



This special issue includes our 2012-2013 Annual Report of Giving

Media-Providence Friends School

Dragon Tales

Winter 2013

Narratives of the Magic of MPFS

What Meaningful Learning Really Means

mean-ing-ful (*adjective*): significant; worthwhile; having real importance, value or purpose.

At MPFS, meaningful learning means instruction that's intentional, grounded in research on the brain and child development, in service to the growth of higher order thinking skills, and instilled with Quaker ideals. For us, learning that's **full** of meaning is **full** of inquiry, experience, discovery, engagement, connections, collaboration and reflection.

We Know **Full**, Well

The big picture begins with *inquiry* as faculty committees first distill the essential questions we want kids to consider in each grade before designing curriculum to take them there. Then, every single day, throughout school, lessons are launched with inquiry to activate students' existing knowledge so they're ready to integrate new concepts. Literally, teachers "provoke their thoughts."

Inquiry naturally gives rise to hypothesis testing and that's the realm of *experiential learning*... hands-on, problem-based learning that develops thinking strategies and domain knowledge. A hallmark of science classes, at MPFS it also applies to math, art, social studies, music, computer, Spanish, and language arts!

Discovery learning calls for particularly artful teachers. In the ele-middle years, it's vital that learning not be an entirely self-directed experience, but that it be guided. Because students "don't know what they don't know," teachers must provide the pieces they miss, directing them down paths that they wouldn't normally consider. The idea is to expose kids to as many different ideas and

perspectives as possible – something at which MPFS teachers excel.

Engagement learning relies upon quality, child-centered literature to which students can make "text-to-text", "text-to-self" and "text-to-world" connections so content becomes personally relevant and thus more exciting. Likewise, thematic instruction, multi-sensory lessons, interdisciplinary units, and differentiation give students many avenues through which to construct knowledge.



Connected learning takes place where academics, learners' passions, and inspiring mentors intersect, and leads to the "a-ha" moments that beget innovation. Summoning students to be entrepreneurs, it encourages exploration beyond the classroom walls and the development of personal learning networks.

Collaborative learning sees students teaching each other, capitalizing upon respective skills, experience and knowledge-bases rather than relying on the teacher as the sole disseminator of information. Harkness discussions, group projects, peer editing and

debates are examples of collaborative approaches that take place on campus each day.

Reflective learning is the engine that drives the development of higher-order thinking skills: critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis. At MPFS, teachers expect students to reflect on what they've learned, and also explicitly teach students to think about their thinking (aka metacognition). Through reflection, they learn who they are as learners.

Making it Personal

Through all these means, teachers help students internalize thinking constructs so that they ultimately begin to independently apply them to make learning personally meaningful. And apply they do!

Remarks T. Nancy Allison, Middle School Coordinator, Humanities and Quakerism teacher, "By 8th Grade, through gradual release of responsibility over time, kids are almost entirely responsible for their own learning. I don't tell them WHY I'm giving them an assignment, I let them make that inference. They're accountable for coming to class having studied material or prepared a position and being ready to discuss it. I may not say anything until the end of class to bring it all together if they haven't already done it themselves. They've figured out "How do I make my OWN meaning from this?"

That's Meaningful with a Capital M
William Butler Yeats said "Education is not a filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire." Indeed. Truly meaningful learning is about the larger context of our social responsibility to the world. It ignites the "Now, what am I going to **do** with what I know" spark. Purposeful lives... that's what "Meaningful Learning" breeds.



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This Newsletter is a publication of MPFS. If you have moved recently or are planning to move, be sure to give us your new address so that you can continue to receive uninterrupted mailings.

Media-Providence Friends School is a PreK-8 Quaker day school which provides a rich educational experience where academic challenge is combined with the teaching of values.

Printed on recycled paper.

Strategic Plan 2013

Like all institutions, MPFS must adapt to accelerating change, while staying true to its mission: creating a community of learners that celebrates individuality, nurtures intellectual growth and curiosity, and cultivates responsibility amidst challenging academics grounded in Quaker practice. To that end, MPFS' 136th year saw the Board of Trustees concluding a year-long strategic planning process that considered the school's mission and history, and examined its facilities, finances and governance. The result? A plan for the next 4 years with the following foci:

Educational Innovation

Whether "flipping" classrooms, developing interdisciplinary collaborations, or employing mindfulness techniques in service to improved learning outcomes, exceptional faculty members distinguish MPFS. We must ensure that our teachers are equipped to provide the best educational opportunities for our students so that they, in turn, are equipped to make a better world.

