizes, teachers are able to provide individualized support to each student and strive to see them as their authentic selves.

We are constantly learning and improving as our world evolves. Our ultimate goal is that each individual who enters our gates is embraced for who they are, treated with humanity and dignity, and supported on their journey. This includes, and is not limited to, the academic, social, emotional, as well as spiritual, religious and ethical dimensions of human life.



Read the complete statement:

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS and a SENSE OF BELONGING

A Reflection from Our Head of School

Transitioning to a leadership role at a new school is a challenging yet exciting endeavor, ripe with opportunities to enhance the academic program and nurture and strengthen the school culture and community. Shared values, beliefs, norms, and communication are the foundation of excellent schools. Safe and vulnerable learning environments are built on trusting and meaningful relationships. This past year, the pandemic, civil and political turmoil, and fires and extreme weather events created unprecedented challenges for the operation of our school, as well as for maintaining personal connections and the overall well-being of our community.

During the summer planning months and throughout the school year, the mission, the values and the underlying *why* of what we do at MMS steered the decisions of the school's leadership team. We recognized that by implementing layers of mitigation strategies and drawing on our serene mountaintop setting to construct outdoor classrooms, MMS was in an unparalleled position to offer an innovative, in-person educational experience for our students. Even with the uncertainty and challenges presented by COVID-19, the faculty and staff were resolute in their commitment to support the academic, social and emotional needs of our students. Listening took on a new importance and a desire for personal connection and a sense of belonging were common themes of conversations with students, parents, faculty and staff.

As with any other year, our students developed caring relationships with their teachers, strengthened bonds with their friends and forged new friendships. Together, they engaged in new learning opportunities focused on developing their character as well as their academic and creative skills. In doing so, they also explored the wonders and magic of the mountain.

Rituals and traditions reflect school values and influence the culture of the school community. The senior class, a joyful group of students, embraced Mount Madonna's long history of rituals and traditions. On an early, clear morning in May, they gathered as a group at the upper campus overlook to welcome the sunrise. That morning the sky was painted with a palette of pinks, oranges and yellows. Quietly the seniors sat on the hillside, and I imagine they reflected on the beauty of that moment and the possibilities their futures might offer.

MMS strives to develop ethical and global-minded citizens who value inclusion, equity and belonging. COVID-19 exposed systemic racism in the United States, and civil and political unrest fueled citizens and leaders to begin confronting and discussing racism and disparity in our country. On campus, these events sparked discus-

sions about our role in social justice.

The courage to overcome your fear requires vulnerability and is essential for growth. We work to empower our students to believe in their capacity to collaborate and collectively solve a problem larger than themselves. Developing the courage and capacity to overcome obstacles will serve students throughout their lives.

Memories are built each day during the school year. Some of the most meaningful memories and enduring traditions occur at the end of the year. One ritual, which has entertained audiences for more than 40 years, is our whole-school production of the *Ramayana!*, an ancient Indian epic. The pandemic forced the entire student body, guided by our performing arts team, to come together to envision and create *Ramayana! The Movie*, continuing the time-honored tradition of the school and Mount Madonna Center.

The school community had not gathered together in over a year, and the end of year rituals such as the rite of passage, moving on ceremonies and high school graduation took on a new importance as many gathered for the first time to celebrate the milestones and the accomplishments of our students. Transitioning from divisions represents a milestone in a student's academic career. In June, the eighth graders embarked on a three-day experience in which activities were intentionally designed to spark self-discovery through introspection. As students returned from their journey, they were greeted by their parents and community celebrating their personal growth and achievement of a milestone. On the final day of school, as a community, we celebrated the achievements and graduation of our senior class and wished them well.

As we look back on our journey, we recognize that in the face of adversity the shared experiences of this year have forged bonds, created a sense of belonging and strengthened our community.

With gratitude,

Ann Goewert

Ann Goewert, Ph.D. / Head of School



ANCESTRAL LANDS and LIVING HISTORY

Third Graders Study California's Indigenous People

Last fall, third grade students studied several indigenous tribes whose ancestral lands are located throughout California.

"I learned that I live in Ohlone territory in Aptos," shared student Conrad Comartin, who studied the people formerly known as the Costanoan. "When I go to the beach, I think about the people who lived here thousands of years ago. The Ohlone were not wasteful, they put everything to use. Today we should be more like the Ohlone."

In fact, much of the Monterey Bay region, including inland to San Juan Bautista, Morgan Hill and Gilroy, and the land where MMS and Mount Madonna Center are located, are the ancestral lands of the Popeloutchom (Amah Mutsun) and Ohlone people.

Students shared that historically tribes had larger populations than in current times, occupied vast areas of land, and lived harmoniously with their surroundings. In presenting their research, students spoke of resourceful people who hunted, gathered, farmed, created art, traded, and, at times, went to war to defend their people and homeland.

"I learned that I live in Ohlone territory in Aptos!"

"In third grade students study American Indian nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past," commented teacher Natalie Turner. "They learn about each tribe's national identity, religious beliefs, customs, folklore, geography, climate, and



how tribes interacted with new settlers. Students went through the process of gathering information, asking questions, and writing an expository text to share their learning. This student-centered project and active exploration of real-world challenges and problems, allowed students to acquire a deeper knowledge." — Leigh Ann Clifton



SERVICE and SUSTAINABILITY

Summit for the Planet

The 15th annual Summit for the Planet walk-a-thon and fundraiser was re-envisioned due to COVID-19 and a commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all. The MMS community raised a gross of \$29,471, and after expenses (\$5,308) and donations to outside organizations (\$2,430), netted \$21,733. These funds are directed to the school's operating budget, and support employee salaries, bolster financial assistance awards and support student-selected nonprofit organizations.

In an effort to instill selfless service and engage students in philanthropy, MMS looked to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [see related story page 26] as a guide to create this event. Students brought in books which were donated to The Friends of Morgan Hill Library; canned goods for the Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County; and e-waste which was recycled. These activities support SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Students selected the following organizations to donate 10% of the total amount raised by each class to:

Pre/K: *Food Not Bombs*, Santa Cruz – \$300; **First grade:** *First Nations COVID Relief Fund* – \$212; **Second grade:** *Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County* – \$200; **Third grade:** *Native Animal Rescue of Santa Cruz County* – \$123; **Fourth grade:** *Teen Kitchen Project* – \$286; **Fifth grade:** *Save the Whales* – \$228; **Sixth grade:** *World Wildlife Fund* – \$144; **Seventh grade:** *Regeneración, Pajaro Valley Climate Action* – \$78; **Eighth grade:** *American Red Cross* – \$327; **Ninth grade:** *St. Jude Children's Research Hospital* – \$130; **Tenth grade:** *Asian American/Pacific Islander Resource Center* – \$110; **Eleventh grade:** *Botshabelo* – \$129; **Twelfth grade:** *Pardada Pardadi Educational Society* – \$163.

We are humbled and deeply grateful for this outpouring of support and every donation and effort put towards sustaining our school. We acknowledge and thank Lazy Suzan Designs and the Michael Lee Environmental Foundation, valued community partners that donated to the event, despite MMS not being able to host an in-person celebration with the entire community.

— Linda Manzur

LEARNING OUTDOORS

Navigating a Return to In-Person, On-Campus School

There is something magical about learning outdoors, and the 375-acre MMS campus includes groves of coastal redwood and live oaks, mountain meadows, chaparral and ponds. The ecological tapestry of biomes, rich with diverse life forms, provides an unmatched outdoor laboratory for our educators to engage students in a broad variety of learning experiences and opportunities, from the art of crafting stories to scientific inquiry and experimentation. Immersing students in nature and outdoor learning develops the whole student. Outdoor learning fuels the mind and ignites all of the senses. Through exploration and discovery, students naturally problem solve and build confidence. The sights, sounds, and evidence of life stimulates curiosity and creativity in students, and these firsthand experiences strengthen students' connections and their sense of responsibility to be good stewards of Earth.

Meaningful educational experiences encourage students to solve complex problems, think critically about nuanced problems, and communicate ideas effectively. Many of us read Shakespeare's *Hamlet* sitting in rows in a classroom. Now, imagine reading *Hamlet* in a shady redwood grove surrounded by the sights and sounds of the outdoors. This type of learning experience captures the imagination of students, encourages discussions geared to critical analysis of the text, and facilitates the creative expression of ideas.

MMS invests in quality education to strengthen the mind, body, and hearts of our

students. While many schools are grappling with space limitations, our school community is blessed by small class sizes and generous outdoor acreage. We had dedicated indoor classrooms for each grade, and during the summer of 2020, in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, MMS designed and built 13 additional outdoor classrooms as well as an outdoor amphitheater. In September 2020, educators and students returned to school with some choice and flexibility in where they learn. Like indoor classrooms, the outdoor classrooms were furnished and equipped with shade structures, whiteboards, Wi-Fi technology and data projectors.

Since March 2020, we have lived in a historic moment in time, and Mount Madonna was unwavering in its commitment to making a return to full-time, in-person school as safe as possible for students, faculty and staff. Likewise, we are dedicated to ensuring that students thrive in the MMS program, work daily on practicing mindfulness, and develop grit and resiliency.

Planning for the unknown is challenging, and it requires moving forward as a team relying on shared and individual strengths, ingenuity and nimbleness. While the learning environment, instruction and rituals were adjusted for safety, students, faculty and staff felt fortunate to engage in learning on campus. Sounds of laughter, friendship, discussion, and debate permeated the outdoor classrooms. Achieving a year of in-person learning without a single transmission of



the COVID-19 virus during the pandemic, a time when most schools and businesses were ground to a halt, required dedication and sacrifice from students, faculty, staff and parents. Looking ahead and planning for the future, we walk together with eager anticipation and courage as we have learned we can overcome any obstacle as a community.

— Ann Goewert

EXPLORING the CAMPUS VIRTUALLY

Over the summer of 2020, MMS created a virtual tour of its campus for the school website. During the 2020-21 school year, the virtual tour offered a great way to get a feel for the campus layout and beautiful setting during a time when in-person visits were not permitted. Kudos and gratitude to Devin Kumar ('06) for photography, facilities staff Aumao To'alepa'alii, Edwin Solorzano and Juan Gonzalez for grooming and preparing our campus over the summer, with hands-on support from Sarojani Rohan, office staff, the administration and student Isaiah Orozco.

— Leigh Ann Clifton



View the virtual tour:



Photos from top: Perla Trevizo, Musuk Nolte, Students meet with Trevizo via Zoom

EMPATHY and DIGGING DEEP

Connecting Students with Global Reporting

After attending a summer 2020 workshop on underreported stories in Latin America with the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, I contacted the center, eager to work on bringing those stories and journalist connections to my classroom.

Ninth grade Spanish class students spoke with Perla Trevizo, a Mexican American journalist who travels globally reporting on immigration stories and human rights. Students read Trevizo’s bio and selections of her published works and developed questions in Spanish focusing on her experience and recent reporting from Guatemala, titled “A Lost Generation.”

“I like how she brought in a perspective of how there are so many teenagers in the world, yet we have such very different lives,” said student Erin Kavitsky. “While I played with toys when I was younger, they had to grow up quickly and help their parents around the house. They didn’t really get to experience a full childhood.”

Students in the eleventh grade Spanish 4/AP class interviewed photojournalist Musuk Nolte, known for documenting human rights, cultural exchange and climate change issues in his home country of Perú. Students were introduced to his reporting about the Peruvian section of the Amazon rainforest and

how deforestation has impacted indigenous communities, and his coverage of families mourning the deaths of more than 60,000 people due to terrorist acts within the country from 1980 to 2000.

“This interview helped me practice my speaking and listening skills in Spanish, and shed light on some of the current issues people are facing in different parts of the world,” commented student Alyssa Manzur.

“There are so many teenagers in the world, yet we have such very different lives.”

Trevizo told students it’s essential to keep telling these stories, building awareness and participating in classroom visits to create spaces for curiosity, critical thinking and developing empathy.

