

## Finding Your Passions at MPFS

At Media-Providence Friends School, students from preschool through 8th grade are encouraged to discover and explore their passions. It is important to note the plural *passions*. Students are encouraged to explore ideas that excite them, and that may be in multiple subjects, offering flexibility and challenge. Through a curriculum anchored in Quaker values and with guidance from teachers, students gain a true sense of self. This strong foundation built in the formative years at MPFS allows students the confidence, skills, and exposure to identify and pursue their passions both professionally and personally.



1<sup>st</sup> graders explore and study and identify leaves and seeds on a walk to Glenn Providence Park

We spoke with several alumni about how their experience as an MPFS student influenced their passions in both academic and professional careers as well as hobbies and interests outside of their work life. Alexis Mincer, Class of 2001, is a physician's assistant at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital in Orthopedic Surgery. During her time at MPFS, Alexis gained a deep understanding of the importance of helping others and being a proactive member of the community. "I just remember how they stressed the importance of helping other people. That really lead me on my path of where I am in my career. And that's how I ended up volunteering in a hospital in Kenya where I found my love of medicine. That service oriented mentality leads back to my days at MPFS."

Andy Aguilar, Class of 2008, is currently an ESL teacher who, when we spoke this summer, was gearing up to move to China to teach at the David Perry English Center of WuHan. Andy says he has always wanted to help people in his own community, volunteering as an English tutor for immigrant populations as a high school and college student, but that he wouldn't be teaching today were it not for the confidence he gained while attending MPFS. Andy goes on to say that the emphasis on conflict resolution at MPFS, and working with school counselor Teacher Laura Taylor on peer mediation, directly influenced his desire to become a foreign services officer. "It taught me to look into different perspectives and see how another person sees a particular conflict. It's a skill – being able to be patient and understanding and culturally aware of those differences."

Asia Scott, Class of 2008, graduated from Immaculata University this past spring, with two degrees in biology and chemistry. Asia also credits her time at MPFS with connecting her with her desire to help others in her profession. When we spoke with Asia this summer, she was studying for the MCATS and planning to go to medical school to become a radiologist. She says that the workload she was given at MPFS helped prepare her for high school and college, which in turn aided in her pursuing her interests. She attributes this preparation to helping her follow her passion in the competitive medical field. "If you don't ask questions you will trail behind," she says. "And I definitely



6<sup>th</sup> grade students read African folk tales in humanities

This special issue includes our 2015-16 Annual Report of Giving

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## LETTER FROM The Head of School

Dear Friends,

The week of the election, Teacher Heather Chamberlain, one of our kindergarten teachers at Media-Providence Friends School, had her students work together to write a letter to the president-elect. This activity was about sharing helpful words with our incoming president.

The activity began on the day of the election during T. Heather's morning message to students, when she posed the question, Can you think of some helpful words to say to our new president? "The day after the election I decided to extend the lesson and create a class letter. Many of the ideas stemmed from our 'How to Be a Friend in Kindergarten' list created at the beginning of each school year," says T. Heather. "I didn't mention Trump's name. My students told me who our new president was and they wanted the letter addressed to Mr. Trump."

T. Heather says that the purpose of the activity was to remove the negativity associated with this election and come together as a community in a positive way. The most important point of this activity, one that T. Heather has conducted during other elections, is to remember to be kind.

After a photo of the letter was shared on the Media-Providence Friends School Facebook page, it garnered a lot of positive attention both from members within the MPFS community as well as from the wider local community. Our local ABC station even featured the letter in a news segment. Feedback from the letter was overwhelmingly positive and many wrote that the wise words of the students gave them comfort and hope.

We are very proud of the advice that our Kindergarteners have for our new President. We hope that the simple, level-headed advice of this group of 5-year-olds can be of some help in bringing us all together at a time when there is so much division in our country and the world.

