

Middle School STEAM

You may have heard a lot about “STEM” (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects and how the U.S. should address perceived deficits in its education system. A recent article by educator (and my father) Dr. James Catterall suggested that engineering is not taught in K-12 schools and should either be left out of the conversation or addressed immediately. Research shows that while all students begin their education interested in science and engineering, many, by eighth grade, have given up, and by the end of college, statistics are fairly dismal for women and minority groups attaining engineering degrees.

One cutting edge way that schools are encouraging a broader group of students to embrace STEM is by using STEAM, an integrated teaching of art with STEM. This year, I completed a graduate research study on Women, Art and Pedagogy: The Effect of Arts Integration on Gender Disparity in STEM Subjects. Using MMS students as subjects, I looked at the effectiveness of STEAM in reducing gender disparity in engineering and mathematics, and improving learning outcomes for all students.



Surveying the night sky at Chabot Space and Science Center

My research found that students increased their engineering confidence, creativity and overall empathy when exposed to a series of STEAM lessons. Third through tenth grade students participated and each group had six lessons to complete a self-directed project that integrated engineering

and art. Students utilized The Factory, our campus makers' lab.

Elementary students have regular STEAM classes. These classes are entering their third year and are enormously popular with students and

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A quiet moment in Washington, D.C.

The Cornerstone of a Healthy Democracy

The Washington Monument glowed rosy gold against the twilight sky. A quietness seemed to settle as our group approached, not an auditory one, rather the quietness of mood that comes when hundreds of strangers are focused on one thing, one tower reaching up to the stars. To the north was the White House, a working monument to the executive branch of the government. Facing back the way we came, the Capitol Building was visible just above the trees of the National Mall as the legislative branch symbol. Around the corner of the obelisk was the Jefferson Memorial, and around the last side, the Lincoln Memorial shone double in the reflecting pool. I had always been uncomfortable around patriotism because

I thought of it as a blind pride in the country as it is. On this trip, my idea of patriotism shifted to be more along the lines of hope for what the country could be and the drive to help it get there. Standing in the circle of billowing flags and craning my neck to see where the tip of the obelisk pierced the night, I felt a wave of this new patriotism.

— Julia Gratton, 12th grade

In our interview with the great civil rights leader, Congressman John Lewis, he told our students, “Keep your eye on the prize and do not give up.” In the moment described by senior Julia Gratton as she stood with a new realization of the responsibility of citizenship at the

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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.

Celebrating Anurag Christine White



Anurag Christine White

*She of great empathy,
compassion and loyalty,
Blessed with tenacity and capacity.
Gentle Handler of our eccentricities,
Unafraid to take charge, to be
responsible, to plunge into the fray,
Juggler of countless details, system
rethinks and continuous emails,
List maker, innovator and
fearless risk taker.*

Upon her arrival, Anurag served in leadership, both at our School and Mount Madonna Center. Anurag sought to unify our communities, to better how we do what we do. This was not easy work.

To steer in community often means endless meetings and committees. It is handling lurches, frustrations, and negotiating tough

personalities (like mine). It takes fortitude, trust, and conviction, a “say yes” mentality to navigate sudden left turns and spontaneous challenges and, despite the obstacles, still move forward.

Adding to her already weighty duties, Anurag became the producer of the performing arts productions, both middle and high, as well as of the *Ramayana!*. In doing so, she was handler of the performing arts team's visions and collisions, expenditures, hiring quirks, demands and pleas. She kept track of the oceans of details, contracts, tickets, advertising, souvenir programs, set building, lights, props, costumes, make up, parents' involvements; she was constant communicator, facilitator, enabler and gate keeper. She did it all humbly and steadily.

She's old school, driven by a work ethic unparalleled, part of a generation of Mount Madonna lifers who seem to follow the postulate that we can and must do all. Where does she get this energy, this propulsion of spirit that carries her from point to point on her lists? Walk through the office when she is present, and you'll witness her continual whirlwind of counsel and quest.

Now she moves into a new part of her life journey. May she know our love, our deep appreciation and gratitude for all her years of dedication and investment. You've made our lives better and we thank you deeply.

— *By Sampad Kachuck*



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Live, Grow and Thrive: A Letter from Our Head of School

The four graduation events at MMS are the pinnacle of self-reflection with each speech and performance demonstrating the journey our students have travelled. This year, I had the privilege of giving the youngest and the oldest students their diplomas. From the block-laden pathway in the Pre/K classroom, to the cap and gown, pomp and circumstance ceremony under the outdoor tent, students were surrounded by loved ones, teachers and alumni. Whether students join us in preschool or high school, the mere presence of a school that serves students ages 3 to 18 enhances the interactive experience for all and expands the definition of a “whole child education.”

Ramayana! is the year-end celebration where students of all ages come together to create an experience that delights so many each year. The backstage team-building moments are as insightful and important as the onstage performances. The older students can be seen calming a teary preschooler, helping with makeup and congratulating one another on a scene or a song well done. These caring interactions grow confidence and leadership, and build trust. Students who learn to trust themselves and others grow the ability to overcome obstacles, develop resilience and work cooperatively with their communities for the greater good. Research has found that feeling connected to something larger than oneself is a number-one indicator of happiness and contentment in life.

This past spring, the visiting Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) accreditation team recognized our School in a beautiful prologue letter (excerpted below), along with a seven-year accreditation term, the highest level received by independent schools. They saw the commitment made by our founders, faculty and staff, and appreciated our smooth transition of leadership with the addition of three division directors: Jenni Leach, lower school, Lisa Catterall, middle school, and Shannon Kelly, high school.

“From sunrise to sunset, the Mount Madonna experience is truly magical. It is rare that one participates on an Accreditation Team in such an inspiring environment,” wrote Angela Howell, director of development at Mayfield Senior School and a member of the visiting accreditation team. *“Students love their teachers who, ‘encourage you to do your best.’...The parents are equally enthusiastic and appreciative...and commented that they selected Mount Madonna School because of the outstanding student-centered curriculum that created young adults with global understanding, values and self-confidence...The majestic trees sparkle with life and are grounded to this sacred earth. So too are your students, as they stand confidently, grounded in a most extraordinary soil of learning and peace, in a place filled with wonderful people...We are confident that this school and your children will live, grow and thrive for generations to come.”*

The journey of an MMS student is marked by milestones that stretch their capacity just enough to reach the next stage. Rafting and camping trips, learning journeys near and far, athletic competitions and performing arts productions serve as training grounds for the soft skills that are the focus of so much research today. Through academic excellence, creative self-expression and positive character development, we are growing independent thinkers at each developmental stage. MMS students are informed citizens who contribute to society, with learning projects extending beyond the classroom walls and into the community. Our students are engaged in their school life and the activities that matter to them, from environmental protection to humanitarian and social justice issues.

Mount Madonna is a place to grow:

Where students see ducklings and baby turtles swimming in the spring pond

Where fruit trees flowering become applesauce in the fall

Where kindergarten students become fifth grade Tiger Buddies

Where middle school dancers and volleyball players grow into freshmen and sophomores engaged in marine sciences on Catalina Island, and juniors and seniors travel to Washington, D.C., India or South Africa

Where students go on to colleges near and far, studying diverse subjects leading to adult lives in education, engineering, technology, science, medicine, law, social work, the arts and more.

The Connection marks these transitions with stories and photos that capture some of the past year’s memories. It is our pleasure to share these highlights and thank you for supporting our School and its continued growth.



Head of School



Mary Supriya McDonald

Athletics: A Robust and Expanding Program

Kudos to our middle school (MS) league champions, track and field league medalist, our first female cross country runner to compete on a regional level; and to our girls cross country squad for being named a Scholastic Champion!

Cross country fielded both boys and girls squads, and sent one athlete to section championships (see story, page 5). Positive attitudes and a willingness to work hard played a significant role in their season.

“What I tried to emphasize with our team is that each athlete needs to personally improve his or her own times and physical fitness,” shared coach Stephen Harrington. “We were competing against ourselves, and over the course of the season, our runners saw their times improve by as much as a minute or two – and that’s huge.”

“Even though we may not be the team that comes in first place, we still run and we still compete,” said junior Caroline Smith, *“and I think that translates into my life when it comes to doing things for the experience and not because of a prize at the end.”*

On the volleyball court, the varsity girls team, which included six veteran senior players, finished third in the Santa Cruz Coast Athletic League (SCCAL).

“The girls were fortunate to have amazing successes and exhilarating performances,” commented varsity girls coach PK McDonald (’04). “Our finish was the culmination of persistent effort and a resilience that has been developed over the course of our journey together.”



The 2016 varsity boys team



Height and power!

The junior varsity (JV) girls competed energetically throughout the season, according to coach Nate Rockhold:

“This was a super-focused, team-oriented group of girls who held strong throughout the season.”

Gold for gold! Congratulations to the MS girls (fifth/sixth) Gold team, Silicon Valley Athletic League (SVAL) champions! The team was coached by Tina Pendleton with assistance from alumna Michaela Schuessler (’11). Athletic Director (AD) Sidd McDonald coached the MS girls (seventh/eighth) Blue Team, which finished second in their SVAL division.

“This group of athletes is highly talented and played outstanding all season long,” Sidd McDonald said. “We look forward to their upcoming high school (HS) careers.”

The varsity boys team played competitive volleyball, finishing SCCAL in second place.

“This was a team of really experienced athletes,”

commented coach Rockhold. “They had a lot of weight on their shoulders after last year’s league win and performed consistently well throughout the season with every team they faced.”

The JV boys team also had an upbeat year coached by PK McDonald. “I enjoyed working with these boys and helping them take their game to



The JV boys volleyball team



Cross country runners compete



At the International Games

the next level. We had great talent and leadership from our upperclassmen and the atmosphere in the gym was focused and positive.”

The MS boys (sixth through eighth) Black team, coached by Sidd McDonald, finished second in the Central Coast Athletic League. “I’m very proud of this team,” he said. “Many of the boys played club ball in the off season and were very competitive when it came to league play.”

Earlier this year Sidd McDonald, announced he was retiring as athletic director after serving in



Varsity girls at the net

that role for the past 13 years. Effective August 1, there are two AD positions, with PK McDonald for HS and Erin Mitchell ('10) for MS.

High jump, hurdles and sprints – oh yes! MMS offered its first track and field, coached by Jenne Wood-Taylor (track) and Sara Sobkoviak (field events). Without a track or field of its own, the MMS team divided its weekly practices between their own campus and shared space on a local HS track. The team finished with three athletes competing in league finals, including one who medaled (see story, below).

“From shot put and discus to sprints, high jump, the two-mile and relay, our athletes took risks,

competed their hearts out, and had fun running, throwing, and jumping their personal bests,” commented Wood-Taylor.

“Each athlete improved their technique and witnessed how hard work, with consistent and balanced training, helps in competition,” said Sobkoviak. “We are looking forward to next season and developing the team even more!”

For the 13th year, fifth and sixth graders represented Greece in the annual county-wide

International Games track and field competition at Soquel High School.