I look forward to bringing more such experiences to MMS for students to connect with voices all over the world to develop curiosity, compassion and engage in positive global citizenship. — Sara Sobkoviak



Read more:

ANNE FRANK

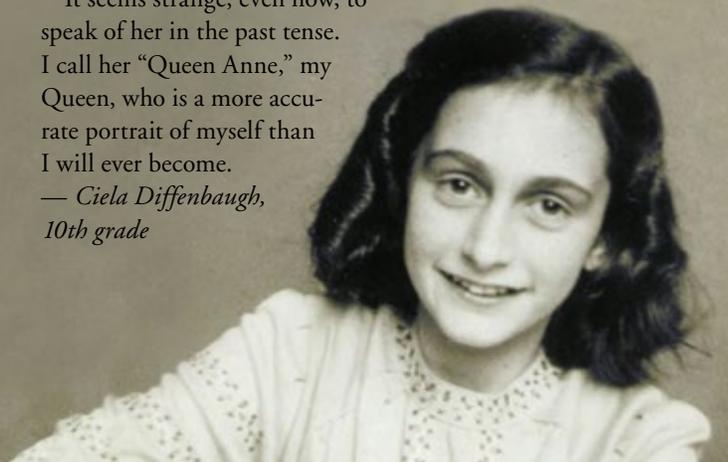
I turn to her in pain, more than I ever do in joy. Such is the case with beautiful people who understand. Understanding is not a given, in any life, and I play privy to a sticky pattern of loving in another century. I know her closely; she is closer to me than any other ghost. She left an imprint of herself in her departure, with her diary, and still I feel I only know parts of the girl I am constantly missing. I read her every night, and I start over when I am through. I now finish her sentences. I hold two years of her life in my hands, and nothing is unfamiliar; ours is an equal embrace as we hold steadfast to our inconstancy.

If I am to speak in practicalities, I must tell you something about her. We share these secrets and laugh together because most who claim to know her know only what they see at first glance. They will quote her and say, “In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart.” We both know that this is only the beginning. She was bisexual, and I am a lesbian.

She wanted to become a journalist, as do I. She was a feminist, saying that she needed more than a husband and children to be happy. She wanted more than the women who came before her and was angry when the revelation came that women have always been thought inferior to men. She wanted to change this, as do I.

It seems strange, even now, to speak of her in the past tense. I call her “Queen Anne,” my Queen, who is a more accurate portrait of myself than I will ever become.

— Ciela Diffenbaugh,
10th grade



CITIZEN ADVOCATES and SAVING BLUE WHALES

Blue whales, the largest animals to have ever lived on Earth, are endangered, and fifth grade students say they need help and protection from human-caused threats to their survival.

“Blue whales are on the verge of extinction because of plastic pollution,” warned students Aiden Powers, Henry Anderson, Rory Kayne and Trip Woodrow in a collaborative research report. “Some 14 billion pounds of plastic enters the oceans each year, and by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish and marine mammals in Earth’s oceans.”

Fifth grade’s year-long blue whale project included: partnering with their ninth grade buddies and local conservation organizations for public presentations and an outreach campaign to reduce single-use takeout plastic; writing, filming and editing an original movie; creating and coding an online, interactive educational whale game; engaging the public in an outdoor trash cleanup; and sharing resources to teach their kindergarten buddies about whale conservation.

Students formed a mock company and assigned job roles and responsibilities to manage the creation of their educational movie, a *Wizard of Oz* parody called *Ocean of Oz*. Students also organized a cleanup challenge of public spaces and waterways, which drew some community support, including from the broader MMS community.

“Ninth graders integrate real-world problem solving into their marine biology curriculum,” said teacher Nicole Silva Culbertson. “As part of their learning, ninth graders watch documentaries, do labs and work with their fifth-grade buddies [over Zoom due to the pandemic] to create awareness on how and what we need to do to continue to protect the Monterey Bay and the greater ocean environment.”

Students in both classes engaged with advocates such as Jackie Nuñez of The Last Plastic Straw and collaborated on public service announcements for the #CutOut-Cutlery campaign.

“This is a problem that increased dramatically with COVID,” commented fifth grade teacher Jessica Cambell. “Most people are taking the food home to eat. Students asked restaurants to make this an ‘opt in’ and not automatically add these items to every order.”

“In working on this issue, students will gain firsthand knowledge about how to be



a citizen advocate,” observed Culbertson. “Students work across age and grade levels towards a real and tangible goal using their science knowledge combined with their creativity and passion. It is beautiful to witness students apply what they have learned for greater good in the world in which they live.”

— Leigh Ann Clifton

CREATING a BLUE WHALE DAY

This spring, students Zoomed with Congressman Jimmy Panetta, D-20, to share their research and ask him to support creating a blue whale day.

“If blue whales can be recognized with a day, it might help to raise awareness and reduce threats to them,” commented student Deja Orozco.

“Here on the coast, the Monterey Bay and ocean is our ‘front yard,’” noted Panetta. “We love blue whales, and I think that some sort of recognition like this would be a good thing, and could go a long way toward enlisting support from those who don’t have the luxury of being so close to the ocean. A national day for blue whales would be beneficial for our country.”

The students told Panetta that they want to educate people about threats to whales, including ship strikes, entanglement and plastic pollution.

“How can Congress and citizens help stop pollution in the environment?” asked student Henry Anderson.

“Good question,” answered Panetta. “It’s everyone’s responsibility to shrink our footprint when it comes to our trash. We each have an individual responsibility, and as legislators, we can help to incentivize people and industry to use less plastic and more biodegradable materials.

“We share the Earth amongst ourselves and the wildlife,” he continued. “The wildlife are our responsibility and we need to do everything we can to protect them.”

— Leigh Ann Clifton



Students’
Ocean of Oz movie:



THE WORLD BEYOND THEIR HORIZON

Elementary Students Learn About Social Justice Champions

From civil rights champions who soar into space and shatter glass ceilings, to preserving indigenous traditions and advocating for farm workers; from conserving Earth's resources to increasing access to education, lower school students have learned a lot about people working to improve peoples' lives and make the world better.

On April 30, MMS presented Champions for Social Justice, highlighting several months of in-depth studies by preschool through fifth grade students, prerecorded and shared via Zoom.

Pre/K students studied indigenous Hawaiian culture and learned about Princess

Ka'iulani, who advocated for Hawaii's independence in the 19th century, and Edith Kanaka'ole and Mary Kawena Puku'i, two respected "kumus" or hula teachers. First graders focused on Native Americans, including Chief Seattle; second graders studied farmworker advocates César Chávez and Dolores Huerta; third graders learned about physician and astronaut Mae C. Jemison, the first African American woman in space; while fourth grade students studied the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. In fifth grade, each student chose a social justice leader that they wanted to learn more about, including Xiuhtezcatl Martinez,



Stacey Abrams, Allie Young, Daisy Bates and Malala Yousafzai. — Leigh Ann Clifton



RACE, EQUALITY and the AMERICAN DREAM

Eighth Graders Build Empathy and Engagement Through Literature Project



This spring, eighth grade students dove deep into a curated collection of writings, ranging from essays and poems to novel excerpts, focusing on systemic racism in the United States. Authors included

Nikki Giovanni, Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou and contemporary writers and poets such as Amanda Gorman, Jason Reynolds, Ibram X. Kendi, Angie Thomas, and Jacqueline Woodson.

Students engaged with the works through two projects. The first involved selecting quotes or passages that struck them and writing about their reactions. Next students either wrote responses to readings, composed a rap, song or poem, or created artwork reflecting their connection to the readings' themes.

One student created an art piece in response to two writings, *The Front Lines of Ferguson* by Rembert Browne and *Holdin' Out for a (Nonwhite) (Funny) (Fictional) Hero*. The latter came from a blog titled "I am Begging My Mother Not to Read This Blog," which listed no official author.

"In *Holdin' Out*, the author talks about how the books we read may affect our view on racism," reflected Amelie Z., "and how our minds are molded by what we read and how some of the racism we experience may be due to the books we are feeding to children. I had this in mind as I drew the children reading at the feet of the cops."

After their projects, the students dove into the groundbreaking play, *Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, followed by a final written piece ranging from an original scene or story to formal essay.

"The hope is that through empathy and engagement," observed teacher Sampad Kachuck, "our younger generations, empowered with positive visioning, can help to create the dramatic changes that must ensue, so that all people, no matter what color or ethnicity, are accepted and treated fairly." — Leigh Ann Clifton

A WAY with Words

The Creative Writing Reading (CWR) has been an annual celebration of student writing for almost two decades. In March we took the gathering online. Students submitted video recordings of themselves presenting their writing, and I edited the content into a film that was streamed live. We were still able to celebrate the students' creative work, and many students expressed that they enjoyed the bonus creative aspect of filming their own projects, and some students even created visual poetry, using their photography and drone videography to pair with their words. Students also shared other forms of visual art. Overall it was a beautiful event, and I'm proud of the students for their resilience and artistic talents.

— J. Haley Campbell ('02)

View the CWR film:



HONORING ADOLESCENCE

Change is Inevitable. Growth is Optional.

— John C. Maxwell, leadership expert

The annual MMS eighth grade Rite of Passage was developed more than 25 years ago. It is our school's version of a coming-of-age ritual that has been practiced in human civilizations for millennia. Standing somewhere on the continuum between childhood and adulthood, the eighth grade students venture into a three-day retreat in the forest of redwoods, oaks and madrones around our campus, mentored by and partnered with a staff of experienced adult guides comprised of present and former faculty members.

“Standing somewhere on the continuum between childhood and adulthood, the eighth grade students venture into a three-day retreat in the forest.”

In that setting, we pause and reflect on where we've been and where we're headed, and especially where we ARE in the moment. Part of that experience is common to all of us: we are here in relationship with the land and everything and everybody that surrounds us. How have we navigated those relationships? How do we move toward adulthood in a way that honors our individuality while recognizing an interconnectedness through our family ties, peers and with all living beings?

Nature itself is constantly modeling the interconnectedness of all life. All plants and animals and life forms have their special place, purpose and gifts. Through immersion in the natural environment, the student participants have the opportunity to discover their own place in the interconnected web of life.

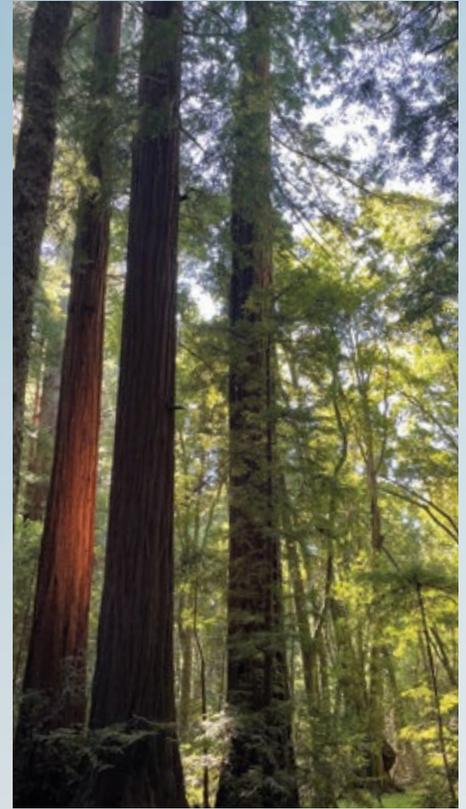
The intention of the Rite of Passage is for each of us to recognize and wholeheartedly inhabit our life journey. Being witnessed in the journey is an important component in this process. Whereas some of this witnessing comes through our peers, the witnessing of family members is essential in confirming the real change as our student-participants come into a greater sense of their maturity and responsibility.

Setting ourselves up for age-appropriate challenges, we open to the connections that can happen when we put away the devices and alter the routines that we rely upon. Students are guided through a series of activities that range in focus from the outer landscape of MMS and Mount Madonna Center's wooded land to the inner landscape of our shared and individual experiences.

The event culminates in an overnight period of solo and silent retreat for each student. During this process, which includes council or sharing our thoughts and feelings in a circle format traditionally used by indigenous peoples, it becomes apparent that each of the students and adults brings their own questions and awareness, which we all are encouraged to reflect upon and share in a safe and supportive environment. Over the years, students report and demonstrate that they have found this immersion to yield benefits that they may not have anticipated. In particular, our mentor team members have observed that students learn a great deal about their own resilience and interconnectedness.

We look forward to maintaining and evolving this time-honored tradition with our eighth grade community members, providing a retreat from normal daily life, so that we may reflect, look forward, and most importantly, notice where we stand in this moment.

— Bob Caplan and Dayanand Diffenbaugh



PHILOSOPHER or ARTIST?