In this issue of Dragon Tales, we discuss the idea of students *finding their passions* at MPFS. I believe that with faculty members like T. Heather, who help students find their voice, students across grades find the confidence to explore new subjects, ask questions without fear, and discover what it is that ignites their passion for learning. We hope you'll enjoy hearing from our alumni on their experiences at MPFS in our feature article and much more included in this special Annual Report issue.

In Friendship,



W. Earl Sissell  
Head of School



Earl Sissell, Head of School



## Strategic Plan 2016-2021

In October, we published a brochure that highlights Media-Providence Friends School's Strategic Plan 2016-2021. This plan comes from many months of hard work by numerous people, including MPFS faculty, staff, trustees, parents, students, alumni, Meetings, and other stakeholders. We thank everyone who participated in this important process and who made possible the broad community engagement that is essential to effective planning.

You should have received your copy of the brochure, accompanied by a thank-you letter from MPFS Clerk of the Board of Trustees Parker Snowe, in the mail. If you did not, we would be glad to send one to you. Please let us know by contacting the school.

The Strategic Plan guides us as we remain a vibrant center of values-infused education for years to come, fostering lifelong critical thinkers, ethical leaders, and global citizens. The plan is organized around four goals:

1. **Academics:** Lift up and strengthen MPFS' outstanding academic program and richly diverse learning environment with a focus on whole-child education and preparing students for future success, home-school communications, and supporting professional development and leadership for faculty and staff;
2. **Quaker Centered:** Celebrate and strengthen the Quaker foundation of MPFS, ensuring that our programs, curriculum, and teaching reflect those roots, educating our community, and partnering with Friends Meetings and organizations;
3. **MPFS Pride:** Promote the unique and outstanding MPFS experience through clear communications, deep engagement with families, broad outreach, and social media/digital marketing leverage;
4. **Sustainability:** Planning for tomorrow through philanthropy, enrollment growth, education accessibility and affordability, facilities/campus maintenance and enhancements, and environmental sustainability.

For all of us, this plan is an affirmation and a call to action. We are grateful to you for supporting our mission to educate the whole child – body, mind, and spirit – and participating in the life of the school.

"Pre-school, elementary and middle school education needs to be more than just learning basic reading, writing and math," says Head of School Earl Sissell. "In addition to learning the basics, it's also about feeding and satisfying students' curiosity, instilling a lifelong love of learning, helping them find their passion, challenging them to think outside the box and accomplish things they don't think are possible, preparing them with the collaborative, creative, and critical thinking skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world, and fostering their respect and appreciation for other people and other points of view. ... It is not,

quite frankly, enough for our children and students do fine, we want them to thrive."

As we move forward in the execution of our plan, we seek your engagement with us at school and community events. This fall, we hosted a concert by the Merasi: Master Musicians of Rajasthan enjoying their music and raising awareness of caste prejudice and social marginalization, a screening of the documentary *Dukale's Dream* to promote Fair Trade, and an evening with Friends Council on Education Executive Director Drew Smith underscoring the vital value of a Friends education. In December, we will be participating in the WHYY Membership Drive at their studio and hosting Transition Town Media's Green Fair in our gym. Our Spring Auction, a fantastically fun event that raises essential funds for our school, will be held on Friday, April 21st. For more information about MPFS events, go to [mpfs.org](http://mpfs.org) and our Facebook page, or call us at 610-565-1960.



*Friends play together on the playground at the annual Pizza Pumpkin Night hosted by Media Monthly Meeting*

The most effective method of attracting new students is through word of mouth, so share your experiences at MPFS with others. Tell your friends. Like and share our social media posts about what is happening here. Wear and use MPFS logo gear. If you're local, get and put up a yard sign. And please participate in the Annual Fund, tax-credit programs, and other philanthropic opportunities supporting MPFS. Email Director of Development Cynthia McGoff at [cmgoff@fox.mpfs.org](mailto:cmgoff@fox.mpfs.org) about ways you can contribute.

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for MPFS.