“This event allows our younger students to step off our mountain and interact in the arena of track and field,” shared Jessica Cambell, who co-coached the kids along with Rockhold. “For some students this is their first taste of a track meet. It is especially important now that we have a HS track and field team, as it allows our younger students to start pursuing this sport with the goal of being on the HS team.”

Volleyball Honors

SVAL Champions – 2015, Gold Team

All-SCCAL

**High School Volleyball,
Girls & Boys:**

Co-Coach of the Year: *PK McDonald*

First Team: *Sophie Ortiz*

Second Team: *Elise Slater*

Honorable Mentions:

Sophia Saavedra, Mara Peruzzi

First Team:

Holden Smith, John Anthony Dias

Second Team: *Brigg Busenbart*

Honorable Mentions:

Luca Peruzzi, Zac Clark



Top: MS Gold team champions!
Bottom: MS Blue team

Track and Trail: SCCAL Finals and CCS

Kudos to juniors Caroline Smith, a medalist in the 2016 Santa Cruz Coast Athletic League (SCCAL) track and field finals, and Cat Ching, who qualified and competed in the Central Coast Section (CCS) championship. Smith, a member of MMS' inaugural track and field team, finished seventh in the junior varsity (JV) 100-meter dash finals. She earned a third place medal in the JV high jump, with a jump of four feet, two inches.

“Being a part of track and field has been one of the best parts of this year,” commented Smith. “I am so grateful to our coaches, Jenne [Wood-Taylor] and Sara [Sobkoviak], for putting a great deal of their time into our practices and meets, and helping us achieve so much, not only as individual athletes, but as a team.”

Ching placed 39 out of the 72 D-V runners with a 23:27.6 finish in the three-mile race, and is the first female runner representing MMS to compete in CCS!

In addition, Ching and her teammates were honored as having the highest collective scholastic average among CCS D-V girls teams, 3.926, and the second highest average among all CCS cross country teams.

“At the beginning of the season, I joined cross country for exercise and fun – and because I didn’t want to play volleyball,” Ching explained. “Along the way, my teammates were all so open that it made me really comfortable and more open, too, not only for cross country, but at school and in my everyday life.”

— *By Leigh Ann Clifton*



Caroline Smith



Cat Ching

Saving a Shorebird

The Western Snowy Plover, a small bird that lives along California's coast, is the subject of *Shore Wars: The Shore Awakens*, an educational movie created by fifth grade students. Earlier this year the students screened the film on campus and in Santa Cruz, and shared with audiences their months of work related to their plover environmental project.

Teachers and mentors Jessica Cambell and Nate Rockhold say the project empowers students to get involved in their communities with issues of consequence. Their efforts took several forms:

Students visited the Pajaro River mouth to observe wintering plovers and learn from avian ecologist Carleton Eyster of Point Blue Conservation Science. They travelled to Moss Landing State Beach to assist in dune restoration in collaboration with the Elkhorn Slough Foundation.

Top: Sharing their research
Bottom: Microplastic on the beach



Celebrating a cleanup of the Pajaro River mouth and nearby beach

“Our goal was to pull up the invasive plants in the snowy plover habitat and replant the natural habitat so the plover can nest on the dunes,” explained student Sam Kaplan. “I thought it was really fun when we replanted the habitat; and although it felt like it was such a small step because there was so much ice plant and trash around, I realized in the end, it’s not about making the world completely eco-friendly and fixing it all, it’s about doing your part or all you can.”

On another occasion, fifth graders – along with their preschool, kindergarten and ninth grade buddies, parents, teachers and Save Our Shores representatives – cleaned up Palm Beach in Watsonville. They also met with Jackie Nunez of The Last Plastic Straw who told them about a movement to encourage local restaurants to voluntarily refrain from serving straws with beverages (unless requested). Straws are a leading type of beach plastic pollution.

“Our goal is to help each child develop as citizens, to realize they have a voice and that each action can make a difference to society,” commented Cambell. “Recently there was a National Public Radio interview about how

the younger generations seem to lack a desire to vote or engage in community action. Those interviewed said individuals didn’t think they could make a difference. This is exactly why Sri Gyan [James McCaughan] and I started this program years ago: to help children to understand that they can make a difference and change the world for the better if they are active citizens.”

“Through our work, I feel like we helped the plover and our own future,” shared student Vivienne Chankai. “We know if we don’t do anything for the environment, it will all be gone, and I like knowing that I’m working to change things for the better.”

— By Leigh Ann Clifton

Cleaning up trash on the beach



Student Awarded National Merit Scholarship Commendation

Class of 2016 graduate Julia Gratton was named a Commended Student in the 2016 National Merit Scholarship Program. She scored in the top 5% nationwide of the more than 1.5 million students who took the 2014 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT). Gratton is attending Whitman College this fall.

What We Talk About When We Talk About Writing

I believe that reading and writing deepen our understanding of ourselves and of the human condition. Through story we are connected; through story we find meaning and empathy. We experience what it means to be fully alive.

In high school English at MMS, we discuss literature with constant reference to authorial intention. Why did Shakespeare include a seemingly superfluous scene with comedic minstrels right after we find out (Spoiler alert) that Juliet is dead? Why did Amy Tan structure *The Joy Luck Club* in a way that is mimetic of the mahjong game? How did Conrad use foreshadow and juxtaposition in *Heart of Darkness* to prepare readers for Marlow's final lie to Kurtz's Intended? Why did Dickens begin *A Christmas Carol* with exposition instead of scene?

We enter story as writers with a strong understanding of the art and craft of the creative writing process, and then I ask students to let it all go. To trust their analytical knowledge like we do our life-vests on the rafting trip – it will keep us afloat while we have fun exploring the world we're creating and letting our narrators or speakers (poetry) lead the way. We can rely on our understanding of story craft without constantly focusing on its presence.

The Freedom of Constraints

Nobel Laureate Thomas Mann said, "A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult."

Sometimes shifting between the analytical and creative minds is not an easy process. One way we slowly push open the door to creative writing is to experiment with various constraints. Zach Wagner, 10th grade, explained it well: "A poetic constraint is



Creative writing students relaxing after a hike

a rule or structural boundary that must be followed. Some benefits include a clear flow or a specific style that is achieved. The writer is forced to expand creativity to make their message fit the form, and the reader gets a specific feeling or vibe from how the poem is delivered." Constraints can create rhyme schemes, delineate syllable counts, feet, or meter, imbue themes or symbols, and they can be as specific as avoiding the letter "e." The students approach this process with ingenuity and energy, and they discover the freedom of constraints.

Writing in Nature

Another way we proverbially get out of our heads is to get out of the classroom. We venture into the woods to write with a weather-proof envelope

full of writing prompts. Much like constraints, these prompts – opening lines, conflicts, character ideas, photographs – provide a structure that stretches the imagination and inspires new ideas.

We hike out to the cathedral classroom (a grove of redwoods past the new gym), or to a sunny hillside, or to an open field. Then we disperse, each finding a quiet space to settle in and write. Sometimes students select prompts from our collection; sometimes they're in the middle of a project and know exactly what they want to work on. Sometimes they sit and watch a lizard basking on a rock, or they fiddle with a twig in the dirt, or they stare at seemingly nothing. And that's okay. I trust their process. — By Haley Campbell ('02)

Writing outdoors sparks students' creativity



Snapchat Snapshot: Students Use Mobile Messaging App for Women’s History Lessons

When the 12th graders in the American Women’s History class brainstormed ideas for celebrating Women’s History Month, they hit upon a creative way to raise awareness among their peers, the campus community and beyond using the mobile messaging app, Snapchat.

For the “uninitiated,” Snapchat allows users to share photos and short videos, to which they can add captions, messages and assorted filters. Once viewed by the recipient, the posts disappear within a few seconds. Another user option (and the one employed for this project) is for the sender to add posts to their “story,” where messages remain for 24 hours and can be reviewed multiple times.

“Almost everybody [in our generation] uses Snapchat,” said senior Cameron Bess, technology editor for the project. “We were inspired by this platform because it’s a convenient and accessible way to get information out, and there are tools for customizing it.”

Throughout March students created and placed posters around campus highlighting different eras and women’s history topics. One poster focused on colonial women and included art, quotes, and

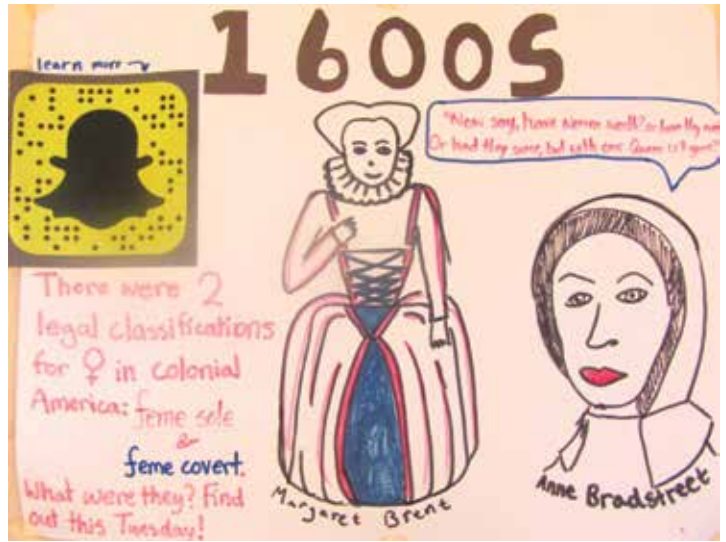
trivia about colonial women’s legal status.

Students researched historic periods and created audio accompaniment. One eleventh grader (who wasn’t part of this senior elective course) did a “guest cameo” voice-over for a message, while a sophomore submitted a video for another.

Information was edited, customized and posted twice a week.

Senior Julia Gratton studied the 1600s, while classmate Miles Wayne shared research about important feminist figures of the 1700s; still another “chat” focused on changes in reproductive rights through time.

“Snapchat is interactive and we’ve received feedback and support from current students, alumni and other people,” Bess shared.



Legal classifications of women in the 1600s

Users accessed the project by scanning the yellow SnapCodes posted around the campus, or by viewing the “womens_history” Snapchat username.

“I love that they chose a platform that they and their peers already engage with on a daily basis,” commented teacher Tiffany Wayne. “I’m proud of them for researching topics beyond what we’ve actually studied in class. They’ve shown a lot of initiative and worked well together as a group!”

— By Leigh Ann Clifton

World View: Global Themes and Geography

Ninth graders took a “big history” approach to their world history and geography studies by looking at themes across time and regions. Students created poster projects, board games and presentations based on the global spread of crops, animals, diseases and technology.

Students completed a final project of hand-drawing the world map, an activity that seemed daunting at the beginning of the year. After studying the physical geography of different world regions and learning the location of each country, students were surprised at their own abilities and were proud to display their completed creative and colorful world maps.

— By Tiffany Wayne



Left: World map of HIV/AIDS
Middle: World map of rice
Right: North and South American llama map

Eggs, Chickens, Buddies and Berries: Students Experience a Working Farm

“Wow! A new egg!” said a six-year-old girl, extending her arm to show this “treasure.”