Philosophy means the love of knowledge, but more than that it is the pursuit of knowledge. Art is similar, but it takes a more abstract and often emotive approach to tease out the wisdom of life, whereas philosophy is often more logical. We are all philosophers and artists because we are all alive, and we are all curious. For me, philosophy gives me the space to ask why. It helps me find my place in the world and lets me know how to move through it. With art, I imprint myself on the world and let my emotions flow out. Art gives me the space to recognize my ego and individuality; it makes me *feel* like me. Philosophy leads my mind and art gives a space for my soul to follow.

— Sam Kaplan, 10th grade

A RAY OF HOPE: STUDENTS' JOURNEY to INDIA

Sometimes an uplifting “ray of hope” can be found in the most unexpected of places, even when people are separated by continents, oceans – or a pandemic. Such was the experience last spring, when senior students engaged via Zoom in conversations with students, social activists and thought leaders in India. The discussions were part of the students’ Ashakiran (Hindi for “ray of hope”)Project, representing positive intention on an unusual learning journey.

“Recognizing the extremely difficult conditions in India, we were deeply touched that those with whom we spoke were so open and willing to spend time with us,” said teacher and Values program founder Ward “SN” Mailliard. “They were a ray of hope, as well as courage, for us.”

For more than 20 years, MMS juniors and seniors have traveled to India or South Africa. For three decades plus they’ve visited Washington, D.C. These learning journey rites of passage introduce students directly to those who lead in the larger world.

“We have had to rethink our traditions and create new ones, which is what we are doing with this year’s India trip,” commented student Savannah Cambell. “As with any loss, we need to acknowledge there is sadness around what couldn’t be, but after processing and hearing that we could still have an India experience, the class leapt onto the idea.”

“Our class was excited to hear new perspectives and explore the rich culture that surrounds the very foundation of Mount Madonna as an organization,” observed senior Octavio Moreno. “Being presented with new challenges further highlights the importance of connection and has shown us that it is a choice to show up and learn, and not something out of our control.”

Strengthening human connections and finding happiness through a life of service are ideas inherent to the school’s mission, and



concepts that resonated with students, too, as reflected in the following excerpts from the students’ Ashakiran blog.

— Leigh Ann Clifton

“It was a privilege to have a deep conversation with feminist Kamla Bhasin. She urged the concept of love, and how it must be something we bring into our lives. She said, ‘To root out the seeds of hate, we must sow the seeds of love.’...With love we can build the new normal, and we can minimize our human-made inequalities.” — Ronan Lee, 12th grade

“Dr. Kshama Metre [a pediatrician who leads the Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development] said to us, ‘If you only have one stick in the broom, you can’t sweep.’ Not only was this an excellent metaphor for the dangers of isolation and the necessity of contact, it also put them in concrete terms...She said society is built on human connection and when that connection is lost, society starts to crumble.” — Kahlan Tervalon, 12th grade

“I found it fascinating that Kamla Bhasin found the source of many of society’s problems to be property. She connected more educated countries with higher degrees of gender inequality, because with greater wealth comes a greater need to control the wealth. ‘Richer people are more patriarchal,’ she told us. She said indigenous people, with less property, have more freedom. Why talk about property and gender? Kamla said that you can’t fight gender inequality without fighting capitalism.” — Ami Bharghavan, 12th grade

“While some believe material or experience brings the most joy, Dr. Metre told us, ‘The

joy of helping is incomparable to any other happiness we get in life.’”

— Kira Kaplan, 12th grade

Editor’s Note: On September 25, 2021, Kamla Bhasin, developmental feminist activist, poet, author and social scientist, passed away.

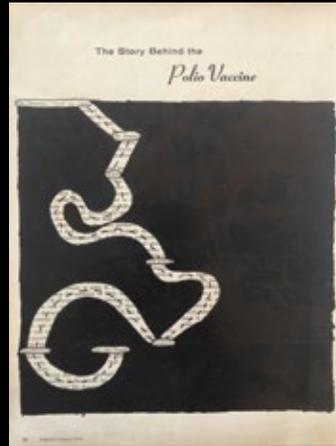
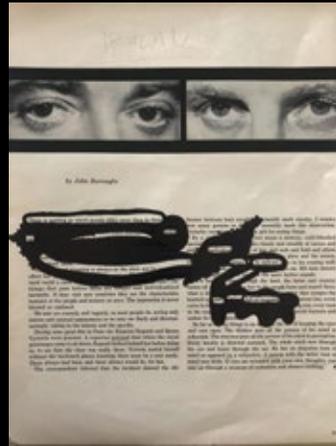
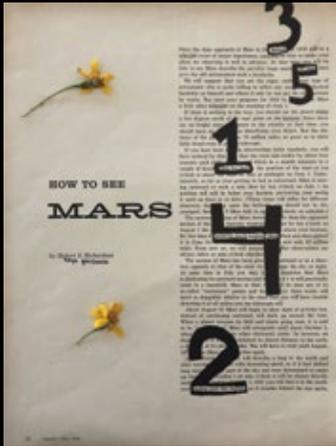
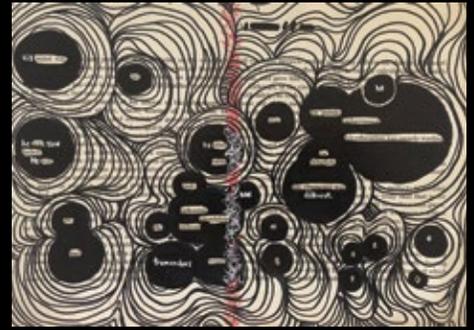


*Ashakiran Project
complete blog:*

SCULPTING BLACKOUT POETRY

Using pages torn from a 1950s magazine, ninth grade students sculpted erasure or “blackout” poetry, visually obscuring all other language so that only the poems’ words are highlighted.

While this process can be as simple as crossing out the unnecessary words, students were challenged to find more visually interesting ways to emphasize the poem, including ways relating to their poem’s meaning. In the Creative Expressions class, one of the things we encourage is the development of artists’ “habits of mind.” Letting oneself play, experiment, and try new processes are skills essential to growth in the arts. — *Angela Willetts*



FAREWELL to a STORIED PUBLIC SERVANT and GREAT TEACHER

Many in the MMS community were sad to hear that former U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz passed away on February 6 at the age of 100. Beginning in 2008 we were able to take groups of students to interview him at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and we formed a special bond with him.

During our interviews, some of Secretary Shultz’s answers would take time because there was much to say and stories to tell as he reflected on so many years of experience. A seasoned diplomat and kindly grandfather figure all rolled into one, he chose his words for clarity and understanding.

In 2012, then-senior Aaron Storrs posed his question: “Mr. Secretary, you said in *Turmoil and Triumph*, that you always start with ideas, and if you don’t, you get lost. Later in a Stanford speech you said that, ‘Ideas are a compass.’ Is there a central idea that you started with that has remained with you as a compass throughout your career?”

Here the Secretary’s answer was startlingly brief. He paused for a moment and then replied, “I suppose the central idea is to be

honest with yourself. And try to do things that are right.” There was a moment of silence. Then students realized that was all he was going to say, and his answer began to sink in. A simple aphorism based on a long career of dealing with complex issues in service to the nation.

When we talk to people who have taken part in history, we come to understand that we as human beings create that history through perseverance, thoughtfulness, integrity and hard work. It is important for schools to be as concerned with the content of students’ character as it is to measure their knowledge and the content of their books. Both are important and neither will serve well without the other.

This is why we make the effort and take the time to prepare for and pursue interviews with leaders like Secretary George Shultz who contributed so meaningfully to his community and to the world. It is the character we hope our students will develop regardless of the disciplines they pursue or the jobs they hold. We expose students to these experiences and moments of connection, and hope, as



Secretary Shultz said, that they understand that “values and the ability to interact with people are the most important part of academics.” — *Ward “SN” Mailliard*

Students’ 2012 interview with George Shultz:



Students’ 2018 interview with George Shultz:



JOY PREVAILED: ATHLETICS AMID a PANDEMIC

Editor's Note: Athletic competitions in California were prohibited for much of the school year, with pandemic restrictions easing in March, allowing some sports to go forward with shortened seasons. Despite these challenges, athletic practice and competitions offered needed boosts for participants' social-emotional and physical well-being, and a chance to reclaim some semblance of a "normal" school year.



CROSS COUNTRY —

Middle School (MS): "On March 9, 2020, MMS participated in what would be its last athletics competition and public event for almost a year," reflected Stevan Manzur, middle school athletic director, earlier this year. "Cross country and soccer coach Nicole Silva Culbertson recounted the ominous day our Hawks played Twin Lakes School in a soccer match, a day that was soon followed by school closures, a worldwide lockdown, and upheaval of life as we knew it.

"Three hundred and sixty-two days later, our Hawks set their footprints on the damp ground of Mission Springs and imprinted their place in history as they competed," Manzur continued. "Clouds loomed over-

head and threatened with downpours throughout the meet, but the student-athletes and community were determined to see this day happen. Looking around at the masked, cheering crowd, it was not forgotten that we are in the midst of a pandemic, but the universal joy of the gathering could not be veiled, the smiles could be seen in the eyes – the most genuine kind – and the cheers and laughter easily penetrated the multilayer fabric, reverberating into a textural buzz that could be felt like a warm, protective cloak. The rains held until five minutes after the last runner crossed the finish line. On that day a victory was shared by all of us as life persisted and joy prevailed!

"The Hawks competed in three meets over a brief two-week season, taking some top positions and recording personal bests," added Manzur. "Thank you to Coach Nicole Silva Culbertson for her seemingly tireless positive energy and leadership, and to the dedicated parents who did all of the 'extra' to make this season possible."

High School (HS): Under the guidance of Coach Nick Cabassa and Assistant Coach Dan Gurska, runners competed in weekly meets during a shortened March season.

"It was great to get to run even with the COVID restrictions," said Cabassa. "The kids loved the opportunity to run and hang out with each other at practice, and hopefully we'll be back in full stride next season."

BEACH VOLLEYBALL —

This year, the indoor HS volleyball program transitioned to the sand courts for beach volleyball.



HS Girls: "While we lost more matches than we won, the focus for the girls was on having some fun," commented Coach Kent Kitchel. "Athletes learned about how the beach game differs from indoors, and savored the chance to interact with one another during this strange year."



HS Boys: Alumna Sophie Ortiz ('16) returned to coach and expressed appreciation for how hard the athletes worked.

"Senior Ronan Lee absolutely optimized the spirit of the team this year," said Ortiz. "Ronan has the ability to work hard and not take himself too seriously, which will serve him well going forward. I felt honored to coach this team, and have the utmost appreciation and respect for PK McDonald ('04),

STAYING in the GAME

Senior Savannah Cambell signed a National Letter of Intent with Johnson & Wales University to play DIII volleyball with the Wildcats beginning this fall. She began playing volleyball at MMS in third grade.

In her sophomore year, Cambell was recognized with an All-SCCAL (Santa Cruz Coast Athletic League) Honorable Mention; and as a junior she was picked as an Athlete of the Week by the Register-Pajaronian newspaper. She was also selected by CalHiSports.com for the honorary All-State Girls Volleyball First Team and named to the All-SCCAL Second Team.

In 2019, Cambell helped lead the Hawks to the D-V State Championship, after first winning the Central Coast Section and NorCal titles, and receiving the California Interscholastic Federation scholastic team award.

"Savannah has had unparalleled success with us at Mount Madonna School," commented High School Athletic Director PK McDonald ('04). "She consistently played with her whole heart, and was always a great friend and teammate."

— Leigh Ann Clifton



high school athletic director; he did the hard work to make sure the boys had a season under these difficult circumstances.”



TRACK and FIELD —

MS: The Hawks participated in three meets this year with other Santa Cruz County teams. MMS had numerous individual winners in many events including high jump, long jump, shot put, discus, 4x100 relay and all running events.

“We had a talented group of athletes this year,” commented Coach Nicole Silva Culbertson, “and I am so grateful to Debbie Dutra, Stevan Manzur and Hilary Alvarado for helping with team practices and at meets when possible.

HS: Sophomore Zoey Ocampo-Sobkoviak and senior Octavio Moreno competed in the Central Coast Section (CCS) semifinals



on June 12, with Moreno qualifying for the June 19 championships, where he medaled in shot put.

“This season went by in a blink of an eye, but thank you all for showing up to play,” said Assistant Coach Jameelah Johnson. “We set goals for ourselves, then we went out and conquered them!”