## Welcome Our New Trustees

### Greg Gephart

Education is a priority and a passion for new Trustee Greg Gephart and his partner Michal Hall, particularly the education of their daughter Katie. The Gephart-Hall family joined the MPFS community in 2013, enrolling Katie as a Pre-K 3 student after hearing about the school from fellow parents. Katie is now a 1st grader.

Greg, who grew up in Michigan and earned his Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from the University of Michigan, moved to the Philadelphia area in 1994 and has lived in Delaware County since 2002. Early in his career, Greg worked in non-profit theater in Philadelphia — as a producer, director, actor, educator, and arts administrator for Arden Theatre and The Wilma Theater, among others. He spent years as a freelance producer and stage manager for corporate events across the United States.

"I'm still a huge fan of theater and hope to build that passion in Katie, as well as a love for music," he says. He also enjoys cooking and being outdoors.

Greg is now Director of Client Services & Public Relations at Peak Development Consulting, which provides organizational and leadership development for pharmaceutical, biotechnology, technology, insurance, manufacturing, government, and non-profit organizations. "[I work] with clients on communication plans for their large-scale change efforts, and on marketing and PR initiatives, including

around the recent publication of the book *Leading with Intention: Every Moment Is a Choice*," he says.

Greg's emphasis on education and Friends education was rooted in Michal's experience working at a Quaker school in Philadelphia and then as a public school teacher. "We also know kids who have been educated in Friends schools and have been impressed with them," he says. "They are confident and have a different relationship with the world through their education. We wanted that for Katie."

"At MPFS, it's been what we expected and more," he continues. "We've seen that Katie is excited about learning, and that she is thinking about and exploring the world around her. We see MPFS' mission to help students find their passions brought to life every day — and they're bridging Katie's passions for art and music to reading and math, not just encouraging creativity, but making it cross-curricular."

Greg and Michal have been active volunteers and Annual Fund donors. Last year, Greg participated in committee work for the school's Strategic Plan. As a Trustee he looks forward to leveraging his experience working in non-profits and around non-profit Boards. "There's a need for organizations like MPFS, and I'm happy to serve and add value in any way I can," he says. "This is a great community that's been a really wonderful fit for our family!"



### Meagan Watkins

When Meagan Watkins and her husband Tony sought a school for their daughter Evangeline, then a Kindergartner-to-be, the choice seemed obvious. "We believe that MPFS chose Evie, actually," she says. "She went for a visit and declared it home."

Now, Evie is in 3rd grade and Meagan and Tony have been very active volunteers, advocates, and philanthropists in support of school events, the Spring Auction, and the Annual Fund. "MPFS made it very easy to get involved," says Meagan, who, in addition to joining the Board of Trustees, also serves as a Class Ambassador. Outgoing, energetic, and thoughtfully efficient, she builds community and strengthens the school through all her efforts.

Meagan grew up in Harleysville, PA, and currently lives in Aston. With a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Millersville University, she has built a career in Human Resources and is currently Director of Organization Development for Urban Outfitters.

"I have the opportunity to work with and learn from some of the best leaders out there," she says, noting that she sees people making huge differences in this world by focusing

on the greater good and moving everyone forward. "There are certain skill sets that set the most successful leaders apart."

"So when we started looking at options for Evie's school, we started by looking at those that had a curriculum that would leverage what is special about her to develop her ability to lead successfully and ultimately to provide her with a toolkit she could use later in life," she continues. "In our research, the Quaker testimonies aligned perfectly with all of those things."

Meagan loves that, at MPFS, "Evie gets to learn a lot, but she also gets to experience a lot, and it is in those experiential moments that I see her finding her passions — plural — because Evangeline is not a kid who has a singular passion."

Gardening is one of Meagan's personal passions. "While my time is limited, I have been volunteering for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society for years," she says. "I've walked almost 20,000 steps in one day at the [Flower Show]."