Goals

- Support professional development to ensure best practice in each classroom.
- Identify new ways in which to integrate technology into curriculum and program where educationally and mission appropriate.
- Promote students' understanding of the connections between global and Quaker perspectives through new initiatives and educational partnerships.

Financial Sustainability

Having weathered the recent extended economic downturn, maintaining a stable enrollment through careful management, it is time to ensure the school's ability to thrive into the future. We must strengthen and expand financial resources to enhance program, maintain the school's commitment to economic diversity and build reserves for strategic investment.

Goals

- Establish tuition policies that preserve and grow enrollment while generating sufficient revenues to meet strategic objectives.
- Maintain competitive salary and benefits policies that attract and retain staff and faculty.
- Increase non-tuition sources of revenue: planned giving, alumni relationships, EITC/OSTC.
- Promote a culture of philanthropy within school constituencies and grow the Annual Fund through personal engagement.

Facilities and Property

Our facilities are integral to creating an environment that fosters learning. \$2.2M in campus investments in the last decade supported that aim and yielded stable enrollment. We must continue to investigate new opportunities to improve facilities to best meet current and future program needs, and maximize student retention/attraction.

Goals

- Secure a formal site plan to determine opportunities for expansion and/or optimizing use of existing buildings.
- Develop an inventory of property needs and wants in consultation with staff and faculty.
- Prioritize infrastructure projects and strategic investments and establish associated capital budgets and capital campaign fund-raising goals.

The School is well-positioned to achieve the Board's vision with the support and cooperation of the entire MPFS community.

Annual Giving Report



Media Friends School circa 1927

*D*ear Friends of MPFS,

At MPFS, we say learning is a journey... It's asking questions and seeking answers; it's exploring different perspectives; it's taking responsibility for your own learning; it invites collaboration and ignites critical thinking; it's making connections; it happens amidst the work of play; it's within the joy of shared experience and the creative process; it calls us to make a difference in the world. We say, a lifetime of learning and doing starts right here, at MPFS.

It starts with tremendous faculty who are passionate about teaching and learning and who relish the work of passing their enthusiasm and love of learning on to their students; who strive to provide a deep education that cultivates the ideals upon which Quakerism is based: Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship; who challenge students to discover their own voices and interests within the context of demanding academics; who push students to move outside their comfort zones to develop new skills they never realized they could master; who expect students to grow in spirit and who support them in developing inner resources for discipline and achievement.



The outcomes? Our graduates are peacemakers who are engaged in the real world. They are creative problem solvers and critical thinkers who care deeply about our planet and its inhabitants. They are respectful advocates who appreciate diverse perspectives. They bring their intellects and creativity to bear upon issues that they are passionate about. They perpetuate good in a world that very much needs it.

Each donor on the list that follows has chosen to participate in this important endeavor of transforming young people's lives. Each gift, no matter its size, helped support our curriculum, our faculty and our mission. Each student benefitted personally from investments in their future that these contributions represent. For this, I am most grateful. On behalf of all of us here, I thank you for your stewardship.

In Friendship,
W. Earl Sissell
W. Earl Sissell
Head of School

2013 Annual Fund By the Numbers

Total: \$82,397

Donors: 344

Participation:

Trustees = 100%

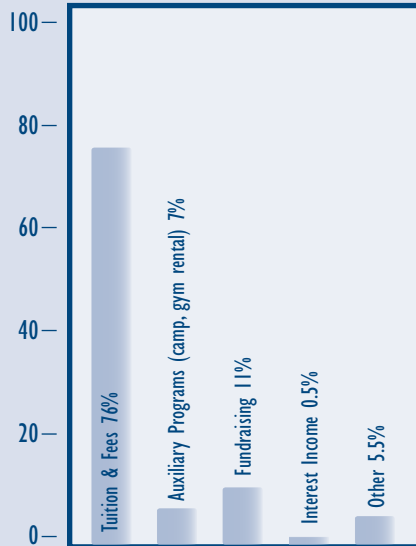
Teachers = 97%

Parents = 63%

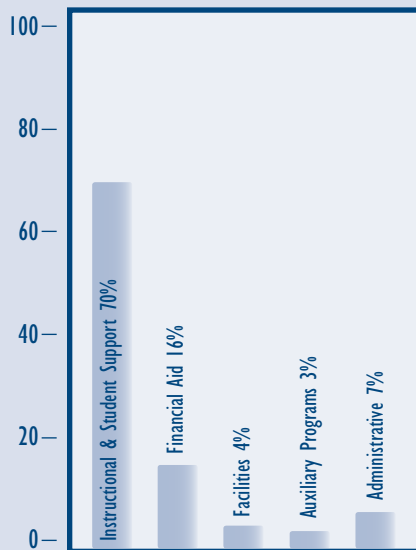
Alumni = 11%

**Help us achieve 100% participation
all 'round in 2014!**

Income



Expenses



Annual Giving Report

EITC & OSTC Spell Win-Win



Welcome and many thanks to *Utica National Insurance Group*, the insurance carrier for MPFS, which became a new OSTC donor for 2013-14! Pictured (3rd from left), *Mary Williams*, VP of *Willis of Pennsylvania*, the insurance broker serving PAISBIG schools, presents *Utica's OSTC contribution to MPFS Business Manager Fred Keffer*, Head of *School Earl Sissell*, and Director of Development *Cynthia McGoff*. *Willis of PA* also supports MPFS through our Spring Auction.

When businesses participate in Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) programs, they know their gifts make an MPFS education possible for more children, which enriches the MPFS experience for all students. They also enjoy an additional benefit: their Financial Aid donations give right back to them in the form of tax credits.

Through EITC and OSTC, corporations and partnerships making a donation to support need-based scholarships for worthy students at MPFS can reduce their state tax liability up to \$750,000 and gain a charitable deduction on Federal taxes. These businesses receive tax credits for up to 90% of gift value. Effectively, it costs a dime to donate a dollar—and when that dime's deductible on Federal returns, it's both a win-win and break-even proposition!

Our Financial Aid program, funded in part by generous donors, philanthropic foundations and area Meetings, enables the enrollment of talented, well-qualified students who contribute to and benefit from the education here regardless of family finances. Aid is awarded according to demonstrated financial need, and any family needing assistance is encouraged to apply.

EITC and OSTC gifts assist current and new students who meet annual household income eligibility requirements. OSTC contributions are restricted for need-based tuition assistance to students attending a school determined as "low-achieving" by the PA Dept. of Education.

Participation is simple: Businesses complete an online application and, if approved, can redirect up to \$750,000 in tax payments from Harrisburg to MPFS where 100% of their donation will provide for children's education.

In 2012-13, corporations collectively contributed \$93,911.58 through EITC and OSTC. Gifts from Alliance Business Systems, The Bryn Mawr Trust Company, DNB First, Hawkins Technologies, Phelan Hallinan, Manley Mincer DDS and Hope Berman DMD, Philadelphia Insurance Companies, Michael R. Rhile Carpentry, Philip Rosenau Co., Rose Valley Asset Management, United Savings Bank, Universal Health Service of Fairmount, Universal Health Services Recovery Foundation, Verizon, and a generous anonymous corporate donor offset financial aid expenses that normally would come from the school's operating budget. We are most grateful to these donors and invite other PA businesses to explore applying. Contact the Development Office for assistance.

Meet the Trustees

A lifelong Friend, **Bruce Haines** is a product and proponent of Quaker education, attesting, “It’s transformational.” After attending Moorestown Friends, Westtown, and Earlham College, Bruce studied law at Rutgers and practiced in Philadelphia for 25 years. Having spent 16 years on Westtown’s board, he then turned his focus to non-profit and educational leadership, serving as Head at Mullica Hill Friends for two years.

Bruce strengthened MHFS’ financial posture, attracting a million-dollar investment in its solar project. He especially enjoyed when he and T. Earl got to put their “Heads” together during the two schools’ tandem iPad program rollouts.

A Media resident and member of Providence Meeting, Bruce is “excited to serve a school that is affiliated with my Meeting.” He also enjoys spending time with his family, the outdoors—camping, hiking and cycling—and his involvement with Friends organizations.