“This year was exceptional, with the season shortened to just six weeks,” commented Coach Sara Sobkoviak. “This year, as the result of Liana Kitchel’s recommendation for team building and added fun, we often played a game of ultimate frisbee on the Aptos football field for a dose of healthy competitiveness. As seen in our stats and the number of school records broken, this was definitely an important year for us in the league. The benefits were not only the opportunity to improve students’ physical fitness, but also supporting their social-emotional health during this extraordinary time, when most have felt disconnected from their peers and have missed participating in activities like this. To see wide smiles on faces, personal goals being accomplished, and new friendships formed were by far the best parts of this season!”

SOCCER —

MS: This coed team competed in two games against Kirby school students.

“We had a fantastic, sixth-eighth grade team this year, and they won both games!” commented Coach Nicole Silva Culbertson.

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL —

MS: Girls volleyball was able to resume practice in mid-April, and competed in several games.

“I have never seen such excitement and joy from players for each other as when we had a full pass, set, hit, and when everyone made their overhand serve in games,” commented Coach Sophie Ortiz (’16). “I fell in love with this sport at their age, and I am really grateful to have coached such fun-loving, kind girls!”

—Linda Manzur and Leigh Ann Clifton

A DEDICATION to TECHNIQUE and TRAINING

Octavio Moreno Medals in CCS Shot Put Competition



Senior Octavio Moreno placed fourth in the shot put with a throw of 49’ 3.5” in the Central Coast Section (CCS) track and field championships on June 19.

Moreno, who will attend the University of California, Berkeley, this fall, is the first MMS athlete to medal at CCS.

“It’s a big day,” said Moreno following the competition. “I received a lot of support from my family and my coaches. I concentrated on form and gliding through the throw.”

Coach Sara Sobkoviak praised Moreno’s achievement during his three years on the MMS track and field team.

“Octavio is a motivated and talented athlete dedicated to technique and training, always seeking advice and looking for ways to improve,” commented Sobkoviak. “Just before he stepped into the ring to throw in the first round of the finals, we spoke about visualizing the mark and focusing on each throw as if it were the last to secure a solid placement. He definitely brought it out in that first throw, throwing almost four feet beyond his previous personal record! Octavio’s fellow competitors roared with cheers to see him do that! He turned right around and had a big grin on his face and we both knew instantly that he was going to have a good end to the season!”

— Leigh Ann Clifton



In its third year the MMS endowment has reached \$873,894 in donations, including \$33,722 during the 2020-21 fiscal year. This fund will be used to help ensure Mount Madonna is able to recruit and retain talented faculty and staff by improving the current compensation of our employees. Funds may also assist with student scholarships.

The overall goal is to raise \$5 million over the next few years, with a \$1 million target by March 1, 2022. The board of directors will be responsible for conducting an annual

review of the investment strategy, continuing efforts to raise additional funds and directing the use of these funds.

Please join us in continuing the MMS legacy for years to come with an endowment gift. You may donate online or contact me for more information at 408-846-4032 or linda.manzur@mountmadonnaschool.org.

All who care about the sustainability of MMS are invited to contribute and pledges may be paid over several years. We can also work directly with families and individuals to plan legacy giving and tribute gifts, honoring friends and family members.

— Linda Manzur

Support the MMS
endowmentnet:



We thank our 2020-21 endowment fund donors who gave their gift by June 30, for their vision and leadership in sustaining the MMS legacy.

THE POWER of JIV SCHOLARSHIP



Our dear friend, mentor and colleague, Jivanti Rutansky, was honored and remembered during the year-end upper school award assembly through the presentation of a scholarship gifted on behalf of one of her lifelong friends. This friend, who wishes to remain anonymous, wrote of the scholarship, “Over many years we all experienced the Power of Jiv. The woman who handled pressure with ease, who tackled and overcame all obstacles. Jivanti never let a problem slow her down; her perseverance was inspiring and her work ethic legendary.”

The recipient is junior **Benn Glorfield**, who exemplifies Jivanti’s work ethic, positivity and eagerness to help in any way possible.

THE JIVANTI RUTANSKY MEMORIAL AWARD

To honor the memory of the late Jivanti Rutansky, the MMS faculty give one high school student and one middle school student an award in her name each year. These awards are presented to students who embody the qualities that made Jivanti such an important ambassador of the MMS mission. The selected students are engaged and dedicated members of the school community, empathetic and compassionate classmates, engaged and curious learners, honest and self-reflective individuals, and protectors of the environment. The recipients, junior **Grace Timan** and eighth grader **Amelie Z.**, also demonstrate support of their classmates in their endeavors, and dedicate themselves to service.



Ocean View
(\$250,000+)

No donors for the 2020-21 fiscal year

Hawks’ Nest
(\$100,000-\$249,000)

No donors for the 2020-21 fiscal year

Redwood Circle
(\$50,000-\$99,999)

No donors for the 2020-21 fiscal year

Live Oak
(\$25,000-\$49,999)

No donors for the 2020-21 fiscal year

Tanoak
(\$10,000-\$24,999)

Estate of Richard Timan

Madrone
(\$5,000-\$9,999)

No donors for the 2020-21 fiscal year

Azalea Grove
(\$2,500-\$4,999)

Jewish Community Foundation
of Southern Arizona, on behalf of
Robyn Kessler and Jeff Timan

Lotus Lake
(\$1,000-\$2,499)

Blythe Collier (’12)
Deborah Dutra
Nicole Tervalon

Manzanita Grove
(\$250-\$999)

Linda Blum
Jessica and Forrest Cambell
Paul Connor
Specialized Bicycle Components

Camelia
(up to \$249)

Dana and Jeffrey Kerr
Sanika Lakka (’13)
Elizabeth W. and Timothy Walsh

EMBRACING the CREATIVE PROCESS

Throughout the school year, preschool and kindergarten students are immersed in creative and active experiences that engage their minds and bodies, and refine gross and fine motor skills. The complex tasks involved in the creative process fortify the skills of planning, sequencing, critical thinking and problem solving. Creating “masterpieces” involves trial and error, self-regulation when things don’t turn out as planned, and flexibility to accept “mistakes” or use one’s mistakes to create something new.

The creative process especially strengthens the brain’s frontal lobe, which manages purposeful mental action and positive personality development. The quiet focus required for creative projects strengthens the child’s attention span and academic development and encourages perseverance and patience.

— Hema Walker and Danielle Barr



THE SPIRIT of PHILANTHROPY

Annual Giving

Annual Giving at MMS helps all students receive a quality education by adding to the tuition revenue that covers about 85% of the program expenses. Annual Giving also demonstrates key support of the school's mission and program from the wider community to our accreditors. MMS relies on the spirit of philanthropy from our committed donors and their tax-deductible gifts.

Thank you to our donors who contributed a net of \$156,140, including \$16,005 raised through the Drive for Schools fundraiser. Annual Giving netted \$140,135 in donations, surpassing the goal of \$120,000. This is the sixth year in a row that our community has rallied to go above and beyond our fundraising goal! We appreciate the generous contributions from our families, alumni, faculty, staff, grandparents and friends of MMS.

Thank you to the following donors for their support:

CHAMPION (\$5,000 – \$9,999)

Bay Area Services Inc.
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Ross Bryan
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MENTOR (\$2,500 – \$4,999)

Apple Matching Gifts Program
Claudine and Vaduvur Bharghavan
Nicole Chiala and Abbie Zands
Kranti and Ward "SN" Mailliard
Bonnye and Michael Sirk

PATRON (\$1,000 – \$2,499)

Linda Blum and Paul Connor
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ADVOCATE (\$500 – \$999)

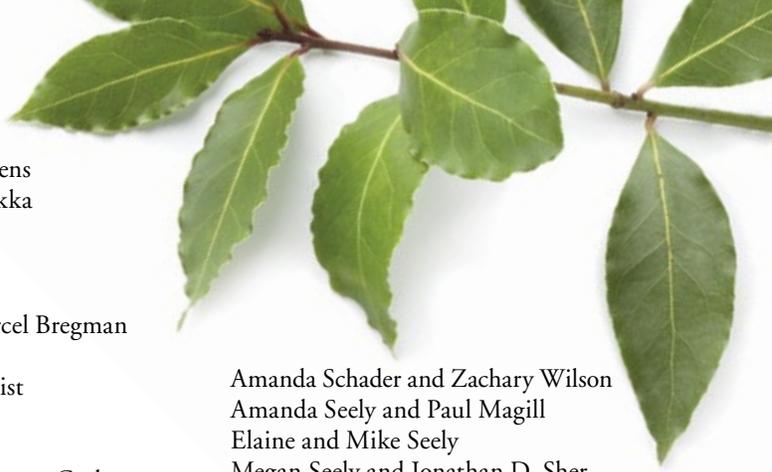
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Debby and John Fust
E&J Gallo Winery
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Anya Hobley
Masinafanaa'e and Erik Hunnicutt
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Jennifer Klein and James Kavitsky
Carlton Angus McDonald
Eve and Raoul Ortiz
Prabha Pacey ('86)

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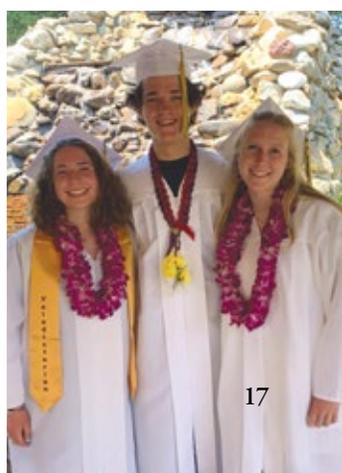


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 Jessica Zovar and Tobias Aguirre ('94)

Every effort has been made to avoid errors, misspellings or omissions. If, however, your name has been incorrectly listed or omitted, please accept our sincere apology. For corrections contact Head of School Ann Goewert at 408-847-2717.



ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

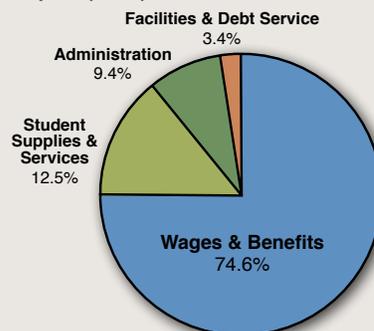
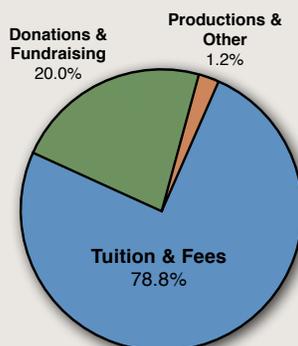
MMS operates under the committed stewardship and oversight of our trustees, board of directors and finance committee. The tuition generated by enrollment remains the primary source of operating revenue, while salaries and benefits comprise the majority of operating expenses. The school ended the 2020-21 fiscal year on June 30, 2021 having received revenue from 167 students. We raise money each year for the operating budget in three fundraising campaigns: Annual Giving, which netted \$140,135, Drive for Schools, which netted \$16,005, and Summit for the Planet, which netted \$21,733. In addition, we raised \$33,722 for the Endowment Fund in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, MMS applied for and received \$454,900 through the Federal Paycheck Protection Program. This whole amount was forgiven, and we recorded this revenue entirely in the 2020-21 school year. We are grateful for this assistance, as the pandemic caused significant financial disruption for many of our families and reduced our tuition revenue. The school was able to respond by granting the most financial assistance to the greatest number of families in our history. The school also responded to the pandemic by creating outdoor classrooms to host the majority of the instruction during the year, by hiring additional staff, and purchasing furniture, technology devices, software, personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies. MMS also postponed, canceled and changed the form of student activities, such as athletics, middle and high school field trips, and the *Ramayana!*. As we were often responding in real time to the needs of the moment, this introduced unusual uncertainty into the budget for the 2020-21 school year. We are grateful that we had the outdoor space, the resources and the creativity to respond to the extraordinary challenges of the full pandemic year.

