

## TESTIMONY SPOTLIGHT: **Equality**

In the last four issues of *Dragon Tales*, we have shined a spotlight on a different Quaker testimony (also known as the SPICES), and with help from faculty, staff, and students, we'll explore how each testimony is put into practice at MPFS and how families can instill these values at home! Look back at the Summer/Fall 2018 issue for our spotlight on Community.

Friends believe that all people are created equal, regardless of race, gender, faith, age or class. Believing that the light of God lies within every person, Quakers holds human equality as a foundational truth. Friends believe in the inherent worth of every individual and diversity being embraced and celebrated.

Media-Providence Friends School has a long history of upholding the testimony of Equality and modeling for the community the importance and depth of that word, even when the society and culture of the time were not so tolerant. In 1937, the first African-American student, a nursery student by the last name of McKnight, son of Dr. Lances and Thelma McKnight, was admitted to what was then called Media Friends School. This is an example of the dedication and important work that continues today at MPFS within the curriculum and culture of our school.

An important aspect of the mission of MPFS is the inclusion of service and service learning in the life of the community. The mission states that, where we can, we should reach out to the local, state, and global community to implement our Friends ideals. We are clear that when service is done well, it is mutual - a learning experience for all, broadening perspective, rejoicing in knowledge of others' lives, and acknowledging that of God in each person. Whether it's our preschool class' yearly project collecting and delivering donations to the Media Food Bank and learning about socio-economic differences in our own community or our middle schoolers building prosthetic hands for differently-abled

children-in-need during last year's STEAM Week programming, service learning projects at MPFS are heavily grounded in the testimony of equality.



*Students read a recipe on milk-free brownies baked during MLK Day of Service and donated to the Life Center of Delaware County along with healthy casseroles and other items like hygiene kits and blankets donated from our community.*

In addition to annual celebrations that highlight equality within our community and the wider world, like International Day of Peace and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, MPFS also hosts special community events to engage our parent, student, and wider local community in important missions-driven discussions around equality. In the fall of 2018, MPFS, along with several other local Friends schools, hosted a screening of the documentary film *I'm Not Racist, Am I?* at Swarthmore College. The film sparked such a lively conversation among parents, that Angela DiMaria, Assistant Head of School and Director of Admission & Program, invited parents to an ongoing event called *Race, Racism & Privilege: An Open Conversation* as a designated space to continue these important conversations in a constructive environment. MPFS' Counselor Laura Taylor worked with T. Angela and Head of School T. Earl to create a list of

TESTIMONY SPOTLIGHT... | *Continued on page 7*

## LETTER FROM The Head of School

Dear Friends,

Earlier this year I announced that I am stepping down as Head of School at the end of the school year. It is strange to think about not being at MPFS. It holds a singular place in my heart. I have almost two decades of memories and milestones here, perhaps the most important of which include seeing my daughters, Elena '14 and Margot '17, grow up on our campus. So, when I think about the end of the year, with each passing day and school event, the transition feels more palpable.

At the same time, I am confident that MPFS is well-prepared for the change. It is and always will be a beacon of Light. MPFS is changing the lives of its students and planting the seeds of a more just, equal, accepting, and caring society every day, just as it has for 142 years. I believe that, in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "The arc of the moral universe is long, but bends towards justice." The ongoing work of the talented and diverse students, the untiring faculty, staff, trustees, our parent body and larger school community, and the new Head of School will continue to fulfill that mission long after I leave.

It has been an honor to be a part of such a special school for so long and words can't express how appreciative I am for having the opportunity to lead the MPFS community. I offer my thanks to everyone for your support. I also thank Sonia, my partner in all things and wife. Being the spouse of a Head of School is not an easy role to fill and she has done it remarkably. I could not have done this work without her.

As I explore new opportunities for the next chapter of my professional life, I take with me all that I have learned and all that this community has given me, and I look forward to what lies ahead for me and for MPFS.

Peace,



W. Earl Sissell  
*Head of School*



Earl Sissell, Head of School



## ANNUAL GIVING, DAILY NURTURING



MPFS students pictured with the loveable MPFS mascot, Dazzle Dragon during our annual fall family event Pizza Pumpkin Night.