Alex Kendrick developed a passion for and prioritization of service at Ravenhill Academy, Penn, and Temple and it’s followed her ever since. She’s always worked in the non-profit sector, initially in marketing at the Walnut Street and Wilma Theaters. Alex found her calling as a teacher when Norma Vogel, former Head of Lansdowne Friends, “just sucked me into education.”

After interning at Friends Select, Alex taught for 18 years at Goshen Friends. She spent two sessions with the Delaware Autism Program (DAP) and just completed her fifth year at Stratford Friends teaching reading to 11-to-13-year-old students.

She holds a Master’s in Education, as well as Reading Specialist and Special Education certifications. A member of Swarthmore Meeting, she’s married and enjoys long-distance running. As a Trustee, Alex looks forward to working to serve “this small and wonderful school.”

Ina Li is glad to give back to the school that “taught me a lot about what learning is.” She appreciates that MPFS students—including her own children, Jay (5th) and Sydney (3rd)—are well-schooled well beyond standardized tests. “Here, education is also loving to learn, developing self-esteem, liking to read, being good citizens, having friends, and being happy,” she observes.

As Associate Director of Geriatrics for Christiana Care Health System and Medical Director of the Visiting Nurse Association, Ina also practices medicine ‘beyond the test.’ “Seniors are engaged and great partners in making a health care plan,” enthuses the Princeton undergrad and Rutgers Medical School grad. “It’s a privilege to work with them.”

She and her husband Mike Kostal, Jay, and Sydney live in Media, where Ina also enjoys soccer, running, working out, and watching movies. Describing herself as “comfortable in a team setting”, Ina’s eager to jump aboard the Board.



New MPFS Trustees (l-r) Katie Miller, Alex Kendrick, Evelyn Ridgeway, Bruce Haines and Ina Li.

Long before becoming a mom, **Katie Miller** wanted a Quaker education for her children. As a student teacher at Westtown, she thought, “If every child could have this kind of education, the world would be a better place.” Katie followed through... she and husband Russ enrolled their daughters at MPFS in 2011. “I love that my girls enjoy school so much that they often don’t even register what they’re doing as learning,” she remarks.

Since, she’s spent nearly as much time on campus as AnnaMary (2nd) and Elizabeth (5th) volunteering. Her work has been stellar and her cupcakes are legend! As a trustee, she wants to help the school in its vision of moving forward, meeting the needs of current students and attracting new students.

Currently a stay-at-home-mom, Katie has degrees in education and nursing from West Chester and Thomas Jefferson University respectively, and has taught in Philadelphia and as a hospice nurse. Favorite pastimes include baking, cooking, learning to play the guitar, knitting, sewing, and quilting.

Evelyn Ridgeway’s first visit to MPFS inspired déjà vu, evoking memories of her own independent elementary school in Newton, MA, where she experienced “the same kind of wonderful environment with small classrooms and a sense of intimacy, nurturance, and care.” She and her husband Darryl saw MPFS as the perfect fit for their daughter Aliya, then entering PreK-4 and now a 3rd grader. “The importance of relationship development, family, community, and resiliency is lived out in the classrooms here,” she reports.

As Child Development and Mental Health Manager at CHOP’s Early Head Start (EHS) program, Evelyn has found that “what I do dovetails with the MPFS mission.” She earned her undergrad degree in human development and family studies from Cornell, and then a Masters in family counseling and a Ph.D. in psychology from UMass-Amherst. Now, she’s completing a fellowship, developing a culturally specific framework for infant mental health.

“I want to help families to see the school as more accessible,” declares the new board member.

We thank the following donors for their contributions — unrestricted, restricted and gifts-in-kind — received during the last academic year, between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013.

While every effort was made to include all donors, if we have omitted your name, please contact us so that we can make corrections in the next issue.

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Alumni News

Class of 2009: Familiar Faces in New Places

We're so proud! **Allison Brunner** is pursuing degrees in Childhood and Special Education and Spanish at NYU. **Carter Ford** is attaining a business degree in Arts and Entertainment Management at Pace University; **Jacob Kleinman Phillips** is studying Architecture at Savannah College of Art and Design; **Shayna Kleinman Phillips** is majoring in International Relations at the University of Colorado, Boulder; **Paul Newlin** is attending Washington College and studying economics and political science; **Alex Roberts** is working towards a degree in Childhood and Special Education at Lebanon Valley College; **Henry Russell**'s enjoying a postgraduate year at Northfield Mount Hermon before heading off to college next fall; **Isaiah Warren** is majoring in Business at the University of Arizona; **Emelia Waterman** is at the White Mountain School with plans to study biology in college; and **Aaron Zack** is taking courses in museum studies, history, and business at Juniata College.