— Eric Forbes, Business Manager

Operating Revenue	2020-21 Budget	Operating Expense	2020-21 Budget
Tuition & Fees	\$2,511,983.00	Wages & Benefits	\$2,360,500.00
Donations & Fundraising/PPP	\$638,909.00	Student Supplies & Services	\$394,590.00
Productions & Other	\$37,000.00	Administration	\$298,850.00
Total	\$3,187,892.00	Facilities & Debt Service	\$108,700.00
		Total	\$3,162,640.00

Surplus (Loss) \$25,252.00



	2020-21 (Budget)	2019-20 (Actual)	2018-19 (Actual)	2017-18 (Actual)
Revenue	\$3,187,892.00	\$3,067,497.00	\$3,459,733.00	\$3,359,627.00
Expenses	\$3,162,640.00	\$3,087,510.00	\$3,306,108.00	\$3,091,434.00
Surplus (Loss)	\$25,252.00	(\$20,013.00)	\$153,625.00	\$268,193.00
Enrollment	167	180	188	189

Note: The audit for this fiscal year was conducted by the Harrington Group in October. That report will be available in April for anyone wishing to review it.

FUNDRAISING with SCRIP

MMS can earn thousands of dollars every year if more families develop the habit of using Scrip for their everyday shopping and buying gifts by purchasing Scrip gift cards to the places where they usually shop. Through the Scrip program, MMS earns 3-5% of the total revenue of gift cards purchased. In the 2020-21 school year, MMS families raised \$2,729. Visit the school website to purchase gift cards today. If you have any questions or would like to help sell Scrip, contact me at linda.manzur@mountmadonnaschool.org.

— Linda Manzur

DIRECTED and IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Each year, MMS families, friends and community members give generously to specific programs for which they have a special affinity. Gifts have included contributions to financial assistance scholarships, performing arts, athletics, the culinary studies program, a grant for the student GSA Club and the fifth-grade program. During 2020-21, some of the gifts MMS received were cash, while others were in-kind contributions including live plants for the upper school garden, yarn and knitting books for the art program, photobooks documenting the *Ramayana!* stage and movie productions and library books.

— Linda Manzur

Thank you to our in-kind and directed donors:

Bess Family Charitable Fund	Elizabeth and Laurence England	Padma Rubiales
Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems, University of California, Santa Cruz	Yareli and Don Jacobs	Amanda Seely
Patricia Cole	Dana and Jeffrey Kerr	Heather Sirk and Kevict Yen
Community Foundation Santa Cruz County	Linda and Stevan Manzur	Wharf to Wharf Race WE.org
	Preston Merchant	
	Marcella and TJ Moran	
	Amy and John Padilla	

RAMAYANA! from STAGE SHOW to SCREEN



Amid a pandemic year when live stage shows everywhere were prohibited, MMS re-envisioned performing arts and its distinctive, theatrical production of *Ramayana!* to create a movie, offering its preschool through grade 12 student cast members an innovative and unique performance opportunity. *Ramayana! The Movie* premiered June 25 on Vimeo.

The movie adaptation honors 40-plus years of MMS *Ramayana!* stage shows, and is set on the school campus and among the shrines, temple and vistas at Mount Madonna Center (MMC). In this film, several of the main characters are portrayed by students in different classes, as grade-level cohorts were kept separate for COVID safety. The collaborative team of director Gitanjali Lori Rivera, musical director Anand Darsie, filmmaker Devin Kumar ('06) and producer Jeevani Vince, have crafted a beautiful, dazzling musical feat, with striking attention to nuance and detail.

Ramayana! has been central to MMS since its founding, and is an annual, year-end celebration for the community embracing diversity and creative self-expression. With this show, MMS carries forward a tradition inspired by Baba Hari Dass (1923-2018) and supported by MMC. The *Ramayana* is a timeless classic teaching the universal values of truth, duty, love and service to the greater good.

Baba Hari Dass, a silent monk, teacher and yoga practitioner from India, was the founder of MMC, which shares a history and mission with the school. The annual *Ramayana!* production is part of this mission. The well-known tale with origins in India was adapted into a musical by members of the Mount Madonna community in the 1970s.

— Leigh Ann Clifton



Ramayana movie
VIMEO link:



Ramayana movie
USB purchase:



Support MMS
performing arts:



A CALMING PRESENCE

Peggy Moore joined the school community when her sons Corey and Oliver Mensinger ('21) began fourth grade in 2012. She first chaperoned an overnight field trip with the third and fourth grades to the Point Montara Lighthouse, then later a trip to the Sierra Outdoor School. The following year, she braved the fifth grade end-of-year camping trip for an entire week, using her calming presence to help lead novice backpackers into the wilderness and help maintain order.

When her sons entered middle school, she began volunteering in the snackbar, picking up food in Corralitos every Friday and cheer-

fully serving the students their lunch. For three years, Peggy, a physician, chaperoned the fall middle school camping trip, assisting as needed and offering medical advice and first aid. This period culminated in Peggy joining an eighth grade backpacking trip and learning journey to Big Sur.

Peggy volunteered in the annual, parent-organized Career Forum for several years, organizing and inviting other parents and alumni professionals to participate, as well as sharing and discussing her career choice with high school students. For the past two years, Peggy served as a class liaison.



We express our sincere gratitude to Peggy, a dedicated and dependable volunteer, for her contributions to MMS and our students.

— Monique Smith

THE PINNACLE of DEDICATION

Editor's Note: In December 2020, Christine Smith nominated the MMS faculty for Growing Up in Santa Cruz magazine's Teacher of the Month series. MMS was selected, and her letter was published in February 2021.

Blessedly, our world is full of good – good art, good innovation, good people. So, when it comes time to recognize a person for their contributions, the choice can be tough. Look at *Time* magazine, which has often chosen a group of individuals rather than just one person for its coveted recognition as “Person of the Year” – the American soldier in 1950 and 2003, U.S. scientists in 1960, and American women in 1975, to name a few.

As we wind down 2020 and welcome 2021 with cautious optimism, I tip my hat to a group of individuals who are as good as it gets, and maybe even better: the faculty at Mount Madonna School.

I'm a long-time parent at Mount Madonna School and a member of its board of directors. Nevertheless, I find myself overwhelmed by the skill, commitment, and love demonstrated by this group of educators during the COVID crisis. In March of 2020, when in-person teaching pivoted to online instruction, the teachers at Mount Madonna took a collective breath and had our students engaged online essentially overnight. Then, when it became evident the fall semester would not begin with instruction as we knew it, our teachers shifted to outdoor instruction (yes, they teach outside) in the open-air classrooms the school constructed, taking advantage of its mountaintop setting. Then, as COVID numbers rose and learning temporarily pivoted back to an online format, not one beat was missed as teachers provided students with each and every tool they needed to pick up precisely where they left off while on campus.

It's impossible to name all of the activities that have kept our students interested, engaged and learning, whether socially distanced on campus or at home. But, from packed-up science kits so students could conduct science experiments together on Zoom in family kitchens, to virtual scavenger hunts, P.E. classes to remind kids of the importance of exercise, and a livestream of the students' holiday caroling to keep music in their lives – and many, many more – Mount Madonna teachers have filled our students' hearts and souls with love and laughter and, when needed, have “held their hands” through frustrations and disappointment.

This faculty has gone above and beyond in providing our students with an outstanding education during these challenging times. And dare I say maybe even more importantly, they have modeled for our students that time-tested life lesson – “Yes, we can.”

— Christine Smith



NAVIGATING the COMPLEXITIES

Students Create a Guide to California's Ballot Propositions

In every election, California citizens are challenged with understanding and voting on the array of state ballot measures put before them. There were a dozen propositions included in the November 2020 election, and eleventh grade students researched the measures and created "A Friendly Guide to California's Ballot Propositions."

Their assignment was to describe the measure in user-friendly language, share who favors and who opposes it and present their new-found knowledge to their classmates.

"After developing the skills necessary to thoughtfully take in media, and recognizing the various propaganda and persuasion techniques employed by all sides, each student was tasked with becoming the resident 'expert' on a ballot proposition," explained teacher Dan Gurska, who wanted students to better understand how to navigate the complexities surrounding ballot measures.

"For my research, I used the voter guide, considered current correctional programs, and looked into outside opinions from sources such as the *Los Angeles Times* and

California proposition guides," shared student Grace Timan. "The hardest part was keeping my own opinion out of my writing. From the beginning I was very anti-Prop 20, and writing about it in an unbiased way was challenging."



Class parents and members of the public voiced support for having students participate in this relevant and meaningful project.

"Alyssa told us all about it," shared parent Linda Manzur. "It was the first time she was actually excited about politics. I think it forced her to put herself in the shoes of all stakeholders and feel the high level of responsibility – and discomfort – of voters who

are collectively making life-altering decisions for others."

"The students' guide caught my attention because as California has moved in the direction of governance by ballot initiative, we as voters need to become more savvy about what problem these propositions accomplish and understand the fiscal impact," commented Aptos resident Cynthia Allen. "Mount Madonna educators are helping their students investigate and identify the true stakeholders of ballot propositions through this exercise, guiding them to discover the motivation and objectives behind each ballot initiative. Perhaps most importantly the students learn how language can be used to shape public opinion and the importance of careful study of ballot initiatives before casting your vote."

— Leigh Ann Clifton

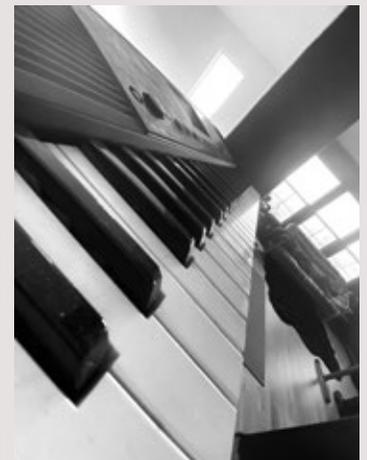
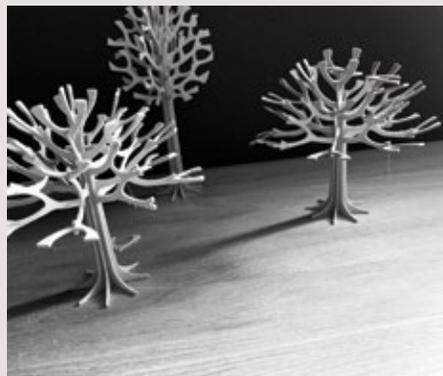
View the Friendly Guide to California's Propositions:



WHAT THEY SEE

Student Photography

Working only in black and white, ninth grade students focused on camera angles and finding the "hidden worlds" of overlooked spaces within their homes or to reveal other worlds hidden inside the familiar. The project was part of their Creative Expression class taught by Angela Willetts and Haley Campbell and took place during a period of remote learning.



POETRY, ART and MONSTERS, OH YES!

Integrating seasonal elements – with generous measures of creativity and imagination – into curriculum is a delightful way to spark interest in young students.

Last fall, first graders wrote poems and made monster drawings. Teacher Cassia Laffin read monster storybooks aloud to inspire students' imaginations and explore firsthand some of the biological concepts taught in the classroom.

"It's interesting to see how they 'digest' our lessons about body coverings, anatomy, and biological adaptations in designing their ori-

ginal monsters," said Laffin. "Some students choose to incorporate features of real animals into their work, while others are more make-believe and fanciful.

"In reading the monster books we focused a lot on how body parts and coverings serve the animals by helping them protect themselves and obtain food," she continued. "This will segue into an upcoming study of animal adaptations in which each student chooses a native animal to research and present about."

Later, first graders gathered at their outdoor classroom to listen to each other's themed poetry, which reflects their creativity and growing vocabularies in describing the temperaments, physical and social characteristics of their monster creations.

"My monster is a happy monster, with bat wings, spider legs and three eyes, but it's blind," said first grader Liam Copeland. "Instead it uses its belly button to signal and sense its environment."

On another day, students gathered near the Farmhouse front porch and took turns on the porch "stage" sharing their completed colorful drawings.

Student Rhiannon Aron-May drew a colorful, four-legged, dragon-like creature with a spiky tail, scales across its back and large, and bright red wings.

"Students gain inspiration from one another, practice their public speaking and presentation skills and share compliments," commented Laffin. "They seem to appreciate knowing that their work will be shared on



our classroom walls or in person, from our porch stage. When they know their work will be 'seen,' students feel encouraged to try their best." — Leigh Ann Clifton



CLIMBING MOUNTAINS

A School Year of Ups and Downs

Editor's Note: In January, the Independent Ideas blog of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) published junior Grace Timan's reflection on her fall 2020 school experiences. Following is an excerpt from her essay.

I couldn't ignore the sinking feeling I felt upon learning that the administration had canceled the annual river rafting trip because of the pandemic. None of us expected to be online for another year until we were virtually climbing mountains instead of driving up the one we loved so much to our campus.