As a Trustee, Meagan is "excited to continue to learn" and "to contribute further in a different way to MPFS." She is enthusiastic about helping to guide the school through its new Strategic Plan. "It's a very brave undertaking," she says. "Many organizations wouldn't hold that mirror up to themselves, but it's when you're willing to be vulnerable that you can have amazing things happen."





# ANNUAL GIVING REPORT

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## ALUMNI PROFILE: Tracy Davis '79

## The Way to Serendip

Tracy Kathryn Davis credits her education here, along with extraordinary serendipity, as guides to finding and living her passion, and toward making the world a better place. "This school helped direct me in my life choices so that I have been inspired to help others," she says.

When Tracy's parents made the decision to explore alternatives to public school for her, they had no experience with or particular knowledge of Quaker education. Media Friends School just happened to be the first school they and Tracy visited.

"They didn't have to show me a second one," she says. "I fell in love with the school walking through the door. I saw a diverse group of kids sitting on a bench and I knew immediately that it was the place for me."

Tracy attended Media Friends School from 5th to 8th grade and stayed for high school at Providence Friends School, graduating in 1979. "I liked being there so much that I used to cry when school let out for the summertime," she says.

Some of Tracy's fondest memories are of field trips, camping, hiking, and canoeing. "I enjoyed the sense of community and particularly loved sitting in Meeting for Worship together," she recalls. She also remembers people fondly. "Murry [Engle Lauser] was Head of School then and I remember her as being so wise," she says.

Tracy points to T. David Camp, who served as her advisor for several years, as particularly influential. (*T. David still teaches 8th grade Quakerism, a survey of world religions, at MPFS.*)

In 1976, Tracy took a life-changing school trip to India with T. David and several classmates. "I got really turned on to India, so much so that I've gone back 14 times," she says, noting that she was drawn to the country's spirituality and religious pluralism.

When Tracy headed off to college, she thought she'd study science or business, but decided to major in Intercultural Studies concentrating in South Asian Culture. "I kept feeling that attraction to India," she says. She started at Guilford College and then transferred to Warren Wilson College, a move impacted by musicians she met at Guilford's *Serendipity* Festival.

Tracy worked — as many as three jobs at a time — and raised her daughter Crystal. In 2001, when Crystal went to college, Tracy went to Pendle Hill, did a two-week intensive class at Earlham School of Religion, and traveled to 28 countries visiting some Quakers along the way.

She lived in West Virginia and then moved to Durango, CO, where she was surprised to find a Quaker Meeting in town. "I walked into a local college looking for a climbing club and walked up to a woman who became my climbing



Tracy Davis at PFS Reunion (front row, right) and Media Friends School 1974 (inset)

partner, offered me a place to stay, and turned out to be a Quaker," she says.

As a member of Durango Friends Meeting and ready for a change, Tracy decided through clearness to go to nursing school. She became a senior outreach nurse in her county. The Meeting created a Project Good Neighbor fund to help pay for patient services not covered by insurance.

When program funding ended in 2012, Tracy decided it was time to go to Earlham. This May — after defending her thesis "Shamata, Shadana, Stillness: Meditation as an Interfaith Practice of Peace" — Tracy earned her graduate degree in Peace and Justice Studies from Earlham School of Religion, the oldest graduate seminary associated with the Religious Society of Friends. Her thesis addressed interfaith dialogue among Buddhism, Hinduism, and Quakerism.

Identifying as a Christian-rooted Quaker and pacifist, Tracy also feels influenced by Buddhist and Hindu practices. "I hope to help people to really see who they are," she says. She has taken college and seminarian groups to India, while still working as a visiting nurse in West Virginia and serving as Durango Meeting's co-clerk.

She is grateful to the Meeting for supporting her education through scholarships and wants to "pay it back". She also pays it forward as a longtime contributor to MPFS' Annual Fund.

"This school that we discovered randomly has had a huge impact on my life and on my whole family," she says. "Today, my sister Candace is a member of Media Meeting, my sister Lisa is an attender at Providence Meeting, and even my little brother went to Stratford and Media Friends."