As students took turns wrapping their fingers around the egg’s warm brown shell, nearby classmates cuddled accommodating hens or peered through wooden pens, coming face to face with hairy goats.

Last fall preschool through second grade students enjoyed a visit to Live Earth Farm in Watsonville, an annual educational adventure.

“Our year-long study of ‘where things come from’ was front and center as we toured and tasted ourselves around a working organic farm and the children experienced their connection to Mother Earth firsthand,” commented teacher Hema Walker. Afterwards in their classroom, students learned about different types of farms and how many food items purchased in grocery stores originate on a farm. Each kindergartener drew a picture and dictated a story about their farm experience.

“As we explored, students learned about parts of plants and their function and experienced the sweet tastes of freshly picked strawberries and juicy tomatoes,” said teacher Cassia Laffin. “I saw a lot of joy as children interacted with each other and their buddies. It was special to see older students assuming the role of caretaker and friend to younger students. They practiced taking turns with the animals, and I watched students who were ‘chicken-holding-savvy’ acquire a bird and transfer their great catch into another’s arms. The look of pride on their faces when

they held those chickens was priceless!”

Elementary science lessons are taught as part of the classroom curriculum and in science labs at MMS. Students study life cycles and spend time in the Children’s Garden, learn farming techniques and grow food to share at MMS open houses. First and second graders sprout seeds, observe, make predictions and conduct experiments with different amounts of water, sunlight and various soils.

“In visiting a working farm, students use their senses — they smell, touch, listen, see and taste their way around,” said teacher and Lower School Director Jenni Leach. “A farmer docent teaches students about the difference between fruits and vegetables, seasonal crops, and how they sow, nurture and water plants depending on their needs. They learn about the animals that supply the farm and about milk production and grazing benefits.”

Second grader Colby Saunders was excited to learn that students would have the opportunity



Harvesting the farm’s bounty

to incubate and hatch chicken eggs in class.

“At the farm I learned how to hold a chicken carefully under its wings,” he said. “They are just so soft and warm.”

— By Leigh Ann Clifton

Holding a hen



Picking tomatoes



Pressing apples into cider



A Spirit of Tolerance: Exploring World Religions

“**M**aybe it was the calming breaths, or the invocation Gitanjali [a Sufi practitioner] blessed us with, but something made us all perk up in interest. What a beautiful religion, way of life and way of thinking. She told us she thinks of the word ‘God’ as a verb. He works in our lives daily; He is always happening. Though I’m not sure what my religious beliefs are, it felt nice to be introduced to such a beautiful philosophy.”

— Lily Petersen, 12th grade

Why do we teach world religions to high school seniors? Our class offers a combination of academic scholarship and experiential learning intended to enrich students’ understanding of others’ views and beliefs, while promoting a spirit of tolerance and peaceful compromise.

Three years ago, I began co-teaching world religions with Dayanand Diffenbaugh, who has guided the class for 21 years. While I hadn’t taught this subject before, I felt that a political philosophy and history background would be a good foundation, as would my interest in how we, as humans, organize ourselves and make sense of the world.

“The course was started more than 30 years ago with the intention of bringing an awareness of the main spiritual traditions being practiced in our world today into our students’ life experience,” explained Diffenbaugh. “We emphasize giving students a feel of different approaches and traditions by bringing them into dialogue with practitioners of the diverse traditions studied, as well as offering a Native American sweat lodge and field trips to temples and monasteries.”

“What I experienced at New Camaldoli Hermitage was something like no other,” reflected 12th



Talking with Father Cyprian at New Camaldoli Hermitage

grader Alex Marshall. “Morning Mass was a treasure among the long stretch of canvas of senior year and I will not forget it for a long time. During Mass I didn’t really understand what was going on, but I respected and appreciated the dedication the monks and people had towards what they believed in. Their dedication made me consider how easy it is to not only think about active change, but to create real change in the world. . . I want to change someone or something with the music I make, and our Hermitage visit helped me solidify this thought. Father Cyprian’s music moved me. It showed me that anything is possible if you put your head and heart towards it.”

In addition to introductions to different faiths, students read from foundational scriptures, including native or indigenous stories, the Torah, Bible, Quran, Bhagavad Gita, Dhammapada, and Tao Te Ching.

Senior Julia Gratton reflected on her sweat lodge experience:

“It was cold and gray and my class stood in an abnormally even circle around the fire. When it was time, we filed in through the low opening in the sweat lodge, walking around clockwise until we had transposed our circle inside the domed tent of crossed branches and cloth. The shaman passed a braid of sweet grass around for us to purify ourselves with its smoke while his assistants brought in the first round of rocks from the fire. When the flap was closed, the shaman and his assistants began to sing. At least, I assumed it was them and not the rocks themselves or the branches of the lodge or the cool, firm ground that was filling the space with music that seemed to come from no one point but all around like the heat, like the darkness. In the sweat lodge I found a willingness to let go of my skeptical reason and just be present in a shifted mode of being.”

“The course experiences provide a deeper sense of what it is to move into the realm of human spirituality,” said Diffenbaugh. “To engage in questions and answers with a Rabbi, feel the depth of peace at the Hermitage, dance *zikr* with a Sufi sheik, dialogue and play with a Buddhist monk or sit and sweat in the dark womb of Mother Earth; these experiences can touch a deep place in the heart. Student participation is voluntary and the only prerequisite is openness.”

— By Shannon Kelly ('92)

At New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur



At the Hanuman Temple



Finish the Gym Campaign!

The new Upper School gymnasium is approaching the final phases of completion! After an initial seed donation in 2007, we began fundraising in earnest in 2009. Since then we have raised over \$1,868,000, and now have a beautiful 100' X 100' facility with courtyard, bathroom complex and large parking area awaiting final touches.

Our fundraising efforts this past year culminated in record-breaking success that began with a \$100,000 challenge grant initiated by the Bess family. This was matched by generous supporters before the end of October. Between November and December, we raised another \$33,450. In March, the Hanuman Fellowship offered \$100,000 to help with finishing costs and \$50,000 more as a challenge, which the MMS school community and friends matched before the end of May!

As we approach the project finish line, we estimate needing an additional \$70,000 to pay for bleachers and a graded field for track practice. There are other equipment needs too, including wrestling mats, pads for the volleyball nets, an equipment shed, and landscaping and picnic tables for the courtyard.

We are selling business banners to be displayed on the gym walls. Parent and board member Forrest Cambell is leading this project along with other board members. We are also offering commemorative tiles to be installed on the pillars of the courtyard plaza. These beautifully engraved laser tiles can contain a message, photo or family name. Please contact me if you are interested in ordering a tile or contributing toward our completion goal.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to all the donors who have contributed over many years. This will be a fabulous facility for our students' PE program, community events and athletics.

Many volunteers have given their time and efforts to help, and we thank them all: our workday crews, Soma Goresky, engineer, Michael Doherty, contractor and advisor, Walter Cortez-Torres, painter, Dayanand Diffenbaugh, site development and large machine operator, and our lead project manager, Sadanand Mailliard.

Plans for the gym opening are on the horizon and we hope you attend!

— By Mary Supriya McDonald



A view of the new gym and bathroom building nearing completion

Thank you for your 2015-16 donation:

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Ann and Nico Peruzzi

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Larry Schreiber
Summit Volleyball Club
Gary Suoja
Louise and Steve Takashima
Vivian Wright and Eric Olsen

Students meeting inside the new gym



Ten Years of Summit for the Planet

Summit for the Planet 2016 kicked off with a surprise stretch and warm-up in our new gym! The eco-carnival was fun, educational and brought some friends – both new and returning – up the mountain. This important annual fundraising event netted \$23,336!

A heartfelt thank you to the nonprofit partner organizations who participated and to sponsors, vendors and donors for making this unique celebration possible. MMS has become a leader in the community by empowering our students to do projects encouraging environmental awareness. We are grateful for the support of our families, board, faculty and extended community.

— By Kiersten Elzy-Loving

Our sincere thanks to:

Allterra Solar
Aptos Landscape Supply
Baskin Robbins, Watsonville
Bat Conservancy of Coastal California
Bay Area Amphibian and Reptile Society (BAARS)
Bike Station Aptos
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Zizzo's Cafe



The Spirit of Service: Honoring Volunteerism

MMS strives to cultivate the spirit of philanthropy in our students, so that they may go out into the world and make their contributions and create a life of meaning for themselves. We all learn by example.

This year we honor and thank an individual who embodies the spirit of service through volunteering for MMS. Her dedication and service are deeply appreciated.

If you peruse the school website, weekly eNews, or happen to catch MMS stories in the media, chances are you are familiar with the captivating photography of former MMS parent Maureen Pramanik.

While numerous individuals share their photographs with MMS, Maureen's volunteer efforts go far beyond an occasional photo, with thousands of shots taken and shared over the past six years. Maureen has devoted countless hours – and frequently entire days – to photographing classroom learning, students, field trips, outdoor projects, performing arts at all levels, including *Ramayana!*, senior class photos, Summit for the Planet, an all-school calendar and other school activities.

A huge amount of preparation goes into developing the artistic ability and technique that make it look easy. Photography requires a lot of effort – and hauling – of camera bags and other equipment to various shoot locations. A woman of quiet focus and unassuming nature, Maureen takes photographs that display a talent for composition and lighting, perspective, color and patterns. She excels at catching the action and capturing the emotion of her subject.

If a photo truly is “worth a thousand words,” then Maureen's legacy speaks volumes. — *By Leigh Ann Clifton*



The Great History Adventure

The excitement was palpable. In a Gilroy parking lot, parents huddled over coffee cups, pouring over maps and itineraries; kids explored the cars that would take them on a long-anticipated adventure. And then, with a word from teachers Hamsa Heinrich and Nick Cabassa, the adventure was afoot, over Pacheco Pass, and “back in time” for a peek at California's history.

Thus began the biennial field trip to Sacramento for third and fourth graders. Each fall, these classes take an educational overnight trip, alternating between a history-inspired journey to the capitol city and an environment-themed trip to Montara.

“California history is usually only studied in grade four, commented MMS Head of School Supriya McDonald. “At MMS, however, we believe spending two years on our state's rich history, government, flora and fauna, deepens students' understanding and appreciation for their state and local areas.”

The first stop was Sutter's Fort, after which the group enjoyed the state Indian museum, where Heinrich's scavenger hunt kept everyone busy diving into the life and times of California's native sons and daughters. Next up was Old Sacramento, the state railroad museum and Sacramento History Museum.

Sound exciting? Demanding? Educational? Fun?

“It was,” shared parent Robert Culbertson. “Hamsa packed a ton of great activities into a very compact time frame. It was quality time during which parents got to learn with their kids and their kids' friends.”

Our home for the night was the Sacramento international hostel, a 19th-century Victorian mansion. Upon arrival, everyone, from the biggest fourth grader to the smallest third grader, carried duffel bags and food inside.

Later our group gathered for a meal prepared in the hostel's kitchen by the parents and students on dinner duty. And just as in the Fortino parking

lot, which seemed forever ago but was just that morning, the energy was palpable, but this time with the satisfaction of a great day of learning.