Through our Infinite Possibilities Campaign, our community helped raise 81% of the MPFS Fund goal of \$83,000. A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped contribute to the campaign's success. These gifts are essential as the Annual Fund covers approximately 4% of the school's \$2,208,202 operating budget, underwriting the activities and procuring the materials that enrich student's daily experiences. It makes possible **Inspired Learning**, enhancing the lives of our students through experiences that foster agile, open, and resilient minds that will support our communities and shape our world.

If you already made your contribution to this year's MPFS Fund, you have our utmost gratitude. If you have not yet made your gift, there is still time to contribute! Any size gift, or pledge to give, would help us raise the final \$10,000 needed. Your gift preserves our 142-year history made possible by the philanthropy of current and previous generations of families, alumni, and friends like you. The result is students who see the world as a place of **Infinite Possibilities**, ready to make an impact today and in the future.

You can make your gift today online at [mpfs.org/give](https://mpfs.org/give), or by mailing a check to MPFS. Our fiscal year runs from July 1st through June 30th. We thank you on behalf of our students who are the ultimate recipients of your generosity!

## IN MEMORY OF PEG LINVILL, Enduring Friend of MPFS

In August, Providence Friends Meeting and Media-Providence Friends School lost a beloved member of our community, Margaret "Peg" Linvill. At MPFS, part of our mission is to create lifelong learners. Long before that phrase became part of the educational landscape, Peg embodied this idea through her love of learning. She was always reading and researching, frequently sharing her discoveries with her family, friends, and Providence Meeting members.

The Linvill family are well known locally as the owners of Linvilla Orchards as well as Knowlton and Hidden Hollow Swim Clubs. While Peg and her husband Paul operated the farm together, along with their children and grandchildren, it was Peg who was the driving force behind many of the creative endeavors like,

*Pumpkinland* that make Linvilla such a special place for many families across the Delaware Valley.

Peg and Paul were married for 61 years and had four children. Their first child, Sue, says she was the test case for the local public schools. "Mom wanted us to love reading and learning and to be curious about other cultures of the world," explains Sue. Peg was not happy with the education Sue was receiving so she made the decision to enroll her at Media-Providence Friends School. Having taught at two Friends schools, Peg understood what MPFS had to offer its students; a rich, value-based academic education with a commitment to supporting a diverse student body. Peg and her husband Paul sent their four children, Sue, Steve, Nancy and Jean, to MPFS and their eight grandchildren attended as well.



Peg Linvill pictured at Providence Meeting with her husband Paul.

In the 70's, Peg wanted her children to be able to continue in a Friends school after eighth grade so she became a driving force behind the creation of Providence Friends School, which later became the Upper School of MPFS. Since then, the Linvill family has been active in the strong

PEG LINVILL... | Continued on page 7

## MEET Our Newest Members of the MPFS Board of Trustees!

This fall, we welcomed two new board members to the MPFS Board of Trustees:

**Pat Demiranda** and **Susan Duncan**.

We are so pleased to have both Pat and Susan join us in supporting MPFS. We are lucky to have a very active board here at MPFS with each member bringing unique professional skills and talents to the group. We are excited to see Susan and Pat's respective talents in action. We are so pleased to welcome both Pat and Susan to the MPFS Board of Trustees and thank them for their service to our school! Read below for an introduction to our "freshman" board members...

### Pat Demiranda

If you talked to Pat Demiranda for even just a few minutes, you will learn that her life revolves around, in her own words, "kids, kids, kids, kids, kids." Pat, a member of Chester Friends meeting, has worked for the United States Postal Service for thirty-five years and her passion is running the Will Trippley Youth Development Foundation ([willtrippleyfoundation.org](http://willtrippleyfoundation.org)). Within the foundation are two organizations, Chester City United, a soccer academy for the children of Chester, and Camp Encouragement, a grief camp for children dealing with loss. "By death, divorce or imprisonment. A loss is a loss and all children need our support as a community," reads the Camp Encouragement website ([campenc.org](http://campenc.org)).