During the first two weeks of virtual school, our teachers encouraged us, and I felt that they missed us almost more than we missed each other. Still, endless assignments flooded my inbox, and I felt

hopeless. I struggled to find motivation without a physical environment to encourage me, especially as a student with ADHD. Without routine and structure, it was easy to get lost in the void of Google Docs. However, the personal connections and relationships with our teachers have gotten me through to the second semester.

Priorities have changed. That's something I learned this year. Yes, I miss the way the world once was, and I pine for the classic high school experience. What I now want most, however, is the health of my community. I can't take anything for granted; I have learned that life changes too quickly and to hold on and be grateful.



Read the full essay:

MANY WAYS of MAKING

All artists have their preferred materials, tools and techniques and tend to gravitate toward certain ways of making. Some enjoy engaging with centuries-old techniques, spending hours learning to draw and paint realistically, diligently and patiently building their skills.

Others prefer to explore and make discoveries, move around between materials and let their imaginations guide them. Some see the process of making as more important than the product and vice versa. There are so many ways to make art and to be an artist and none of them are wrong or better than others, despite what others may say.

The MMS art program offers students opportunities to experience many ways of making. Students study traditional skills, such as drawing light and shadow, using one- and two-point perspective and learning the proportions of the human figure. Other units require students to express emotions visually, experiment with materials and develop creative ideas. What I have learned in my 20 years teaching art, is that students need both skill sets – technical and creative thinking – to feel successful. Students feel more empowered to express their ideas when they are confident in their making skills.

— *Angela Willetts*



Third grade: For these expressive sculptures, students chose lines, shapes and patterns to express the color's "feeling"

Fourth grade: Students learned the Japanese marbling technique

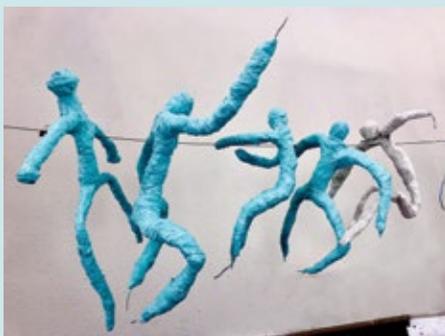


called *Suminagashi*. Inks are floated on water to create swirling shapes and lines and then captured by printing the designs onto rice paper



Fifth grade: In a still life study, students learned to notice and draw how light and shadow help to show an object's form

Seventh grade: Students explored using one- and two-point perspective to create the illusion of depth



Eighth grade: After studying the proportions of the human body, students created sculptures capturing the gesture of a body in motion. These works are in progress, and depict bodies that are skating, surfing, dancing and cycling

CREEK TIME JUBILEE

The gate is rigid rusty red,
 The paint chips to the touch.
 Trying to climb over it
 Leaves hands with dust and cuts.
 We climb to cross the boundary
 And land on soft brown dirt,
 I feel it squish and melt to me,
 The rock I stepped on hurt.
 We walk our bare feet down
 the road
 So fast to leave the heat,
 The trees release their leaves
 of brown
 That crunch beneath my feet.
 The walk is long but worth
 the length,
 We almost miss the path.
 Be cautious of the poison oak
 That hides within the grass.
 We find our trail that leads us to
 The cove of times long lost.
 The shade engulfs the rays of heat,
 The ripples watched are soft.
 I see you intercept the currents,
 Toes within the waves.
 The water's only up to knees,
 But cold as hidden caves.
 I step into the water cold
 And shivers run my spine
 The deeper I am willed to go
 The less I feel confined.
 We build the courage needed to
 Put skull beneath the stream,
 The frigid causes jolts of life
 I hear your joy through screams.
 We fight and frolic, fools of fun
 This water makes us be,
 But soon, so fast, it's time to leave
 Our creek time jubilee.

— *Kayla Goldstein, 11th grade*

SOLAR SYSTEMS, SPANISH BINGO and ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Sleeves up and hands-on, fourth grade students studied the solar system and created small planet and moon models using recycled paper and flour-based papier-mâché.

“Did you know that Venus has 90 times the atmospheric pressure of Earth?” commented student Bishop Avila-Nores. “That’s equivalent to the amount of pressure at the bottom of the Mariana Trench!”

“Mercury’s biggest crater could fit all of Northern Europe,” shared classmate Amelie Thams.

Throughout the school year, fourth graders explore creative and depth-filled curricula. During the same time-frame that they were researching space, other lessons included manipulating fractions and decimals; understanding prepositional phrases; a book report on *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, finishing narrative stories; a study of the human respiratory system; and early California history.

Fourth grade teacher Nick Cabassa, along with teachers Luis Hernández and Lisa Cat-



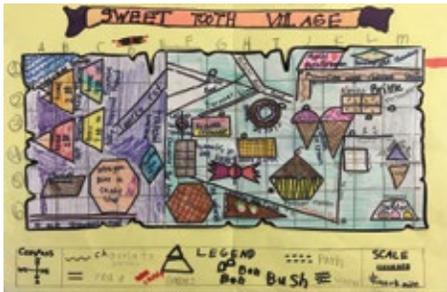
terall, wove enriching cross-curricular projects into fall lessons.

“We created connections between the words, and the pronunciation requires repetition, so we used creative tools for them to engage and practice,” said Hernandez, who guided students through a round of bingo with seasonal Spanish words and phrases.

“Fourth graders study electricity, circuits, and energy transformation through projects

that require them to direct current from power sources through non-adjacent lights and motors,” said Catterall. “Later in the year they begin to study electrical resistance, robotics and applications of chaotic motion. It’s structured in a way that they feel they are playing with the tools and materials, although by the end of their sessions, historically, they do end up acquiring a fairly solid vocabulary in electrical engineering.” — *Leigh Ann Clifton*

THIRD GRADE GEOMETRY TOWN MAPS



Third graders’ budding cartography and architectural skills were on display, as they designed and mapped fanciful communities drawn from their own imaginations.

As the class learned basic geometry concepts, the project provided a creative opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding by making “town” maps incorporating geometric terms. Each town included buildings

in the shapes of pentagons, right triangles, trapezoids and parallelograms, and students added streets and roads connecting the buildings, highlighting terms such as line segment, parallel and perpendicular lines and obtuse angles.

“Geometry is all around us in real life, too,” observed third grader Amelie Powers.

— *Leigh Ann Clifton*

SEEKING to INSPIRE: YOUiversity LEARNING DAYS

In January, upper school students participated in the first MMS YOUiversity learning days. Offered via Zoom, YOUiversity was intended to engage students during parent-teacher conferences.

“We were seeking to inspire the creative energy of our students, faculty, staff and alumni,” commented Dean of Students Bob Caplan. “We asked community members to consider making a 15 to 60-minute presentation to teach a skill, share a passion or

hobby, or explore a topic of interest. We received a range of proposals infused with learning and fun. There were 26 sessions scheduled, 18 were shared live and eight were prerecorded.”

Both mornings began with an alumni keynote speaker, invited to present so that current students could see an MMS education in action, and hear the speakers’ perspectives and approaches in turning their passions into purposeful lives.

Soma Sharan (’11), founder of HerFutureFund.org, spoke about her philanthropy work, while musician Jake Ward (’14) described his career path. It is our hope that YOUiversity will continue to grow and that in the future MMS can host it in person and open it up to our broader school community.

— *Shannon Kelly (’92)*

Read more:



FEEDING PEOPLE

Second Graders Learn About Food Insecurity

135 million people suffer from acute hunger largely due to man-made conflicts, climate change and economic downturns. The COVID-19 pandemic could now double that number. – United Nations World Food Programme, Global Report on Food Crises, 2020

The second grade class, along with their seventh grade buddies, led the school's participation in the Second Harvest Food Bank (SHFB) Santa Cruz County's annual Holiday Food and Fund Drive. During the pandemic,



instead of collecting cans and non-perishable food, students created a donation page on the SHFB website and asked the school community for donations for this important cause.

That request was answered.

MMS families, faculty, staff, alumni and friends donated \$648, equating to 2,593 meals for hungry people in Santa Cruz County. During the holiday season students wrote appreciation letters to Second Harvest volunteers.

"Thank you for helping people who don't have food or houses!" said second grader Dahlia Bell.

"You are helping others," wrote classmate Jules Moutafian. "Thank you for sorting and filling up bins of food."

In second grade students learn about food cycles, part of MMS' commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (see related story page 26), and pertains to Goal 2: Zero Hunger.

"This is an important concept as we are near so much of the food that grows, travels



and gets eaten by people all over our country," said teacher Prema Gammons. "We talk about how food comes into our homes and discuss reasons for hunger and food insecurity. Second graders fully grasp this concept and share reasons for donating to the Food Bank with others."

Gammons received a note acknowledging the students' efforts.

"Please share my appreciation with your students and their big buddies for leading this charge," wrote alumna Lara Kilpatrick ('85), "as it is especially vital and important in these times when so many children and families in our community are food insecure."

— Leigh Ann Clifton

ETHICAL FASHION and UNSTOPPABLE COLLECTIVE DREAMS

My name is Maria. I was born in Guatemala and I am a biologist, an entrepreneur and founder of the Wakami system. I am also a mother and a firm believer that collective dreams are unstoppable. My life's work has been to find ways to link people who are stuck in cycles of poverty to markets that can create cycles of prosperity.

MMS high school students first interviewed María Pacheco in 2008, as part of a Values in World Thought learning journey. Pacheco was introduced to teacher Ward "SN"

Mailliard and his students by Alyse Nelson, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Vital Voices. Last fall, junior students Zoomed with Pacheco, resulting in a meaningful dialogue.

"What struck me most is when she was talking about how everyone is born with a purpose," commented student Kayla Goldstein. "I really like that thought and I look forward to finding mine."

Pacheco has dedicated her life to helping Guatemala's marginalized indigenous popu-

lation who suffered during the country's 36-year civil war that only ended in 1996. In 2006 Pacheco and her partners established Wakami, an ethical fashion accessories brand, with a plan to build a network of rural communities where the fashion products of local women could be sold through an international export chain.

"Maria talked about the idea that by the items we buy, we can shape our country and our world," said student Benn Glorfield. "This idea impacted me, as I never would have thought about how every little thing I buy directly, either positively or negatively impacts the world. This idea also inspires me to do better with consumerism."

"One of the quotes from our interview that stood out to me was, 'Nobody has all the talent, but everyone has a talent,'" commented student Summer Howley. "I appreciated her reassurance that it's okay not to be able to do it all, and the reminder to 'be gentle with yourself'."

— Leigh Ann Clifton



INSPIRING GLIMPSES into FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

Mount Madonna Hosts an Alumni Speaker Series Based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about more tragedy and chaos than we could have imagined. Amongst the loss of so much, however, MMS was able to find opportunity. With the general public becoming accustomed to remote learning and online meetings, MMS sought a way to spotlight alumni and friends who are prominent figures in their fields to highlight the importance of, and the school's commitment to, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). This was an ambitious undertaking: seven events in four months, all via Zoom, featuring speakers from across the country. The events were moderated by current faculty and staff, as well as former teacher and alumni parent Tiffany Wayne, Ph.D. The format followed the Values in World Thought interview tradition, with junior and senior students asking well-researched questions of the speakers after their presentations.

“Our commitment to sustainability, environmental stewardship and global citizenship permeates our Pre/K through twelfth grade curriculum.”

“The SDG speaker series perfectly aligns with what we do at MMS,” commented Director of Upper School, Shannon Kelly ('92). “Our commitment to sustainability, environmental stewardship and global citizenship permeates our Pre/K through twelfth grade curriculum. I am proud of the amazing work our alumni are doing in the world. It speaks volumes about the type of education we offer.”



Amita Kuttner, Ph.D. ('08)

The inaugural event with Amita Kuttner, Ph.D. ('08) explored what place artificial intelligence has, and should have, in modern society in order to guarantee an equitable representation of cultures and societies (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth). Kuttner devotes their time to politics and policies that promote sustainability through listening and learning from indigenous cultures: “What’s clear,” Kuttner stated in their SDG talk, “is that we have frameworks and blueprints to live on this planet that last for thousands and thousands of years, and they’re not incompatible with the technological future.”