The next day more history awaited at the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Colma. After learning about the site and panning for gold, the group found a quiet cove on the American River for a picnic and a swim before heading home.

“Traveling together and having shared experiences is a powerful catalyst to learn more about ourselves and each other,” Heinrich observed. Indeed, everyone arrived home with a deeper sense of their community and a keener awareness that learning is, in fact, a great adventure.

— *By Christine Smith*

A tour of the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park



Sacramento international hostel





Preparing to depart from San Francisco International Airport

Washington Monument, I believe she had her “eye on the prize.”

There are many educational benefits of visiting Washington, D.C. The trip most high school students take visiting museums and monuments tells them a great deal about the history and ideals of our country. Mount Madonna students have the rare good fortune to also meet and speak with a variety of public servants both in and out of government. This year, in 21 interviews we spoke with seven



Top: Visiting the National Mall
Bottom: Exploring Washington, D.C.

members of Congress, interviewed at the State Department and Health and Human Services, spoke with President Clinton’s former chief of staff, and ambassador Melanne Verveer. We also interviewed renowned broadcast journalist Ray Suarez, Alyse

Nelson, president of Vital Voices, and Running Start President Susannah Wellford.

What matters most about these conversations is that the students are able to hear points of view, some of which are quite different than the ones they hold. Regardless of the perspectives expressed, they could see firsthand that these were thoughtful, caring individuals following their passions and beliefs. I believe the students learned that dialogue is at the heart of democracy. My hope is that they will be less likely to ignore or discount points of view without first being curious, and that as citizens, will engage in the discourse that is the essence of our pluralistic system. In a time when divisions widen along economic, racial, gender and religious lines, we need, as an antidote, to understand one another and connect with the basic humanity of those who may hold different viewpoints.

As a society it’s essential that we look at how we educate. The stakes are much greater than college admissions and high paying jobs. We must remember that schools are the places where we prepare our citizens and our future leaders. The values, awareness and discernment students gain will determine whether our democratic self-governance experiment is truly sustainable for the future. How we educate also determines whether we will honor the critical realities of interdependence with our environment, and the need to care about the well-being of all members of society.

Education is the cornerstone of a healthy democracy and the best defense against the overly

simplified rhetoric of our times. Our students now understand that good people can disagree and that principled compromise is what moves society forward. I believe they will seek knowledge before forming opinions. My hope is that they will remain curious about the needs, concerns and opinions of others as they make their choices as citizens.

— By Ward “SN” Mailliard

Top: With Congressman Sam Farr
Middle: Meeting Dr. Kakenya Ntaiya of Vital Voices
Bottom: Talking with Congressman Tony Cardenas





Randy Getz Memorial Golf Tournament Benefits Completion of New Gym

The day was a hot 85+ degrees, yet smiles, camaraderie and good old-fashioned competition flourished. Three teams emerged the victors, with the fitting result that the Randy Getz memorial golf team of just three placed amongst the top (the foursome having clinched first place for several years). After a long day of golf, players were joined by friends and family members for an outstanding BBQ, raffle and auction. This was our seventh annual golf tournament, renamed this year in memory of alumni parent, friend and longtime supporter, Randy Getz.

The event continues each year due to the enthusiastic, committed efforts of a small planning team. In 2015: Noah Lewis (Kadence, 3rd), Juvy Timan (Grace, 6th), Lisa and Robert Moreno (CeCe, 12th and Elias, 10th), Letty Bess (Cameron, 12th, Courtney, '12, Chelsea, '11), and myself, Lara Kilpatrick, '85 (Vyvyanne, '13). Our sincere

Friendly competition and a good time on the course!



thanks to Matt Meachen, former MMS teacher, golf tournament and early gym campaign co-chair, for continuing his invaluable support, and to alumni parent Rod Caborn (Cassie, '15 and McKenzie, '12) who again exceeded the evening. We are also deeply grateful to Morty and Barbara Cohen of SunRidge Farms, Noah Lewis of Issac Lewis & Associates Insurance Services, LLC, and Robert Moreno's associates at Joint Electrical Industry Fund (JEIF), for helping to underwrite tournament expenses through their presenting sponsorship. HUGE thanks for the culinary talents of Robert and Lisa Moreno and their friends Jesse and Elvira.

MMS offers our deepest appreciation to the planning team and to all who sponsored, came out to golf, enjoy the BBQ dinner, photograph and/or showed their support with hole sponsorship or donations. The event netted \$14,060 towards helping us finish the gym. — *By Lara Kilpatrick ('85)*



Our sincere appreciation to:

Alfaro Family Vineyards & Winery,

Mary Kay and Richard Alfaro

Aver Family Vineyards

Gary Banner, DDS

Michelle and Oren Beske

Leticia and Lane Bess

Blossom Valley Foods

BRG Sports

Cindi and Chris Busenbart

Jessica and Forrest Cambell

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The Table

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Victoria Sheldon Designs

Leonard Willis

Willimas, Pinelli & Cullen, LLP,

Anthony F. Pinelli, Esq.

Annual Giving Surpasses \$100K!

The **2015-16 Annual Giving Campaign** was one of MMS' most successful to date. We surpassed the \$100K goal, reaching a net of \$105,097, and 100% community participation (including staff, faculty and current school families). The Drive for Schools raised an additional \$15,808. We set a new record by closing out Annual Giving on February 1 and reaching a record total of \$120,905. Meeting our Annual Giving goal quickly and efficiently allowed us to turn our concentrated efforts to raising the final funding necessary for the completion of the new multipurpose gym.

Each year we rely on three all-school fundraisers, Drive for Schools, Annual Giving and Summit for the Planet. All proceeds from these events fund the program costs for the current year, beyond what tuition revenue covers. To each of our families, friends, grandparents and alumni, we thank you for your generosity and essential school support.

Our deepest gratitude to the following donors for their gifts and pledges this past school year:

Champion (\$5,000 – \$9,999)

Barbara and Morty Cohen
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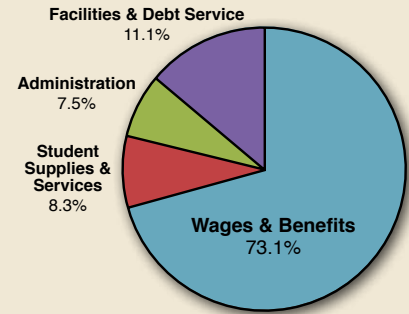
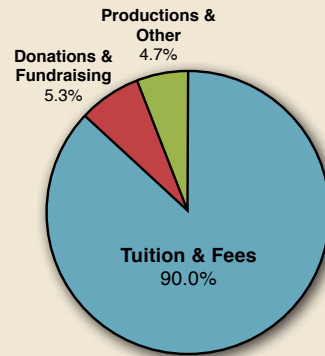


2015-16 Financial Report

Mount Madonna School completed its 37th fiscal year on June 30, 2016. The School 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 expense. We began the 2015-16 year with 194 students, and ended with 195 students. Our Annual Giving Campaign netted \$105,097, plus an additional \$15,808 from Drive for Schools. Our Capital Campaign raised \$357,655 in gifts and pledges plus a net of \$14,060.19 from the golf tournament. We look forward to a future of increasing financial strength and sustainability, through increasing enrollment, generous donations to our Annual Giving and capital campaigns, and directed donations to the excellent programs at MMS.

— By Eric Forbes, Business Manager

Operating Revenue	2015-16 Budget	Operating Expense	2015-16 Budget
Tuition & Fees	\$2,789,635.00	Wages & Benefits	\$2,259,790.00
Donations/Fundraising	\$164,000.00	Student Supplies & Services	\$256,328.00
Productions & Other	\$145,500.00	Administration	\$231,500.00
Total	\$3,099,135.00	Facilities & Debt Service	\$342,800.00
		Total	\$3,090,418.00
		Surplus (Loss)	\$8,717.00



	2015-16 (Budget)	2014-15 (Actual)	2013-14 (Actual)	2012-13 (Actual)
Operation Budget	\$3,090,418.00	\$2,892,286.00	\$3,067,779.00	\$3,032,346.00
Enrollment	194	190	194	211

Note: The audit for this fiscal year just ended will be conducted by the Harrington Group in September. That report will be available in December for anyone wishing to view it.

Directed and In-Kind Contributions

Each year, our families, friends and community members give generously to specific programs for which they have a special affinity. These include financial assistance scholarships, the scholarship endowment, athletics, performing arts, Values in World Thought journeys and the fifth grade environmental studies, among others. Additionally, merchant giving programs – such as Scrip gift and grocery cards – contribute to supporting programs vital to MMS. The total value of directed and in-kind donations in 2015-16 was \$9,790. Some gifts were cash, while others were in-kind contributions including Quiddich hoops, iMac computers, costumes, costumes racks, fiction and nonfiction books, a new sari for Princess Sita (*Ramayana!*), office furniture, electronic snap circuits, and medical supplies intended for the Botshabelo children’s village in South Africa.

Thank you to our in-kind and directed donors:

Susy and Sean Adams
Ardis Baylor and Thomas LeGan
Connie and Glenn Brown
Cindi and Chris Busenhart
Jessica and Forrest Cambell
Barbara and Morty Cohen
Heidi and David Collier
Tom Dembski
The Farm Bakery, Café & Gifts
Gizdich Ranch
Home Depot

Gwen and Rod Koda
Sahana and Sadanand Lakka
Kranti and Ward “SN” Mailliard
Ann and Nico Peruzzi
Jivanti Rutansky
Alice and Brian Saavedra
Olwen and Paul Skogerson
Isa Stead and Eric Forbes
Nicole and Al Tervalon

Fundraising with Scrip

Anyone purchasing Scrip through MMS for their shopping or gifts over the past two years has likely had the pleasure to connect with Tiffany Trujillo (Ava, K). Her smiling face has greeted many of you at the elementary bus stop, where she takes and delivers orders, or in the office, where she drops in weekly for bookkeeping and to remind staff and faculty to get their Scrip!

Tiffany is dedicated to sharing how MMS can earn thousands of dollars every year if more families develop the habit of using Scrip for their everyday shopping and special purchases. During the time that she coordinated our Scrip effort – and due to her consistent, positive energy and friendly encouragement of others to participate – gross sales increased in 2014-15 to approximately \$30,000, and in 2015-16 to about \$64,000, with the school earning 3-5% of this revenue! If you have questions, or would like to purchase or help sell Scrip, contact scrip@mountmadonna.org.

— By Kiersten Elzy-Loving



Active Learning: Night Snorkels, Garibaldis and a High Ropes Course

While the ninth and tenth grade classes travel to southern California together, they embark on very different journeys. The groups take separate boats to separate parts of Santa Catalina Island; and their programs have different learning goals and very different structures.

“Catalina offers a unique opportunity for students to engage in marine science at a professional working institution with hands-on experience both in the water and in the lab,” commented teacher Dr. Nicole Tervalon. “They explore numerous aquatic and near-shore environments, engage in citizen science observation programs and learn about conservation as it relates to the marine environment.”

Seventy-five percent of the ninth grade marine biology curriculum is completed before students arrive on Catalina. On the island students engage in three exercises to complete the lab portion of their course requirements. The rest of their time is spent in leadership and character-building activities designed to push them out of their comfort zones and prepare them for doing research in the water.