Pat started the foundation, and subsequently the camp, after her own son, William Trippley, was killed fourteen years ago at age 20. William was a graduate of the Shipley School and a star soccer player. After his death, Pat saw how hard it was on her daughter Jovonne Trippley, now thirty-seven, and wanted to create a community to help other children struggling with the death of a loved one or other loss. Pat, a graduate of Virginia State College, then went back to get her master's from Neuman College in organizational leadership in 2014. This helped her in creating the camp, which she has been running for five years for children between the ages of 5 and 12. Last year, she also began a program for older children between the ages of 13 and 18.



*Founder of the Will Trippley Youth Development Foundation honoring her late son William Trippley.*

"We've been able to do a lot of good work for the younger children. We usually do counseling and we do fun things and field trips. We even did a historical tour of the city of Chester because a lot of people don't know that there's a lot of historical landmarks in the city of Chester. The kids as well as adults enjoyed that," Pat says. Children have also been treated to yoga classes, art experiences, and visits to horse farms in Thornburg, PA. "Some of the children have never seen a horse or been on a farm. It was exciting for them. It's a really adventurous camp."

In beginning her work with MPFS, Pat hopes to bring her hard work and dedication to help advance the mission of our school. "My son went to a private school and it changed his whole life in a very positive way. And sometimes as a parent you have to take your children

out of their environment and put them someplace where they can open up their mind, be more creative, be able to see the world in a different perspective than what they see in front of them. It gives them the opportunity to say, okay, this is where I'm at, but I know there is someplace better for me to go. I would like to be able to give a child that opportunity."

Pat lives with her husband Creighton Demiranda in their home in Chester. When she's not working, Pat describes herself as a church-going woman and an artsy person who loves any kind of good music, particularly jazz, and dancing. "I'm so busy, I don't really have time to do things for myself. But I'm truly an artsy person," says Pat. We wish for Pat to take some time for herself in 2019 and are so pleased to have her on the team at MPFS.

## Susan Duncan

Susan Duncan, a member of Providence Meeting and a graduate of The George School, believes education and collaborative problem-solving is our future. We couldn't agree more!

Susan grew up in rural Chester County, was raised Quaker at Valley Friends Meeting, and attended The George School for high school, where she specialized in art and French. She speaks fondly of the service learning she did while she was a student at The George School. "We did things like paint houses, help people with certain types of renovations, things that high school aged kids are able to do. But it was just to see a different part of growing up and how other people lived and being part of that was really neat," says Susan. After high school, Susan explored her educational options first at Gernell



Susan Duncan, middle, with son Sean Damon (right) and stepson Morgan Wordlee (left).

College and then Boston University of Fine Arts but found ultimately, that she wanted a different kind of experience. During the tumult of the late 1960s, she moved to California and lived in a political collective in Berkeley. "There was a lot of political activism going on at the time and also

protests about the war, and it was just a real learning experience for me being in a different part of the country."

Eventually, Susan moved back to Media where she married and had her son Sean, now 41 years old. Several years after her move back to Media, Susan completed a program at Delaware County Community College called New Beginnings, which provided skill training and went on to get her Associates Degree. She was able to learn new computer skills that allowed her to secure a job at Wyeth Pharmaceutical. Susan, now retired, spent most of her career at Pfizer Pharmaceutical (formerly Wyeth Pharmaceutical) as a Senior Executive Administrator – a job that had her realize her strengths in organization, logistics, and working with people; all valuable assets to our board. "I've always been really so interested in how to solve problems and how to work things out. And when (Parker Snowe, Clerk of the MPFS Board and Providence Meeting Member) would talk to me about MPFS, it was about the education of children and people and having people work together to solve problems. That had a tremendous appeal for me."

Susan says she has been very impressed with the students she has gotten to know at MPFS and was attracted to the collaborative nature of learning at the school. "I wish I'd had that experience when I was in school because I think that would really have made school way more interesting to me," Susan says. "I found even when I went back to school, it was working on projects with other people that was the



Susan's dog Alo gets his name from the first half of the word Hawaiian word aloha, meaning love, peace, and compassion but used colloquially as both hello and goodbye.

most meaningful and where I learned the most. So, I am excited to be part of MPFS!"