PFS Reunion: Save the Date!

Providence Friends High School alumni, faculty and staff, mark your calendars now for the PFS all-class reunion weekend on **Friday, April 11**, and **Saturday, April 12, 2014**. Friday night, gather with old and new friends at the MPFS Spring Auction at Springfield Country Club. Saturday, take a stroll down memory lane during a reunion event that starts at Providence Meeting and continues to State Street venues. MPFS has reserved a block of rooms at the new Springfield Courtyard by Marriott, adjacent to the country club. Look for your invitation via mail in February. To connect and stay up-to-date, join our Facebook Group: Providence & Media-Providence Friends High School Classes of 1974-1987.

Alumni Spotlight: Paul Menta

When people say to Paul Menta, "Tell me something I don't know about you," his go-to response tends to surprise: "I went to a Quaker school." Many don't connect this professional pioneering kiteboarder who has been shark-bitten (twice!) and attacked by barracudas (only once) with their vision of a Quaker schoolboy.

Yet, the Class of 1984 alumnus credits his education at Providence Friends High School as instrumental to his success as a decidedly unconventional Key Westian entrepreneur, restaurateur, author, and adventurer. "What I learned there has given me everything I have in life," he declares.

Paul came to PFS on the recommendation of a family friend. "I started out as a kid who didn't like school, but grew to love it," he reveals. "At PFS, I was treated as an individual and taught to be responsible for myself," Paul says, lauding teachers like Donna (Noonan) Allen and Peter Corrado for helping him be himself—just more sensibly and safely. "If I wanted to do something crazy, like jump off a ramp on water skis, they would ask: 'How and where will you do that? Who's going to give you a ride and pay for it?'"

As a youth, Paul also learned to cook from his grandmother. "She was my salvation," he notes. "He attended The Restaurant School and had 10 years of culinary training in Europe. Upon arriving in Key West, he cooked for a living,

while living to wakeboard and surf, eventually discovering kiteboarding. Paul eventually made a career out of kiteboarding, founding the Kitehouse in 1999.

"I've been able to make a living doing something that I gladly would have done for free," he points out, noting that business and people skills have been critical to his success. He also counts spearfishing, free-diving, and spending time with his son among his favorite pastimes.

Through the years, Paul has created and sold several restaurants, has been chef on a private island, and currently owns a restaurant that finds him "soul cooking." He plans to open the first legal rum distillery in Key West: Chef Distilled.

All this plus an author, Paul's written, "Native Fuel, Key West Edition." Featuring local recipes, residents' food tips, healthy preparation techniques, and "the value of sourcing local food," the (M)PFS influence is obvious once more!

Paul looks forward to seeing former classmates and teachers at the PFS reunion in April.



What We're Reading (and what reviewers have to say about them)



The Little Book of Conflict Transformation

John Paul Lederach

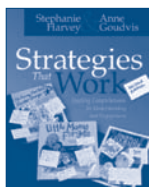
“A hopeful and workable approach to conflict on all that explores why “conflict transformation” is more appropriate than “conflict resolution” or “management.” John Paul Lederach is a scholar with the Joan Kroc Institute of Conflict Studies at the University of Notre Dame and a Distinguished Scholar with the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University.



Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School

John Medina

“How do we learn? What exactly do sleep and stress do to our brains? Why is multi-tasking a myth? Why is it so easy to forget – and so important to repeat new information? Is it true that men and women have different brains? In *Brain Rules*, Dr. John Medina, a molecular biologist, shares his lifelong interest in how the brain sciences might influence the way we teach our children and the way we work.”



Strategies that Work, Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement

Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis

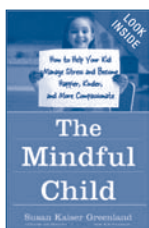
“An indispensable resource for teachers who want to explicitly teach thinking strategies so that students become engaged, thoughtful, independent readers. Exploring the central role that activating background knowledge plays in understanding and applying comprehension strategies flexibly across the curriculum.”