Preparing for an outdoor lesson



They practice kayaking so that the following year they can take data on their very first kayak excursion and feel comfortable with the equipment and skills. The curriculum is structured to allow students to face their fears, whether it is on a challenging high ropes course, climbing wall or immersed in the ocean.

“It was thrilling to watch the freshmen explore, discover and learn how to recognize and overcome their limitations,” said chaperone Fabricio Breeze Olsson. “They supported each other, respected their elders and enthusiastically engaged in just about every activity. Their perspectives were made clearer by their own direct observations and interactions, from the microscope lab to star gazing.”

The tenth grade, in contrast, completes most of its advanced laboratory course in honors oceanography on Catalina, in a program offered through the University of Southern California’s Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies and Marine Science Center. Students spend a day and a half studying oceanographic engineering (and building remotely operated vehicles) with Tervalon, who holds a degree in this subject from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“Night snorkels, counting leopard sharks, and collecting data in a marine protected area were just some of the activities sophomores experienced,” shared teacher Nicole Culbertson. “Students were in the water every day conducting research such as ethogram studies, examining bioluminescence or observing garibaldi territorial behavior. They put in 12-hour days identifying microorganisms collected in plankton, performing transects in the intertidal

zone and collecting and recording data to support ongoing work.”

“Overall,” Tervalon said, “It is a magical experience that ties our commitment to experiential learning to academic excellence in a truly enriching way.”

— By Lisa Catterall and Leigh Ann Clifton

Top: Blue-banded Goby social behavior study
Bottom: The CELP high ropes course



Graduations: Endings and New Beginnings

Like the surrounding forest, thick with oaks and redwoods, our school is truly a place to grow. Through the symbols and ritual of graduation – from apples stuffed with candles, to caps, tassels and gowns – at different stages we acknowledge and celebrate the freedoms and responsibilities accompanying each student's growth.

Seedlings. With our preschool and kindergarten Moving On ceremony, we acknowledge the development of inherent gifts and the ability to express them. We encourage children to learn the community values as they embrace the next stage of childhood.

Saplings. In elementary school, fifth grade graduation recognizes that children have developed the ability and desire to be part of something greater than themselves. We invite them to deepen their understanding of our shared values as they transition from childhood to adolescence.

Flowering. In eighth grade, students participate in a Rite of Passage, followed in the spring by their middle school graduation. We recognize their growing understanding of the values of caring, responsibility and self-discipline, and invite them to hold and exemplify these values as they transition from adolescence to young adults.

Fruiting. Senior graduation recognizes that students have completed their childhood journey and reached their adulthood. Through practice and experience they have earned the privilege of not only holding community values but of helping to communicate and shape the values of our shared future.

— By Sarada Diffenbaugh, Ph.D.



Third Graders Research Inspiring Individuals

*“It does not require many words
to speak the truth.”*

This statement, attributed to Native American elder In-mut-too-yah-lat-lat [Thunder Rolling Down the Mountain], or Chief Joseph, was chosen by student Luc Mattern to include in his Moral Hero study of the revered Nez Perce leader.

Last winter Mattern and the third grade class transformed their classroom into a “living museum” and presented to visitors about his or her chosen hero, sharing reports and timelines of notable events in each hero’s life. Some students included posters, dioramas, props or even costumed themselves as a “living” representation of their hero. Each student also made a colorful “hero” bottle doll.

“There was something about wrapping Clara Barton in her Red Cross apron, for example, or fitting Marie Curie with lab goggles – all just the right size for the dolls – that brought the characters more to life for each child,” commented teacher Hamsa Heinrich.

Writing poetry nurtured students’ literary aspirations and guided their distillation of information.

“As third graders become more comfortable writers, there is a common tendency to write more than is needed,” observed Heinrich. “One of the harder things for students to do, then, especially with a project where they have gathered so much information, is to synthesize it into a few main ideas. I’ve found that providing a poetry format to follow can be a great way for them to identify and extract key facts and interesting details.”



Students share their Moral Hero research



Colby Culbertson shared an excerpt from a poem he wrote about his moral hero, Sioux chief Sitting Bull:

Sitting Bull.

*Who said ‘Nothing is so strong as gentleness;
Nothing is so gentle as real strength.’*

Who believed in the Great Spirit

Who used weapons and words

Who gave hope, inspiration and courage

Students chose mostly historical figures, including athletes, conservationists, scientists, politicians and civil rights activists as heroes.

“John Muir is my moral hero because he had a cool beard and loved nature,” said Nash Wilson.

“I wanted to learn about Sojourner Truth because I thought she had an unusual name,” said Olivia Long. “She was born a slave and her given

name was Isabella. In 1843 she chose the name ‘Sojourner Truth’ for herself and later became an abolitionist and worked for women’s rights.”

Heinrich said the project, and specifically creating timelines, assists students by eliminating some of the abstractness they may encounter in studying history.

“Timelines help make historical events and sequences more concrete and understandable. Above and beyond this, I want students to know that there are such positive people in the world doing good work. It’s inspiring that you can be a ‘regular person’ like Rosa Parks or Jesse Owens, and choose to not sit in a designated seat on a bus or to compete in the Olympics despite the palpable racism, and make a tangible difference in the lives of so many.”

— By Leigh Ann Clifton

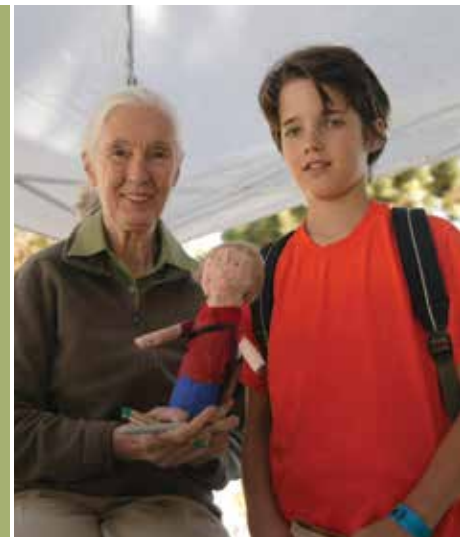
Meeting a Moral Hero

When Ronan Lee was in third grade, he chose conservationist and biologist Jane Goodall as his “moral hero.” That assignment came full circle when Lee, now in middle school, met Goodall in person this year. He attended an event featuring Goodall as a guest speaker and book signer.

“I wanted to study someone who loves animals for my moral hero” said Lee. “I picked Jane Goodall because she helped chimpanzees and made a big difference with preserving their habitat. I never imagined that four years later I would go to a wildlife expo and actually meet her in person! She smiled when I showed her the doll I’d made to represent her years ago.”

Teacher Hamsa Heinrich was inspired to learn of this once-in-a-lifetime meeting.

“I plant ‘seeds of learning’ with my students and don’t always know when the content will come up again,” said Heinrich, “or how it will impact their learning down the road.” — By Leigh Ann Clifton





Hands-On at the NASA Challenger Learning Center

parents. When I became middle school (MS) director in 2015, I was able to facilitate bringing STEAM up through the grades, with the help of music teacher Brian Darsie, dance instructor Saki Tamao, math department chair Dr. Nicole Tervalon, and sixth and seventh grade math teacher Katrina Leni-Konig. Together we formed a “STEAM Team.”

Our team created an integrated sixth and seventh grade curriculum that offers students a choice between a weekly block (1.5 hours) spent in intensive study of abstract math or an integrated



Top: “Mission to Mars” preparations
Bottom: A sixth grader simulates a spacewalk

STEAM class. In STEAM, students study music theory, coding, mathematical choreography (Saki is one of the few teachers in the U.S. with a certification in math-dance), and complete engineering challenges in The Factory. Some sixth grade students elect STEAM because they are not fond of extra math homework, then embrace the intensive math study course in seventh grade, when STEAM helps them find a new pathway to loving mathematics. This year, all eighth graders will have a weekly STEAM class with Katrina.

Katrina, a former engineer, has training in arts integration.

She shifted the curricular projects in MS science towards use of engineering. Students do traditional scientific method experiments in class under her guidance, but for special assignments, they build makers’ engineering projects rather than science fair projects.

Four years ago, the Santa Cruz County Science Fair added an engineering category, but haven’t yet made a transparent system of judging criteria for student-built projects. MMS remains open to fair participation for students who want to pursue traditional experiments. Starting this year, students will be encouraged to take their projects to makers’ fairs.

This past year the MS added a STEM-focused fieldtrip to the NASA Challenger Learning Center at the Chabot Space and Science Center in Oakland. Students spent several hours problem solving on a simulated space ship and mission control center under the tutelage of scientists. In preparation, the students completed multiple experiments using brand new microscopes and other lab equipment that MMS purchased to support its STEM curriculum. Going forward we hope to add a STEAM component to this field trip by visiting The Crucible, a multi-mode makers’ space.

The STEAM program culminates in eighth grade science, when students spend several weeks designing and building model solar cars to race at the annual Summit for the Planet. The addition of The Factory lab has allowed the students to employ 3D printing and soldering in their projects. While the race started as a time trial, the understanding

brought by the STEAM program has added a design category. Students can choose to create a gorgeous car that functions, but perhaps does not go the fastest.

In my graduate program, teachers from around California asked me frequently how MMS incorporates STEAM. Some of them were from schools with a mandate to use arts integration, but they had no training, no resources and no idea how to launch a program. I hope our program can become a model for all schools so that creative students can see that their talents are needed in engineering fields in the U.S.

— By Lisa Catterall

Top: Building an earth bench
Middle: Engineering model rollercoasters
Bottom: Creating fog catchers



Affirming a Child's Sense of Wonder and Reverence

Each spring MMS' youngest students spend some time on a "fairy-full" curriculum: they hear stories, play games and learn poems. They also create their own wands, fairy dolls and edible-flower decorated "fairy cookies."

This wonder-filled lesson culminates with the children arriving at school one day to find their classroom transformed into a fairy playground and their dolls inserted into different fairy scenes around the classroom. Clutching their wands, the children work cooperatively to follow the clues left for them, which lead to their familiar "Magic Fairy Forest." This enchanting redwood grove is transformed for a morning into a fairy wonderland where they can run and play as they enjoy face painting and a delicious special snack.

It's "Fairy Day," our Pre/K celebration of imagination and appreciation of the wonders of nature. In today's world of "screen time" and media-saturated playthings, opportunities for

children to create their own stories and engage in nature are all but disappearing. The antidote? Creative, open-ended exploration and hands-on experiences in nature – a practice embraced by our program and manifested so clearly in this activity.

This celebration speaks to the value that we place on child-directed play and time spent in the natural world. Throughout our curriculum, our connection to nature is interwoven. Age-appropriate academics are taught in a manner that engages the child's imagination through storytelling, creative movement and meaningful, child-created projects, daily time outdoors in the forest and leaf and grain identification and life cycle books that the kindergarten children create.

When children freely explore the outdoors their natural sense of reverence and wonder is supported and affirmed. This open-ended exploration inspires their inquiry into the mysteries of life, the transformation of seed into flower, caterpillar into butterfly, night into day.