Susan currently lives in Upper Providence with her dog Alo who she adopted with her late husband Colin Wordley as a comfort dog. Susan says Alo helped both she and her husband during the late stages of his Parkinson's diagnosis. While Susan was a full-time caretaker for her husband, she laughs that Alo continues to be a caretaker for herself. She enjoys walking Alo and meditating daily as part of her mindfulness practice. She adds that she is very proud of her son Sean who now works as a Legal Researcher for the Amistad Law Project working with juveniles who were sentenced to life without parole. We're excited to have Susan joining us in supporting MPFS!



## ALUMNI Q&amp;A with Clare Gillen, Class of 2002



Clare Gillen '02, an MPFS "lifer", now lives in LA and works as a Creative Director.

**What years did you attend MPFS?**

I went to MPFS from 1991- 2002. A lifetime!

**What are your favorite MPFS memories?**

One of my favorite memories in the classroom was making pinhole cameras in math class. This was my first experience of seeing myself as a creative photographer. Photography in math class also blew my mind at the time. This style of applied interdisciplinary learning is something I use in my career today.

Another incredible memory was the exchange program to Costa Rica. Hosting an exchange student, then staying with her two years later as an 8th grader, then visiting her again 10 years later will stick with me forever. This foreign exposure at such a young age gave me the confidence to travel the world in my adult life. Again, instilling a worldly value system that has taken me far in life.

Too many good teachers to name, many of whom stayed in my life for a long time after leaving MPFS!

**What lessons do you think you learned at MPFS that were most valuable?**

The most valuable lesson I learned at MPFS is the value of participation. Having the space to be heard, seen and encouraged to share my thoughts instilled a strong sense of integrity. Having the integrity to participate whole heartedly allowed me to become a leader.

**As an adult, what do you now see as the biggest benefit of attending MPFS from preschool-8th grade?**

The biggest benefit of MPFS was the effect it had on my openness. The school focused a lot on diversity and in having small classes you can't hide and neither can your peers. We were all seen and our differences celebrated. I feel extremely lucky that we got as much attention at MPFS as we did. We were really taken care of and also all held accountable.

**How do you feel MPFS prepared you for high school? College?**

MPFS prepared me for high school socially and academically. By the time I left middle school I felt like I had seen the world. I was confident to ask questions and get to know people particularly because my experience with students and teachers wasn't distant, it was intimate.

**Explain a bit about your career: what you're doing now and how you got here.**

I am a creative director and director in Los Angeles. I work in music video direction and commercial photography. After MPFS I went to the Shipley school and then Guilford College, a liberal arts school where I majored in fine art. After college I assisted various artists and designers which brought me to Los Angeles. I have my own studio here now. Every day is different for me and it's a total blast.

**What's a recent project you are most proud of?**

I'm very proud of my work directing musician King Princess' music videos. Twice now the video's creative direction has been discussed in two unique *Vogue* magazine articles. Being recognized by an institution of that stature is special and rare for a small town gal. What makes me proud is knowing the value my openness and curiosity brought to these projects.

**How does your chosen career reflect what you learned at MPFS?**

I've built a world for myself here that doesn't fit in a box. I do so many things! I swear, the impact of a well rounded academic youth lead me to realize that I don't have to settle on one thing. My various talents all play into my job as a creative director. For example, my writing to communicate concepts, and my confidence to even share my ideas in the first place! My openness to think big and wildly have lead me to a job I didn't even know existed. But it does, and it's mine, because I knew I could build it for myself!

resources and articles in an open document that parents can access and add to as this discussion continues. T. Angela writes of the role this plays in our community's dedication to Equality:

*I witness people, and I include myself in this, feeling comfortable enough to take risks with what they share, building bridges of understanding across varying perspectives. One can feel vulnerable at times, and that is ok. These are the expectations we set for our students and it is important we practice and engage with these same skills as adults. There is a lot of work to be done to raise our society's racial literacy. I am hopeful that more people will take advantage of this time set aside to listen and talk with each other.*

Equality within the curriculum is seen at the ground level in representation of the books children see in their classrooms and in the school library. Librarian Kristen Thomas-Clarke has worked to turn over the MPFS library collection to be an inclusive representation of the student body that we serve. "The idea is to have literature in the library so that children can see themselves as well as learn about others through the books they read," says T. Kristen. "Having characters in books that represent children of color, or different religions, or different gender identity, helps those children see themselves and validates them and also, helps others build empathy."

The testimony of equality is present across the curriculum at MPFS and is reinforced for faculty and staff through professional development. Faculty and staff chose the book *A Guide for White Teachers Who Teach Black Boys* to read over the summer of 2018 and discuss during faculty In-Service. Several teachers also attended a workshop centered around the book and came away with new insight into the intentional work that goes into teaching a diverse student body. Asking questions like: Do I have different expectations for my students? How does culture work in my classroom, regardless of subject area? Do the posters that are up on my classroom walls reflect the diversity that exists in my students? T. Angela and Teacher Meredith Elizalde, middle school humanities teacher, cited this important takeaway as the heart of the matter: It is not enough to love our kids, we have to provide clear structure and high expectations.

Friends schools believe that all are entitled in an education as preparation for the whole of life: the lively development of intellectual, physical, and social-emotional capacities as well as those of the spirit. Friends schools aim to expose children to a worldview that will have a lasting impact on their lives and teaching children tolerance is at the core of that philosophy along with passion for the truth and concern for social justice; and confidence that they can make a difference. MPFS is dedicated to continuing this

important work in the classroom and partnering with parents to make the same connections in the home. This path to equality is not an optional component of the culture or curriculum at MPFS but an integrated, intentionally taught necessity at the core of Friends education.

PEG LINVILL... | Continued from page 3

alumni community that continues today for both PFS and MPFS.

Despite her busy schedule and commitments to Linvilla Orchards, Peg gave both time and energy to MPFS. She served on the Board of Trustees for a twelve year term, sharing her knowledge of Quakerism and her understanding of its role in educational settings. In the spirit of service to others, the family continues the traditions begun by Peg and Paul. The Linvill family continue to partner with the school on class trips, swim parties, and summer camp. In 1998, Peg and the entire Linvill family received the Murray Engle Lauser Cornerstone Award for their decades of support and service to the school. Always generous with their resources, the Linvills recently demonstrated their support of Quaker education through participation in The Friends Educational Equity Collaborative, an organization that provides financial aid to students in need attending Quaker schools in Pennsylvania. While all who knew Peg miss her sharp mind, her piercing wit, and her generous laugh, we know that her love for Friends education and Media-Providence Friends lives on in her family.

## Come explore with us!



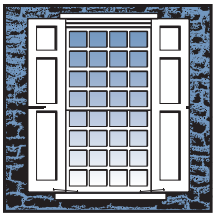
@mediaprovidencefriendsschool



@media.providence.friends



@mpfs



**Friends School**

125 W. Third Street  
Media, PA 19063

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Media, PA  
Permit No. 842

## SAVE THE DATE

**Admissions Open House:**  
March 16<sup>th</sup>

**1960s-early '70s MFS Reunion Weekend:**  
April 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>

**Spring Auction:**  
April 5<sup>th</sup>

**Math & Science Day:**  
May 6<sup>th</sup>

**A Farewell Gathering for  
Head of School Earl Sissell:**  
May 18<sup>th</sup>

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation:**  
June 7<sup>th</sup>

**Summer Friends Camp:**  
June 17<sup>th</sup> - August 16<sup>th</sup>

610.565.1960 • [mpfs.org](http://mpfs.org)



**From the archive!** Photos featuring this year's Reunion Classes of 1960s-early 70s. Do you have photos from your days as an MPFS student that you'd like to share? Email them to [info@mpfs.org](mailto:info@mpfs.org).