Writing for Real: Strategies for Engaging Adolescent Writers

Ross M. Burkhardt

“Getting adolescents to love writing is one of the most difficult tasks a teacher faces. In *Writing for Real*, Ross Burkhardt offers a wealth of writing strategies – collected over his career as a classroom teacher and key figure in middle level education – that give kids real reasons to write.” A toolbox with examples of student writing represent a range of developmental levels and a variety of forms, such as free-verse poetry, interior monologues, and personal essays.”



The Mindful Child: How to Help Your Kid Manage Stress and Become Happier, Kinder, and More Compassionate

Susan Kaiser Greenland

The Mindful Child extends the vast benefits of mindfulness training to children from four to eighteen years old with age-appropriate exercises, songs, games, and fables. Fun and friendly techniques build kids’ inner and outer awareness and attention, which positively affects their academic performance as well as their social and emotional skills, such as making friends, being compassionate and kind to others, and playing sports, while also providing tools to manage stress.”



Your Brain on Childhood: The Unexpected Side Effects of Classrooms, Ballparks, Family Rooms, and the Minivan

Gabrielle Principe

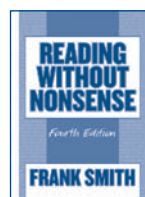
“For more than 99 percent of human existence childhood was spent in a natural environment. In a clearly presented, accessible narrative, the author marshals scientific evidence from a wide array of fields to explain why there is a disconnect between the brain’s evolutionary history and the technology-centered present. The startling implication is that today’s structured, controlled, and fabricated surroundings are exactly wrong for developing brains. Instead of emphasizing technology and organized activities, parents and teachers could better help children learn by encouraging exploration, experimentation, and exposure to the real world.”



Mathematician's Lament: How School Cheats Us Out of Our Most Fascinating and Imaginative Art Form

Paul Lockhart

“A brilliant research mathematician who has devoted his career to teaching kids reveals math to be creative and beautiful and rejects standard anxiety-producing teaching methods. Witty and accessible, Paul Lockhart’s controversial approach will provoke spirited debate among educators and parents alike and it will alter the way we think about math forever.”



Reading Without Nonsense

Frank Smith

“A groundbreaking, humanistic antidote to the managed “systems” approach to reading instruction in which Smith brings teachers and teacher educators up to date on how reading should not be taught. It is a necessary reminder that reading and learning to read are natural activities.”



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Meet Coach Jim Hardy, Athletic Director

At 6' 6", Coach Jim is, literally, the "big man on campus". Don't let his stature fool you though. He's a gentle giant and kid-magnet who's frequently found with what is most accurately described as a "clump" of children milling around his knees, seeking a high five. No less loved by middle school students, who never tire of asking him to demonstrate his mid-court shot (a thing of seemingly effortless beauty), he's a mentor and friend to all.

Jim grew up right around the corner from MPFS in Morton, attending Springfield High. He holds a BS in Political Science from Drexel, where he played forward for the Drexel Dragons. After a stint in law enforcement, he decided that he could better serve the world by teaching. He joined the MPFS faculty in 2001 initially as an assistant teacher in the 4th and 2nd Grades, 6th Grade Science teacher, middle

school coach and extended day teacher, and then taught in both 5th and 4th/5th vertical classes before moving into his current position in 2010.

He appreciates most the community atmosphere here, saying, "The relationships between faculty, between students and teachers, and between parents and teachers are close, like family." As a part of the 7th Grade Advisory team with Teachers Daryl and Aura, he enjoys helping prepare students for the next phase of their education and for life. "Kids respond to the extra level of care they receive at MPFS... they're aware that teachers go above and beyond for them, which opens the way for dialog. That's particularly important at this time in their lives when they have so many questions and need guidance."

Besides his MPFS family, Jim is married and the proud father of three daughters and a son. He rarely has a free moment, but when he does, he enjoys reading, photography and the occasional video game. (This year, he's also enjoying his new maple hardwood floor in the gym!)

IMPORTANT DATES: Winterfest, February 7
Parent-Teacher-Alumni vs. Students Basketball Game, February 28 • Spring Auction, April 11