Fairy Day was inspired by alumni parent Heidi Collier when her daughter (Blythe, '12) joined our program. We are so grateful that Heidi continues to find a way to contribute to these festivities each year! As the children say in the "Five Little Fairies" counting poem they learn, "and the fairies and the children played all day, and the magic of nature in their hearts did stay."

— By Hema Walker



Celebrating Fairy Day!



In Loving Memory: Roxanne (Rasmani) Cummings

Roxanne Cummings, mother to Belle Potter ('05), Orianna Lakshmi Potter ('02), Jeremy, Chaska and Serena, was a part of our MMS community. She passed away on April 3, 2016. Roxanne was a beloved member of the Mount Madonna Center fellowship and a certified nurse midwife, and launched Midwives of Santa Cruz, serving over 2,000 pregnant women and their families. She pioneered fiercely for the midwifery community and advocated for all those served.

We are grateful for Roxanne's many contributions. Over the years she referred many families to MMS and was a staunch advocate for our school. She supported *Ramayana!* backstage and by singing in the choir. She volunteered her medical expertise to teach sex education classes to high school students, including the importance of positive relationships with partners during pregnancy and birth. Roxanne continued to volunteer long after her children graduated, exemplifying a lifelong commitment to selfless service.

— By Sarojani Rohan

Seniors Mentor Sixth Graders' Novel-Writing Project

The power of a vibrant learning community in action: this spring, senior creative writing students engaged with sixth graders for a writing workshop, resulting in the younger students' stories being published in an anthology, *The Hall of Stories*.

As part of the process, which was designed by teachers Michelle Beske and Haley Campbell ('02), the seniors prepared for their workshop with the sixth grade by reading the stories written by their sixth grade buddies.

"The seniors were excellent mentors," commented Campbell. "I was proud of their ability to teach writing craft and lovingly guide the younger students, and the sixth graders just ate it up!"

Beske said the writing project was part of "Nanowrimo," the national novel-writing month. Sixth graders spent a number of days preparing (developing characters and planning plot), then wrote as much as possible for 30 consecutive days. Parent Robyn Pearson took their final stories and art

and compiled them into a book available through Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1532949588?pldnSite=1>

"Only at a school with the freedom to present independent curriculum could sixth graders have a chance to write a novel in English class," observed Director of Middle School Lisa Catterall. "Is there a better way to set the stage for appreciation of



Seniors worked one-on-one with sixth graders on their writing projects

great literary works? This project adds to a broader goal in the world of education for this generation of creating innovators and confident, capable contributors to our society, and I noticed that the ambitious scope of the project has the students fired-up about writing." — *By Leigh Ann Clifton*



Second Grader's Story Included in Young Writers Anthology

How the Snake Got Its Scales, a story by second grader Siena Liddicoat (and written as part of a first grade assignment) received a Third Place award and was included in the 2015 Young Writers anthology published by Bookshop Santa Cruz.

Teacher Cassia Laffin reads Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* with her students every year. With this inspiration, the first graders each write their own story of how an animal got its unique features.

"I'm so proud of Siena for receiving this recognition," commented Laffin. "Her story was cleverly written and filled with great descriptions and dialogue."

— *By Leigh Ann Clifton*



In Memoriam: Dr. Barbara Diane Mahone Brown

Barbara Mahone Brown was a brilliant scholar, world citizen and served on the MMS board from 2010-2013. She passed away on October 5, 2015. Barbara earned an M.B.A. at the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. at Stanford University. She was a professor emerita at San Jose State University and a board trustee for the United States International University, Africa, in her beloved Kenya. She is remembered by her three daughters as an artist, activist and poet.

Students' Poetry Recognized in County Competition

Poetry by 10 Mount Madonna high school students was recognized in the 23rd annual Santa Cruz County High School Poetry Competition and published in the competition anthology. The contest is sponsored by Poetry Santa Cruz.

Congratulations to:

Amelia Busenhart, 11th, *I Am Not Yours*

CeCe Moreno, 12th, *Not Enough*

Clio Herbert, 12th, *Gratitude* and *HIM*

Holden Smith, 12th, *Sounds of South Africa*, Honorable Mention, and *Monterey*

Isabella Bettencourt, 11th, *Brother*, Honorable Mention

Julia Gratton, 12th, *In Echo's Voice*, Third Prize, and *When the first rocket ship landed*, Honorable Mention

Louis Marshall, 12th, *Glistening*, Honorable Mention, and *The Intrepid Sailor*

Lucas Caudill, 10th, *Lament for a Dead Seal*

Maxim Medvedev, 12th, *Untitled 1.2*

Noah Kaplan, 9th, *Our Loss of Creativity*

MMS students study several kinds of poetry in high school: sestinas, sonnets, villanelles, free verse, blank verse, odes, ballads, lyrics, prose-poems and haiku, and are well educated in poetic forms and possibilities.

"I have been so impressed with the students' creative writing endeavors this year," commented teacher Haley Campbell ('02). "The students take honorable risks in their writing and openly explore the power of language. Their willingness to tackle difficult subjects, to question their own identity and relationship with the world, and to play with words and images amazes me every day. The contest provides a positive and nurturing first publishing opportunity for local students, and many of our students are now inspired to pursue other publishing opportunities for their poetry and short stories." — *By Leigh Ann Clifton*

Sounds of South Africa

The language of everything
Spoken all at once
Old women click their tongues like ancient metronomes
Interrupted by screeching wheels
Zig-zagging taxis
Honks
Vendors proclaim self-damaging prices
Water splashes in spray bottles
Electric razor buzz
A cash register explodes open
Style is more heard than seen
Not far off
Children chase a procession of boxcars
The clack of shoes on steel
Their laughter almost drowns out the receding roar of the train
Grass bellows like a cloth umbrella
almost ripped from its roots by the wind
Grasshoppers make conversation with violin legs
The vast lungs of an elephant empty through a horn
A lion lends his voice to a shaman
Who roars at the constellations
The nothingness that sound comes from
When I listen
Like a kite cut from its string
I become the wind

— *By Holden Smith, 12th grade*

Gratitude

"If everything were to be taken away from you, would you miss it. Would you start on a path of gratitude if you knew it was going to be taken away?"

"Yesterday your wife picked your son up from preschool, and your daughter up from first grade."

"On Wednesday your mom invites you over for a home cooked meal. You shared a drink with your father while discussing the news."

"Tonight your wife made a delicious dinner. She didn't expect you to clean up after.

She appreciates you had worked all day. She was grateful for what you did."

"Last Christmas your son made you a spaghetti-necklace, every noodle painted and threaded onto green string."

"Where is the necklace?"

"Yesterday your ex-wife didn't pick up the children from school. It was your day, and you forgot."

"On Wednesdays your mother no longer invites you over for dinner, and your father doesn't want to share a drink with you."

"Tonight your ex-wife made dinner for someone else. She sympathized with someone else's busy schedule, and they show her gratitude."

"When was the last time you were grateful for all that you have? If I told you everything you weren't grateful for would be taken away, would you show more gratitude?"

— *By Clio Herbert, 12th grade*

The Adventure of Learning: Peace Corps Service in Botswana

Interview with Ashley England ('08) by Haley Campbell ('02)

In a dust-blown desert in southern Botswana rests a large compound surrounded by a waist-high chain link fence. Chickens peck the dust. Thorned branches in a circle form a makeshift corral for goats. Out beyond the compound donkeys and dogs roam freely, and further into the bush you might see baboons, impalas and ostriches. On the compound, there is a modest family home, a tiny building for storing food and extra clothing, and a two-room cement rectangle with a tin roof where the land dwellers once lived while they were building their home and where Ashley England, class of 2008, now lives with her dog Jack-Jack. Ashley is halfway through her two-year service in the Peace Corps.

In Botswana the majority of the land is communal or tribal land, and people are allocated rights to farm and build houses. Sometimes established compounds house many generations at a time. Mma Mompoti, the matriarch of the compound where Ashley resides, remains on the land while her husband and adult children live in Gaborone 50 km north, where work is easier to

come by. “Mma Mompoti holds down the fort,” Ashley explained, “but she doesn’t like to be idle.” She cooks large meals from a traditional outdoor kitchen and runs a tuck shop made from tin and sticks where she sells her goods. Local rock quarry workers buy breakfast and lunch from her almost daily.

Out beyond the big gate, Ashley walks along dirt paths through the bush, led by Jack-Jack and other dogs, who seem to appreciate the Westerner’s approach to them. Ashley is known as a bit of a dog whisperer in her village. Most people are terrified of dogs and believe they are only meant to guard against predators. “They just want to be loved,” Ashley said. “The fact that I pet them and am relatively nice to them goes a long way.” Every day she walks 15 minutes to the local primary school where she volunteers as a Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Youth Capacity Builder.

Botswana is a sparsely populated country, and yet it once had the highest prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS. While treatment is readily available in most areas of the country, education before contraction is still an essential element of the problem that requires focus and support. Addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic is the primary goal of Peace Corps volunteers in Botswana. Ashley was placed in the village of Moshana to be a teacher of teachers. She guides teachers in exploring innovative ways of presenting material instead of just lecturing, and she helps teachers to build the skillset and vocabulary essential to prepare students to confront issues of gender-based violence, to deal with risky situations, and to remain safe from contracting HIV/AIDS. “Talking about sex is taboo here, so it’s hard to teach,” Ashley said. Her curriculum addresses basic life skills, such as setting goals, giving and receiving compliments, and creating a positive self-image, which together



Ashley with a rooster

help to empower students to become self-confident individuals with strong coping mechanisms and decision-making skills.

Recently Ashley worked with other Peace Corps volunteers and local counterparts to run a camp for high school students called GLOW, Guys and Girls Leading Our World. Since the students are older teens, they did talk about sex. A lot. By the third day the kids were comfortable asking any question they wanted, and they knew more than just the facts about HIV/AIDS. They participated in a Condom Olympics to get used to handling condoms, and they engaged in deep conversations about gender-based violence, intergenerational relationships, hygiene, risky behaviors, and safe sex.

In her daily work at the primary school, they don’t talk about sex, “but if you become pregnant, you can’t stay in school,” Ashley explained. When kids become passionate about their education and the opportunities that await them, they are more reflective about their choices and behaviors as they mature. The work is powerful and rewarding, but holds many challenges. “Ultimately I am tasked with capacity-building school teachers and changing culturally accepted behavior without changing their culture,” Ashley explained. “I appreciate that my task really should be sustainable and reach many people besides the ones I have direct contact with in two years, but it is a frustrating and disappointing task most days because you

Top: Reading with a student at the primary school library
Bottom: Ashley’s home on the compound in Moshana



don't see progress. To refer to the overused PC metaphor, I get to plant the seeds of a tree for someone else to sit under, but I myself will not see the tree grow while I am here."