Laxmi (Stebbins) Wordham ('93)

In the presentation exploring SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, Laxmi (Stebbins) Wordham ('93) helped us see how we, as average citizens, can have an impact on voting rights and promoting racial equity in society. The key, Wordham says, is voter engagement at the local level. “If we could change the makeup [of the poll worker demographics] to reflect the community so that people could see themselves reflected in the officials that are taking their vote, I think that would be a huge contribution.”

World-renowned climate expert and Stanford professor Dr. Noah Diffenbaugh ('92) demonstrated the inequity in access to technology and the impact this has on the ability for countries and cultures to rise out of poverty and its effect on global climate change (SDG 13: Climate Action). “We get tremendous benefits from [things that require] energy consumption, but there are billions of people who do not,” Diffenbaugh stated. “The sustainable development goal is addressing the imperative that all humans have access



Dr. Noah Diffenbaugh ('92)

to the fundamental resources that are needed for human well-being, while minimizing the climate change that happens as a result.”

FishWise CEO Tobias Aguirre ('94) screened the trailer for an impactful film about fishermen in Southeast Asia and how choices we make in America have global consequences. FishWise began as a partnership with the local New Leaf grocery chain and has expanded to hundreds of suppliers and thousands of storefronts sourcing and supplying seafood from sustainable fisheries engaging in legal and fair job practices. “Life under the sea is inherently and intrinsically connected to life above water,” Aguirre stated. “We want a healthy, striving [seafood] industry because it provides literally millions of jobs around the world. As long as it’s done sustainably and responsibly.” SDG 14: Life Below Water supports and powers all of the other SDGs, including No Poverty, Zero Hunger, and Gender Equality.



Tobias Aguirre ('94)

In working with a local nonprofit, Usha Kilpatrick ('89) taught us about how the small island state of Hawaii has led the charge to achieve carbon neutrality and how others can follow their charge (SDG 17: Partnership



Usha Kilpatrick ('89)

for the Goals). “The urgency of [climate change] is part of my motivation,” Kilpatrick responded. “We really don’t have any choice but to address this.” Through working with The Healy Foundation, Kilpatrick is uplifted every day by hearing about the dedicated work and inspiring stories of the individuals and groups working with the organization.



Ryan Oliver ('94)

Taking a more personal approach, Ryan Oliver ('94) separated us into breakout groups to brainstorm how to make MMS a more diverse arena for Quality Education (SDG 4). Oliver, who works with BUILD.org, said the path to systemic change “starts with small individual actions to build community and connection to integrate across differences.” When addressing individual concerns, he commented, “Students have a problem with segregation, which isn’t their fault in that they did not create it, and it is our responsibility to act consciously against that.”

The final presentation of the series was a reading and talk by *New York Times*-best-selling author Maria Dahvana Headley. She read to us from *The Mere Wife* and her latest, *Beowulf: A New Translation*, and discussed the importance of rethinking how women have been depicted in stories over millennia and the impact this has on modern day thinking and representation (SDG 5: Gender Equality). “Over the course of the translation of [Beowulf],” Headley explains, “the Grendel’s

Mother character was described as a word that means ‘warrior,’ but over 200 years of translation she began to be described as ‘monster,’ which demonstrates how patriarchy began shaping women’s capacity to be warriors.” The talk explored the ways in which canonical art has shaped modern culture, in particular the place of women in it.



Maria Dahvana Headley

All seven talks offered inspiring glimpses into future possibilities. The work being done is impactful, and our students and attendees asked intriguing, thought-provoking questions in the Q&A sessions. MMS hopes to continue the series in the 2021-22 school year.

“Alongside the speaker series, we are excited to launch the Mount Madonna School Sustainable Development initiative to measure our school’s progress and contributions to the global U.N. Sustainable Development Goals,” commented Head of School Ann Goewert, Ph.D. “The school has a rich tradition of developing its students’ capacities to think critically, creatively and empathically to solve pressing global issues.” School leadership envisions creating an interactive database to measure and visualize its students’ contributions to the global sustainable development goals.

In lieu of set ticket prices, SDG speaker series guests were invited to make optional donations to MMS. In total, \$3,882 was received from attendees and event sponsor Monterey Bay Mortgage, to be directed to developing the school’s sustainable development goals-oriented educational programs.

— Robyn Pearson

The videos of all the talks, as well as resources discussed in each session are available at:



WAVES of CHANGE

As a person of color at a school whose student population is predominantly White, representation matters and permeates all



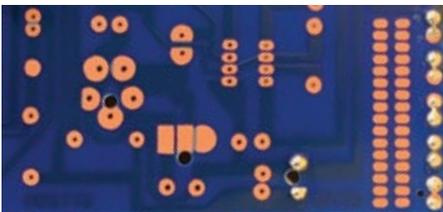
aspects of my life. The MMS Sustainable Development Goals Speaker Series lecture “American Democracy, American Racism” with MMS alumna Laxmi Wordham ('93) illuminated that although our nation has come a long way, we still have work to do. This is why the topic of systemic racism in American institutions is so important to me.

The uprise of Black Lives Matter has made racial injustices extremely apparent. We as citizens can see just how damaging racial injustices are to our local communities and society as a whole. Individuals, law enforcement, health-care systems, and the economy are all detrimentally affected by the tolerance of such inequity.

My classmate Grace Timan and I established a union at MMS where we invite students of color to share their personal experiences, as well as allies who are interested in being open and accepting listeners. As people of color, we feel it is important to have a safe space to express ourselves because our stories are not told in mainstream culture. It feels as though our voices are suppressed, instead of lifted, magnified and simply heard. We want our communities to listen to what we think, feel and speak, so that change can be made.

Our hope is that by sharing our perspectives, we can highlight how racism impacts an average American’s life. As John Lewis said, “If you see something that is not right, nor fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to do something about it.” Change starts small and creates ripples in systems. I am inspired to take on the challenge to make ripples that will hopefully lead to waves of change.

— Alyssa Manzur, 11th grade



ADDRESSING EQUITY GAPS

Engineering for Change, a new course for juniors and seniors, is part of an effort at MMS, and in education nationally, to address equity gaps in engineering fields and get more youth interested and involved in “making and designing” at increasingly challenging levels.

In this class, students study simple and complex machines, design tools and learn about energy and the engineering design process, energy transfer, engineering careers, and electrical engineering. Redesigning some of the projects and labs with the pandemic in mind presented a unique challenge. Students had take-home lab kits that included app-enabled energy monitoring and equipment to experiment with molding and curing for a planned materials lab.

One project involved circuit design and creating circuitry and design journals that included working circuits affixed to paper. While paper circuits are a fixture of makers’

art projects in lower grades, for older students they presented a platform where each student could work without sharing equipment or crossing social-distancing barriers. Students described their circuits mathematically, practiced design tools like isometric drawing, compared configurations and added more complicated components. The lab paved the way for them to use Arduino microprocessors for a control systems unit.

During other sessions, the class tent transformed into an electrical lab with students soldering components onto circuit boards.

Several years ago, a K-12 science curriculum map revealed a gap in teaching the “E” in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), a gap that has been present historically in most school programs. MMS addressed the gap by starting the elementary makers’ program and adding a series of engineering labs in several traditional science classes.

— Lisa Catterall

ALUMNI CONTRIBUTORS to *RAMAYANA!* THE MOVIE

A number of MMS alumni contributed to *Ramayana! The Movie*, beginning with the multi-talented **Devin Kumar** (’06), who is credited with filming, cinematography, editing, film direction, dialogue recording and editing, song mixing, audio mastery, and, as a member of the *Ramayana!* band (recordings were incorporated into the movie), played keyboards, orchestration and programming.

“Working on the *Ramayana!* 2021 movie was an extremely fun and creative process,” commented Kumar. “Being able to reimagine all of the scenes in a different format than on stage and get out of the theater mindset was challenging, but also great fun with all the creative possibilities that come with shooting in movie format. One of the most special things for me was being able to do it on our amazing school and center land. The land has a magical feeling and Babaji’s rock walls and other landmarks was another way that Babaji’s inspiration came through, as he was responsible for beginning the production decades ago.”

Hands-on alumni contributors include: **Bodhi Shaffer** (’08), Kumbakarna, monkey, and monster support; **Erika Rosendale** (’05), set and scenery design and construction; **Ian Rusconi** (’06), song mixing; **Jai Aguirre** (’90), set and scenery design and construction; **PK McDonald** (’04), monster support, monkey; **Tapan Lockwood** (’05), monster support, monkey; **Trevor Forry** (’09), end credits; **Yolanda Sangita Diaz-Houston** (’99), makeup.

In addition, recordings from the *Ramayana!* stage production choir were incorporated into the movie version, and includes the voices of **J. Haley Campbell** (’02), **Jenny Turk** (’14) and **Sally Shields** (’14). **A’kio Nanamura** (’17) contributed lyrics for the song “Tiers Fall.”



ALUMNI NOTES

From the Class of...

'86 Hanuman Fellowship Board of Directors President **Prabha Pacey** is taking a sabbatical from her Starbucks career to live at Mount Madonna Center (MMC) and work as the MMC transition director. She is leading the community as decisions and practices are implemented to support MMC's long-term viability and sustainability, while ensuring that Babaji's teachings about community, satsang, yoga, Ayurveda, love, tolerance, compassion and dedication to self-development carry on for many generations to come.

'89 **Rajesh Westerberg** is settled in Bristol, England, working as construction manager on the set build for *Chicken Run 2*, the sequel to the popular *Chicken Run* by Aardman Animation, the makers of *Wallace and Gromit* and *Shaun the Sheep*. His wife Nicola works in sustainable transport for the Bristol City Council and teaches yoga. Their son Ari plays volleyball and participates in gymnastics, parkour and trampoline after-school clubs, and their daughter Pearl sings in a band and is taking a range of secondary education courses. They have chickens, guinea pigs, and a large, plentiful garden. Rajesh's mother Lila (long-time MMC resident) recently visited to celebrate Rajesh's 50th birthday. **Usha Kilpatrick** recently joined the MMS governance council as a trustee. Usha also participated in the MMS speaker series based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), see article on page 26.

'92 **Noah Diffenbaugh** participated in the MMS SDG speaker series (see page 26). He was recently named as a 2020 American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fellow and recipient of the AGU's William Kaula Award.

'93 **Laxmi (Stebbins) Wordham** participated in the MMS SDG speaker series (see page 26).

'94 Both **Ryan Oliver** and **Tobias Aguirre** participated in the MMS SDG speaker series (see page 26).

'99 **Kate Ray** and husband Mathew Rariden moved from Oahu, Hawaii to Okinawa,



Oriana Teran Valdez '02 children



Rajesh Westerberg ('89) and his children



Franklin Brightwater ('04) and family

Japan. Mat heads the adult mental health department at the U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa. Kate continues to work as a design contractor for an educational company, designing textbooks for middle and high school language arts and social studies programs. In February, they welcomed their fourth child and only girl, Isla. **Kendra Froshman** and partner Sam Luckey are expecting a baby in January 2022. Kendra lives in Oakland and works in San Francisco at Compass Family Services, a family homelessness organization, as the director of impact and learning.

'01 **Dov Rohan** and wife Mary Hunter welcomed their second child, Hannah Marie, in July, joining big brother, Griffin Bear. Dov is a middle school math and outdoor learning teacher at a private outdoor school, Wildwood Academy. On the weekends, Dov and Mary pack up their kids and dog to explore the beautiful outdoors Oregon and Washington have to offer.

'02 **Oriana (Lakshmi Potter) Teran Valdez**, husband Saul, and two-and-a-half-year-old Mateo, shared the joy of a homebirth, welcoming baby Lucia on July 22.

'04 **Franklin Brightwater** and family relocated to Winston-Salem, North Carolina (his wife's hometown). Their daughter Azalea is now three and a half and about to start preschool. Franklin works as an ultrasound technologist at Wake Forest Baptist Health, an academic healthcare system associated with Wake Forest University. His wife Meghan is starting an Etsy business making hand-drawn greeting cards with calligraphy. You can find her work at Sweet Azalea Studios on Etsy.