In exploring the deeper context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there are many factors to consider. Poverty is immense. Having multiple concurring partners is very common; a woman might have five children by different men. Marriage is uncommon in Botswana because it requires too much money. Men and young adults tend to flock to the cities for work and education, leaving behind women and children. Fathers have no rights to children when they are young. "You appreciate it when you actually see a father holding his child and walking his child down the street," Ashley said. "It's so easy to focus on the women's plight and empowering women because that is really, really important, but you can't forget that you also need to educate the men. That's a big thing we're trying to do here in Botswana: empower the women, but educate the men. Give them the chance to be the fathers that most of them actually want to be."

Effective capacity building is based on relationships, and modeling positive relationship skills creates the context for healthier communities. Most of Ashley's time spent as a Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Youth Capacity Builder in Moshana is focused on building relationships with teachers, students and fellow Peace Corps volunteers. It is her hope that these relationships will lay the foundation for deeper connection of the skills she teaches. "From my landlady's grandchildren to the neighbor kids next door, having them help wash dishes, seeing them overcome their fear of my puppy Jack-Jack and even petting him, watching movies together and having them rush to my house to ask if we can do some 'gyming' together (Focus T25 workout) . . . These moments combined show the progression of our relationship, and I know it will be the hardest thing to say goodbye come October 2017."

Ashley has dreamt of volunteering in the Peace Corps since she was a high school student. "I embraced it all," she said of her time at Mount Madonna. "The very reason I'm in the Peace Corps you can blame on Mount Madonna. Mount Madonna teaches you a lot about being comfortable in your own skin,

being adventurous, being willing to be weird and silly, so a lot of that influences how much I love being a teacher and how much I want the teachers here to realize that teaching can be so fun and complex, and every day

can be so different." Ashley credits Ward "SN" Maillaird and the Values program for making her globally aware and curious about the world. "SN was the kind of teacher who wouldn't let me hide as a student and actually put me to work on the Washington, D.C. trip." As a new student in seventh grade, Martin "Sampad" Kachuck was a big energetic being that Ashley didn't think she could live up to, but by high school, she embraced the energy and rose to every challenge. In AP Environmental Science, Lisa Catterall, who was a new teacher at the time, instilled in Ashley and her peers that "It wasn't about a test or goal, but the adventure of learning."

Before applying for the Peace Corps, Ashley taught at Mount Madonna for two years, first alongside Sampad in middle school English, and then she took on her own classes in English



Ashley showing students how to play one of her favorite childhood games, Capture the Flag

and history. That experience showed her that she had skills to share. "I realized that if I can do this here, maybe I can take this elsewhere." The creativity and courage that she brought to her own education has led her around the world to share invaluable lessons and life skills.

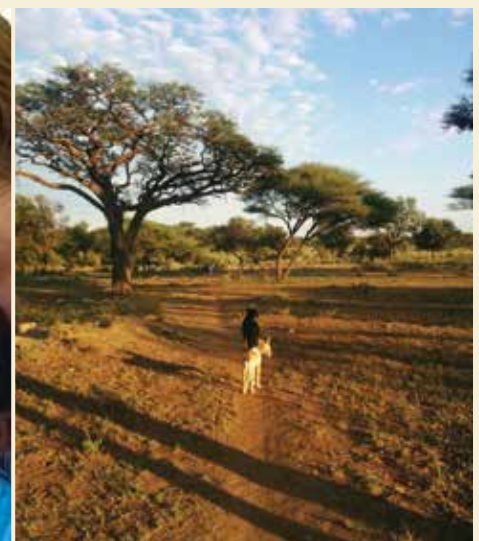
"If I could share any words of wisdom with the Mount Madonna community it would be: embrace Mount Madonna. Mount Madonna gives you the chance to be bold. So be bold. Things will scare you. Don't hide because you're scared. That and travel."

When Ashley's service in Botswana is over next year, she intends to travel more. She would eventually like to get her teaching credential and perhaps attend graduate school abroad. The possibilities to serve seem limitless when you've gone this far.

Playing with Mma Mompoti's grandchildren on the compound



Walking to school with village dogs



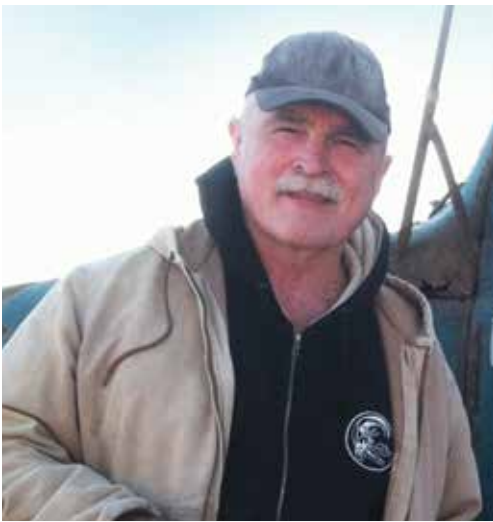
Model United Nations at Stanford University



Fourteen students – MMS’ largest Model United Nations (MUN) delegation ever – participated in Stanford University’s MUN conference last fall. They served on panels ranging from a historic crisis committee dealing with the Opium Wars to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

“Having to join forces with other countries and figure out which parts of our plans worked best was a great social experience,” shared junior Izzy Thomas. “I enjoyed listening to other countries’ solutions and asking questions. Being able to solve problems and work together with other people is something I will use later in college and my career.”

“This experience opened my eyes to the complexity of some of the problems that the world currently faces,” reflected junior Caroline Smith. “My committee was looking at the issue of diseases of affluence. It seems simple; however, after hours of debate between countries, I realized that these problems are the opposite of simple. How do we create a solution that fits the needs of so many different countries and is affordable to developing countries that are usually the ones that need these problems solved the most? I still have no idea, but I now have a very different take on the problems that we all face and realize the hard work and dedication that United Nations delegates put in to try and make this planet better for us.” — *By Shannon Kelly ('92)*



Embracing Diversity: Starting a Queer/Straight Alliance

As part of an ongoing effort to embrace community diversity and make the school environment even safer for all students, MMS has started a Queer/Straight Alliance (QSA) club.

“MMS administrators, faculty, staff, students and families have

participated in a series of presentations by experts in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) matters over the past several years,” explained faculty member Bob Caplan. “This year, we have joined many schools in the region by forming a QSA comprised of faculty and students, and dedicated to educating ourselves about LGBTQ issues. We are also working to create schoolwide events that contribute to a welcoming and inclusive campus.”

As a result of its efforts, last spring MMS was nominated for a Queer Youth Leadership Award through the Queer Youth Task Force of Santa Cruz County. The awards are designed to honor organizations that have made significant contributions toward improving the lives of local LGBTQ youth.

— *By Leigh Ann Clifton*



Passages: James Cardinal

James Cardinal, father to Kellyn ('12), Ananda and Christopher, and husband to Manon, passed away May 25, 2016. He was an avid athlete, disciplined and dedicated yoga practitioner, devoted family man and Santa Cruz native. James enjoyed helping others, which included long-term support of the Sri Ram Ashram in India and the *Ramayana!* playbill through his business, Copy Jewels.

Alumni Notes

From the Class of...

'92 **Noah Suresh Diffenbaugh** appeared on CNN television (<https://youtu.be/3zZ9L00fdpg>) to answer questions about Donald Trump's comments that California is not in a drought. Noah's research has shown that human-caused global warming has increased drought risk by increasing the odds that low precipitation occurs along with high temperature. Noah has also briefed the California State Assembly and governor's Drought Task Force, White House science staff and the U.S. Congressional offices about his research. **Shannon Purnima (Stokes) Kelly** has joined the MMS administration as the new high school director.

'94 FishWise Executive Director **Tobias Aguirre** and staff culminated a six-year effort to secure "responsible sourcing commitments" from Safeway, Hy-Vee and Target. Earlier this year, Tobias and family travelled to New Zealand. "I wanted to take stock of our work, reflect on all that we have done and think about our next chapter. I wanted to talk with those who raise and catch fish, to better understand their connection to the oceans. More than anything, I wanted to hit the open roads and trails with my family and live in the moment. "With some distance between myself and the office, I gained an even deeper appreciation for my coworkers and the opportunity we have to apply our passion, skills, and hard work to some of our planet's important challenges. I remember back to Values class at MMS with Sadanand [Mailliard], when we wrote an essay on what it is to live a meaningful life. Now, at 40 years old and more than 20 years removed from my MMS experience, I know that I am well on my way to such a life!"

'95 **Marshall Diaz**, a practicing CPA, recently completed his fifth year as a partner at Deloitte. He and wife Rebecca (also employed by Deloitte) have been married for 12 years and live in Monterrey, Mexico with daughter Sofia, seven, and son Mason, almost four. They enjoy exer-



Shruti Swamy '03 wed Abe Bingham



Mira Vissell '00, partner Ryan and son Owen Parker



Mark Hansen '07 and girlfriend Alisa Felder

cising, superhero movies, time at the pool and travelling (most recently to Stonehenge).

'98 **Ana Saroj Harris** is living in Piedmont and teaching Pilates at a local studio. On the weekends, she and son Adrian, almost five, spend time in Santa Cruz and Ana works at Bodies in Motion in Aptos.

'99 **Marita Priya Diaz**, husband Ravi Albright and son Matthew welcomed baby Vassilios Tiberio "Lio" Albright on October 9, 2015. The couple, who founded and operate the nonprofit Anindo Chatterjee Institute of Tabla (ACIT) Seattle, applied for and received a \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to fund a series of public concerts and educational workshops in 2016.

Yolanda Sangita Diaz-Houston Ph.D., is working as an outreach coordinator for the Academy for College Excellence at Cabrillo College.

'00 **Derrick Diaz** returned to California from New York City and lives in Alameda with wife Emma. He works at Pinterest as an IT technical lead.

Jennifer (Johnston) Levy, husband Quentin, and son Gabriel welcomed baby Everett on September 20, 2015. **Matt Cohen*** and Sher Zabaszkiewicz of C & C Press collaborate to create fine press, letterpress printed, hand-bound, limited edition artists' books. The Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art is currently exhibiting one of their books, *Colored People*, consisting of Blake J. Nolan's 2005 Cameroonian photographs ([\[si.edu/exhibition/artists-books-and-africa/colored-people-full\]\(http://si.edu/exhibition/artists-books-and-africa/colored-people-full\)\). **Mira Vissell** and partner Ryan Trumm welcomed son Owen Parker Trumm on July 15. The family lives in Santa Cruz and Mira works as a registered nurse at the Capitola Surgery Center.](http://library.</p>
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'01 **Alicia (Weston-Miles) Carlson**, husband Sam and daughter June, welcomed baby Vera Pauline on December 9, 2015. **Alison Alderdice** finished her clinical psychology post-doctoral hours and expects to complete two licensing exams this year. She plans to continue as a staff psychologist with The Wise Mind Institute. On a different note, The Saxophones, the band she and husband Alexi Erenkov are part of, released its first EP and are being recognized in music blogs across the U.S. and internationally. "We have over 200,000 listens on Spotify which I still can't comprehend," said Alison. **Dov Rohan** got engaged to Mary Hunter; he proposed underwater while scuba diving in Belize.

'02 **Nick Manov** and wife Allie are living in Mountain View. It's Nick's sixth year as a test engineer for battery safety and research and development at Tesla. "I feel lucky that I enjoy going to work most days," he said. "I enjoy the fast pace, motivated and sharp coworkers, variety between office and test lab, and the company's mission."