'07 "As many of you may remember my life is about sports and dogs, and now it's about a husband and a baby on the way too!" wrote **Madeline (Weston-Miles) Bailie** recently to MMS. "Since graduating from U.C. Davis, I've worked for the past 11 years at Tesla. When I first started I was employee number 500 and it has grown! It's exciting and extremely taxing to be part of the inception of a company that has created such change. During this time, I took up running and ran some wonderful and interesting long-distance races including the grueling CCC (Courmayeur Champex Chamonix) in the Alps. Two years ago I married Colin Bailie, my fellow runner, inventor and dog lover. Together we have one dog, Zoe, who is now doing canine agility and as you can imagine, it is yet another competitive venture! We were really excited earlier this year to purchase a house next to my sister **Alicia (Weston-Miles) Carlson ('01)**, and my parents, since we are expecting a baby in November!"

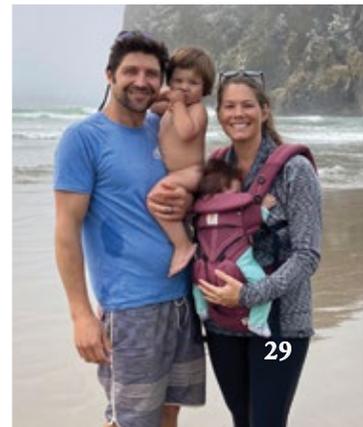
'08 **Amita Kuttner** participated in the MMS SDG speaker series (see page 26). **Chris Fust** is living in Byron Bay (northern New South Wales) for his partner Tianna's vet placement at a wildlife hospital. Chris and Tianna are both close to finishing their graduate degrees, Tianna with a doctorate of veterinary medicine and Chris with a masters of environmental science. Fun fact: Byron is the easternmost point of mainland Australia, and it's a beach town, much like Santa Cruz. Next, they plan on moving to Sydney for the rest of Tianna's rotations and will eventually settle where they can both pursue work connected to nature and wildlife. **Shelby Botula**

Madeline Bailie ('07) with her nieces

Kate Ray's ('99) four children

Kendra Froshman ('99) and her partner Sam

Dov Rohan ('01) and family



MOVING with the TIDE

Editor's note: Following is an excerpt from an interview first shared in February.

"I have been a professional people photographer for 14 years and, in many ways, quite successful: I have made a living off of my work, taken projects that have been artistically fulfilling, and made some great connections," commented Jennifer Richard ('99). "Three years ago, I would have said that I photographed 'portraits, weddings, and events.' Yet, for me, now, there's something disheartening about that description.

"Instead, the shoots I want to explore are a form of storytelling," she continued. "I think of this new style of portraiture as building a dream rather than just capturing a face. I want to spend time with my clients and get to know how they imagine themselves. I want to make storyboards and Pinterest pages and find the exact right locations for the scenes we're creating. I want to build dreams out of borrowed books and draped cloths, out of dramatic costumes, discovered spaces, and people's stories and imaginations. I want the location and the props and the wardrobe to come together to say something more than the sum of their parts. Call me a romantic, but I believe that a really good photo, aside from making you adore the photographer, should make you adore, or be intrigued by, the subject."

Jennifer has been successful at creating a life in line with her creative paradigm. From her houseboat on Lake Washington, she has found a profound gratitude for her situation and her world, surrounded by wildlife and nature. "If I want to go anywhere on the lake, I go via my standup paddleboard. Living here I have a life outdoors. It's like I live on an aquarium; I see fish and turtles every day. I got attacked by a jealous mama goose last spring. We often see bald eagles flying overhead, a mated pair of ospreys, and even a family of beavers with a new tiny baby this year!"

See Jennifer's website:



Jennifer Richard ('99)



Sage Buzzini ('15) and Ellen Kruse at their wedding

works as a project specialist for the Universities Space Research Association on a project called SOFIA (Stratospheric Observatory For Infrared Astronomy). SOFIA is a modified Boeing 747 aircraft, and instead of carrying passengers onboard, SOFIA carries a large telescope to study the infrared universe. The far infrared contains critical information about the galactic ecosystem and is a vital piece in understanding the universe. SOFIA is a joint project of NASA and the German Space Agency at DLR, and Shelby says it has been an honor to work with the brilliant people in both of these organizations. "Every new discovery about space reveals an exciting piece of the puzzle and just to have a small part in that is a dream come true," commented Shelby.

'11 **Soma Sharan** delivered a keynote address at the virtual MMS YOUiversity learning days (see page 24).

'12 **Blythe Collier**, is beginning her fourth year as alumni representative on the MMS Board of Directors. She encourages community members to contact her with ideas for building alumni relations at mmsboard@mountmadonnaschool.org. Blythe recently started graduate school at Alliant International University, and is pursuing a master's in organizational psychology. **Kabir Ahluwalia** is a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in the Clinical and Experimental Therapeutics Program at the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy and received a master's in management of drug development in 2020. He currently works on the development of a stem-cell-based therapy for the treatment of age-related macular degeneration under the guidance of his mentor Dr. Stan Louie, and

in collaboration with Dr. Mark Humayun, with support from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine and the Ginsburg Institute for Biomedical Therapeutics. He hopes to defend his Ph.D. in 2022 and apply to industry positions where he can utilize his training to expedite the development of novel therapeutics and bring life-changing medicine to patients in need. **Nicole Nascimento** earned a doctorate in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. She pursued a clinical focus in women's health and fertility enhancement. The last year of her clinical training was in an inpatient rehab facility (Janus of Santa Cruz), where she practiced acupuncture detox in a community health setting, utilizing the National Acupuncture and Detox Association protocol. She is currently studying for her licensing exam and is in the process of becoming a certified acupuncture detox specialist. She plans to focus her career on women's health and addiction medicine.

'14 Musician **Jake Ward** delivered a keynote address at the virtual MMS YOUiversity learning days (see page 24).

'15 **Renata Massion** graduated in June with a master's in environmental science and management from the University of California, Santa Barbara. **Sage Buzzini** wed Ellen Kruse on May 7 in Colorado. Sage's groomsmen included **Daniel Clifton** ('14), **Luciano Jimenez** ('14), and **Chris Colip** ('15). Guests included **Tobin Mitchell** ('15) and **Aimee Kerr** ('18). Sage was also promoted to 1st lieutenant in the United States Army. He and Ellen live in Colorado Springs.

'16 **Miles Wayne** spent six months studying abroad in Paris, and upon his return al-

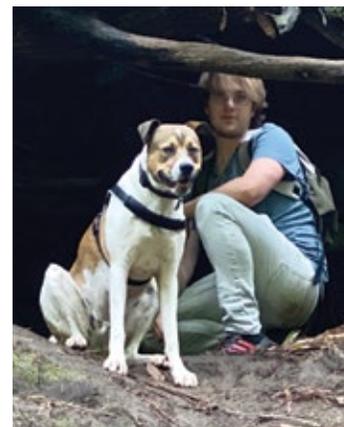
Saniya Lakka ('16) graduates



Nicole Nascimento ('12)



Devyn Powers ('17)





Caroline Smith ('17) graduates



Sophia Saavedra ('16) graduates



Julia Hengst ('95)

SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Editor's Note: The following story was excerpted from a summer 2021 interview

Julia Hengst ('95) is a licensed marriage and family therapist who lives in Maui and helps clients virtually around the world. Passionate about psychology, spirituality and media literacy, she recently published the first in a series of books for children, *Venus Underwater: Songs from Mermaidia*, focusing on concepts from various healing traditions including Ayurveda, shamanic healing, psychology, restorative justice, and mindfulness, in response to a conversation she had with her brother.

Raising three daughters, he asked Julia, who had been working with teens for over a decade, what she thought was the biggest problem that teens face. Self-hatred, she told him. He asked her how he could help prevent self-hatred in his daughters. Following that conversation, Julia set out to write a book series to help bolster emotional intelligence, insight and self-awareness, inclusion, diversity, and body positivity, all of which prevent self-hatred.

Her education and experience at MMS, although brief, was profound and definitely had an impact on her interest in helping young people. Some of her long-term best friends are those she met at MMS almost 30 years ago. When she came to MMS it was a traumatic and confusing time, as her family had split apart and Santa Cruz was completely foreign. The small school size helped her connect with friends on a deeper level and to understand how trauma heals in community. Ward "SN" Mailliard's class impacted her and primed her to think of how ideas can become realities that actually help the planet. It also helped her develop good interviewing and question-asking skills – which she has used as a journalist and therapist.

most immediately transitioned into quarantine back home in Watsonville and a year of online classes at San Francisco State University. He switched his major from journalism to cinema and feels like he has finally found a satisfying field of study. In August he moved to San Francisco to finish his last two semesters. He has spent most of these past couple of months thinking about and preparing for graduate school, running, spending time with friends, and working on a short film project. **Saniya Lakka** graduated from Willamette University with a B.S. in computer science and minors in math and art. She is living in Oregon and works at Nike. In August she began an online master's program in data science at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2020, **Sophie Ortiz** returned to MMS to coach middle school girls and high school boys volleyball. She is waiting to finish her degree from California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo until she can participate in labs in-person, and is making plans to live in a van, travel and work at different farms through Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) after graduation. **Sophia Saavedra** graduated from University of California, Los Angeles class of 2020 with a degree in biology and a minor in art history. She is now working with Heluna Health at mobile COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Santa Clara County. Her future plans include applying to law school.

'17 **Caroline Smith** graduated from Smith College with a bachelor's in history and a minor in religion. She recently began a master's program in ethics, peace, and human rights at American University in Washington, D.C. Ever since the D.C. trip her junior

year, she has wanted to live in D.C., so she is really excited for this next chapter. **Devyn Powers** plays competitive Pokémon games, which has created opportunities to travel across the country and even parts of the world. "It's a game that when played at this level is often compared to chess, and before COVID I was invited to the World Championships in London," commented Devyn. "I have made a tremendous number of friends and learned more about the fundamentals of practice and learning from pushing myself to be the best I can be. I have even made a decent amount of money doing this." Devyn has gained a huge sense of comfort in realizing he is someone who just takes life a bit slower than the rest. "Right now what's important to me is developing myself further with the life lessons MMS passed onto me to be the best person I can be, while finding enjoyment in the core aspects of myself in the world." **Tara Cat Huijin Ching** graduated from the University of California, San Diego with a B.A. in political science with a focus in international relations, and minors in literature and psychology.

— J. Haley Campbell ('02)

Stay Connected! We appreciate learning about the interesting things MMS alumni are doing. Reach out at [mountmadonnaschool.org/alumni/stay-connected](https://www.mountmadonnaschool.org/alumni/stay-connected), or check-in socially:

-  Mount Madonna School Alumni
-  Mount Madonna Alumni
-  @mms_alumni

Jake Ward ('14) performing



Sleep Goddess of Mermaidia by artist Esther Samuels-Davis



Learn more about Julia's book:



Dear Alumni Parents, if your graduate is no longer receiving mail at this address, please forward this publication and notify us of their new address.

CONGRATULATIONS and BEST WISHES to OUR 2021 GRADUATES!



Back row, left to right: *Corey Mensinger, Kira Kaplan (Valedictorian), Octavio Moreno, Sara Bautista (Salutatorian), Ronan Lee, Savannah Cambell, Ami Bharghavan, Sarah Vince.* Front row, left to right: *Sammy Caudill, Oliver Mensinger, Kahlan Tervalon.*

2020-21 College Acceptances:

American University
Boise State University
Cabrillo College*
California Polytechnic State University,
San Luis Obispo
California State University, Channel Islands
California State University, Merced
California State University, Monterey Bay
Centenary University
Clark University
Colby-Sawyer College
Colorado State University, Fort Collins
Dickinson College
Drexel University

Emory & Henry College
Evergreen State College
George Mason University
Goucher College
Grinnell College
Hawaii Pacific University
Humboldt State University
James Madison University
Johnson & Wales University,
Rhode Island*
Kenyon College
Lewis & Clark College*
Meredith College
Michigan State University

Oberlin College
Occidental College*
Ohio University
Oregon State University
Otterbein University*
Purdue University
Quest University, Canada
San Francisco State University
San Jose State University
Seattle University*
Seton Hall University
Smith College*
Sonoma State University
University of Arizona

University of California, Berkeley*
University of California, Davis
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, Santa Cruz*
University of Colorado, Boulder
University of Denver
University of Edinburgh, UK
University of Findlay
University of Glasgow, UK
University of Hawaii at Manoa*
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Lynchburg
University of Oregon

University of Puget Sound
University of San Francisco
University of St. Andrews, UK*
University of Washington, Seattle
University of York, UK
Washington University, St. Louis
Western New England University
Western Washington University
Whitman College
Willamette University
William Woods University

*Denotes school graduate(s)
selected to attend