'03 In June, **Kusum Corina Forson*** married Mitch Allen in Leavenworth, Washington. The couple live in Olympia, and both are geologists

Marita Priya Diaz '99 with son Lio

Marshall Diaz '95, wife Rebecca and children Sofia and Mason

Ryan Schmitt '04 wed Sierra Womack

Baby Vera (Alicia Carlson '01)





Ana Saroj Harris '98 with son, Adrian



Kusum Forson '03* is married



Michaela Schuessler '11, York School JV coach



Tobias Aguirre '94 and family in New Zealand

for Washington state. **Shruti Swamy** married Abe Bingham in a Hindu ceremony on May 20. Shruti's short story, *A Simple Composition*, won a 2016 O. Henry Prize and was published in the contest anthology available at <http://knopfdoubleday.com/book/534056/the-o-henry-prize-stories-2016/>.

'04 In addition to teaching at MMS, **Elliot "PK" McDonald** has joined the administration as the new high school athletic director. **Patrick Barber**, wife Tamaryn and son Oakes welcomed son Arrow, born on January 5 – Patrick's birthday! "Everyone is great," said Patrick. "He was born at 3:33pm, I am 30, My Wife is 33, and my other son is 3. Lots of 3s!" **Ryan Schmitt** recently celebrated his anniversary with Sierra Womack; the couple was married on September 12, 2015, after dating for six years. They live in Bellevue, WA, where Ryan is a software developer for Microsoft's Direct3D team.

'05 **Claire Linney*** lives in San Jose and is in her third year as assistant coach of Santa Clara University's mens and womens water polo teams. **Nayana Stokes*** was a MMS bus driver from September 2015 to June 2016.

'06 **Alyssa Shanti DeBenedetti** is a nationally registered veterinary technician. In March she participated in a parent-organized Career Forum attended by MMS high school students.

'07 **Mark Hansen** is the drummer for The Beard of Zeus, and recently vacationed in Thailand with girlfriend Alisa Felder. He lives in Mountain

Derrick Diaz '00 and wife Emma



View and works as an ads platform specialist at Google. "After three and a half years, I have migrated from social media marketing into digital advertising, an extremely complex and fascinating world that never ceases to present unique and interesting challenges," he shared. **Roxy Brown*** is program manager for The Solar Foundation, an independent research and education organization based in Washington, D.C.

'08 In August, **Aaron Colton** published "Donald Trump and the 'New Sincerity' Artists Have More in Common Than Either Would Like to Admit" in Pastemagazine.com (<https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/08/donald-trump-and-the-new-sincerity-artists-have-mo.html>). Aaron is finishing his Ph.D. in English at the University of Virginia, and this year travelled to Israel and New Zealand. In May, **Tessa Fischer** graduated as doctor of veterinary medicine from the University of Illinois' College of Veterinary Medicine in Urbana. She is currently completing a master's in public health at the University of Illinois, Chicago, and plays recreational beach volleyball.

'09 **Camille Schwartz** graduated on September 15 with a master's in molecular medicine from the Charité Medical University in Berlin. She is planning to relocate to Santa Cruz and work for a small bioinformatics company.

'10 **Anneka Lettunich** graduated in 2015 from Academy of Art University in San Francisco with a

Patrick Barber '04, wife Tamaryn and baby Arrow



B.F.A. in advertising. She works as a design associate at Jack Morton Worldwide. **Erin Mitchell** was profiled in the Santa Cruz Sentinel for her beach volleyball accomplishments with partner Morgan Henry-Ehritt as part of the Cabrillo College sand team. The pair went 12-0 in matches and in May won the NorCal pairs championship. This fall, Erin returned to MMS as the inaugural middle school athletic director, varsity girls volleyball coach and as an elementary teaching assistant.

'11 **Emma Petersen** is teaching third grade at Nordstrom Elementary School in Morgan Hill. **Evan [Bharatendu] Swamy** graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), with a B.A. in fine art. Prior to that Evan studied for two years at the Laguna College of Art and Design. He has been accepted into the New York Academy of Art master's program and plans to study figurative drawing and painting. **Lindsey Colton** lives in Santa Monica and works as a merchandiser in the corporate office of Paige Denim. **Michaela Schuessler** is studying business at California State University, Monterey Bay and is the new junior varsity volleyball coach for York School in Monterey. **Noah Limbach** graduated from Skidmore College with a double major of psychology and (honors) history. This summer he worked aboard a traditionally rigged schooner in Boston, with the likelihood of heading to the Caribbean with the boat later this winter. **Soma Sharan** is the executive and development assistant and board liaison for the Liberty Hill Foundation. With a motto of "change, not charity," the organization focuses on racial, environmental and economic justice and LGBT rights in Los Angeles. On May 21, **Susie Bryan** graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of San Francisco with a B.A. in psychology. This fall she entered the graduate program at the Freie Universitat Berlin, studying social, cognitive and affective neuroscience.

'12 **Alex Hooven** graduated May 14 with a B.S. in biochemistry and molecular biology with a German minor from Rhodes College. In July he took the Medical College Admission Test and then departed for a gap year in Germany before starting medical school. **Alida Lettunich** graduated in May from Naropa University with a B.A. in environmental



Amber Zeise '13 in South Africa



Graduate Alex Hooven '12



Erin Mitchell '10 on Cabrillo sand team



Graduate Courtney Bess '12 with family

studies. She spent an “ideal summer” on a remote ranch in northwest Colorado adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument, chasing cows on horses, farming and living in the settlers’ original home. **Allison Ota** graduated from the UCSC with a B.A. in psychology. **Arianna (Lulu) Morell-Haltom** graduated with a B.A. and double major in history and liberal studies from the University of Redlands. She is student teaching and working towards a multiple subject teaching credential. **Blythe Collier** self-published a book of her poetry and photographs, *Along the Winding Way: Intentional Wanderings in Czech Republic* and graduated with a B.S. in psychology from Santa Clara University. In fall 2015, **Brenten Lovato*** graduated *cum laude* from San Francisco State University with a B.A. in geography and environment. He lives in San Francisco and works as a software programmer for the startup Shop. co. **Courtney Bess** graduated May 6 from the University of Miami with a B.S. in education. She majored in elementary and special education. This fall she is student teaching in Miami. **David Broz** received a B.S. in agricultural and life sciences from Cornell University. **JonJon Blunden**

graduated May 13 from the California Institute of the Arts, with a B.F.A. in guitar performance. He is pursuing a master’s in music industry administration at California State University, Northridge, while also recording and launching a band. **McKenzie Caborn** graduated from the University of Redlands with a B.A. in environmental business. “My departmental honors capstone research explored the impacts that climate disruption will have on maternal health, birth outcomes and early childhood development,” shared McKenzie. “Inspired by this area of study, I have chosen to begin applying to master’s nursing programs with the end goal of becoming a women’s health nurse practitioner.” **Nicole Nascimento** graduated from the University of Redlands with a B.A. in reproductive and child health. She is now attending graduate school at Five Branches University in Santa Cruz and studying traditional Chinese medicine. **Palak Bhatnagar** graduated with a B.A. in public health and minor in business administration from American University. In July she received her United States citizenship. Palak is now studying at Columbia University, working on a master’s

in health administration. **Ryan Alfaro** graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a B.A. in geography and environmental studies.

'13 Last spring, **Amber Zeise** spent part of her junior year through the University of California, Berkeley, studying in Cape Town, South Africa. “I had an incredible time exploring, hiking and learning,” shared Amber. “I learned so much about the impacts of colonialism and the long-term effects of Apartheid. It was important for me to realize how alive the legacy of the Apartheid era is in regard to race relations and wealth distribution. Cape Town is an interesting place. Although it is still entrenched in those relations, it is very wealthy and could easily be a city in California. Navigating the space in a way that leads to fun as well as to a deeper understanding of the country has been a complex process.”

'15 Sage Buzzini, a member of the Army ROTC program at Santa Clara University, was recognized with an MS1 Superior Cadet Award. This award is presented annually to a cadet at each ROTC unit for excellence in leadership and officer potential. **Alumni non-MMS graduates*

In Remembrance: Shyam Gordon Pacey ('89)

Community members gathered this summer in fond remembrance of Shyam Gordon Pacey, who passed away in June while living in British Columbia.

Growing up in the School and MMC community, raised by parents and others who cared deeply for him, Shyam was a bit of a rascal – and a favorite of Babaji.

Shyam appeared quiet and shy when groups of people were around but once free to roam about the property, he would often lead a group of young boys into mischief.

Some will remember his shining face, asking so many questions that he would stutter to get them all out at once and, always, it seemed, trying to find his place in the world.

Some will remember him on the CB stage as the bass player for the student band, Sky Radar, with elder sister Prabha ('86) on vocals, younger brother Charlie ('91) on the air guitar broom, and friend Rajesh Westerberg ('89) on drums. Those were the young and innocent times.

Shyam went on in his early 20s to serve in the army in Iraq during Desert Storm. Letters home during this time spoke of openness and vulnerability amidst the brutality and insanity of war. He was fearless and strong, yet also had a tender, gentle side. He returned still searching for his place in the world. Those closest to him knew of his struggles in life and find solace knowing that he is finally at peace.





Mount Madonna School

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Dear Alumni Parents, if your graduate is no longer receiving mail at this address, please forward this to him/her and notify us of his/her new address.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Our 2016 Graduates!



Front row, left to right: Lily Petersen, Teresa Slater, Clio Herbert, and Sophia Saavedra, Co-Valedictorian. *Middle row, left to right:* Julia Gratton, Co-Valedictorian, Saniya Lakka, Elise Slater, Sophie Ortiz, CeCe Moreno, and Cameron Bess. *Third row, left to right:* Miles Wayne, Alexander Marshall, Maxim Medvedev, Ethan Harrington, and Nathan Burgess. *Back row, left to right:* Louis Marshall, Holden Smith, Salutatorian, and Tyler Sullens.

Class of 2016 College Acceptances:

Belmont University*
Boise State University
Cabrillo College**
California College of the Arts*
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
California State Polytechnic University,
San Luis Obispo*
California State University, Chico
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Humboldt
California State University, Long Beach*
California State University, Monterey Bay

California State University,
Northridge
California State University,
San Diego
DigiPen Institute of Technology*
Dominican College
Evergreen State College*
Florida Institute of Technology
Oregon College of Art and Craft
Reed College
Saint Mary's College of California*
San Diego State University
San Francisco State University*

San Jose State University
Savannah School of Art and Design
Sonoma State University
Southern Oregon University*
University of British Columbia,
Okanagan
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles*
University of California San Diego
University of California,
Santa Barbara*
University of California, Santa Cruz*
University of Colorado, Boulder*

University of Colorado, Denver
University of Denver
University of Montana
University of Nevada, Reno
University of Puget Sound
University of the Pacific
University of Redlands
University of San Diego
University of San Francisco*
University of Washington, Seattle
Whitman College*
Whittier College
Willamette University*

*denotes school graduate(s) selected to attend