At a PFS high school reunion a few years ago, Tracy and several of her former classmates took a pilgrimage to the cemetery at Providence Meeting. "We would have classes there and there was no fear or negativity associated with it," Tracy says. "At the reunion, a bunch of us needed to go back there and just spend that time together. It was really special."



## MPFS High School Reunion Weekend: April 21st-22nd

Calling PFS and MPFS Alumni Classes 1974-1987! Reconnect with friends to reminisce about old times and to make new memories during our reunion weekend. Kick off the fun at the MPFS Spring Auction at Spring Valley Friday, April 21st and bring it home with a gathering at Barnaby's on Saturday, April 22nd. Save the dates now and stay in the loop by submitting your contact info via the "Update Us" form on our Alumni page at [mpfs.org](http://mpfs.org) and by joining the group on Facebook. You can also email Cynthia McGoff at [cmgoff@fox.mpfs.org](mailto:cmgoff@fox.mpfs.org) with questions and contact info.

### TESTIMONY SPOTLIGHT: Simplicity

Over the next six issues of *Dragon Tales*, we will be spotlighting 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 testimonies at home!

Simplicity is one of the testimonies that has made its way into main stream culture as a much sought after ethos for the modern family as a way to de-clutter, de-stress, and focus in an over-stimulating world. The idea of simplicity has been part of the foundation of Quaker belief for over three hundred years. Simple, functional Quaker meeting-houses are the perfect tangible example of the testimony of simplicity brought to life. They are unadorned structures meant to center and aid in reflection: an aesthetically quiet room to sit in silent worship. Outside of the meetinghouse, implementing simplicity into the classroom or into one's own life can seem like an uphill battle.

Every day, teachers at MPFS work to infuse their classroom with the light of Quaker values and, in a world where overstimulation and screen time are hotly debated, turn to the testimony of simplicity as a way to focus lessons, sharpen their student's academic skills, and teach the importance of mindfulness. MPFS' School Counselor, and member of Gwynedd Friends Meeting, Teacher Laura Taylor sees the testimony of simplicity as a three-tiered testimony that speaks to the environment, finances, and mindfulness.

In terms of simplicity in stewardship and the environment, "Think reduce, reuse, recycle," T. Laura says. "It's one of the simplest ways to address materialism in our daily life." Students at MPFS are taught the importance of caring for our own community by recycling and being mindful of waste as well as being aware of bigger problems, like access to clean water, that affect our world. Students learn what it means to be a citizen of the world, and the impact small changes at home can make on the environment.

This year, in humanities in middle school as well as in 4th and 5th grade classrooms, there has been a lot of discussion around access to clean water. Students have been introduced to this problem and the interconnectedness of this issue. "They are our people. They are a part of the tribe of humanity. What affects one of us affects all of us," T. Laura says of how students are taught the importance of stewardship in relation to clean water. The MPFS Makerspace is another great example of students putting this testimony into action. "It is a clear indication to our students that we are trying to walk gently on this earth," says T. Laura. Students become problems solvers in the Makerspace, as they create new uses for items that would otherwise become waste.



Faculty and students paired with their partner classes enjoy the bi-annual walk to Providence Meeting for Meeting for Worship.

Then there is financial simplicity. T. Laura explains that Quakers are taught to make their heart speak to where they spend their money. T. Laura says that, at its core, this idea stems from that "live simply so that others may

*Continued on page 9*



simply live' thinking, that we are all human beings part of a greater humanity and we need to always think beyond ourselves." Students at MPFS are taught the importance of sharing resources with those in need and buying Fair Trade products and, as one of the first Fair Trade certified schools in the country, they are exposed to ethically sourced products every day.

"In another sort of grand way if you think of being a Fair Trade school and service learning – it's all working towards the basic needs of human beings. So if we have more resources we would share them. So when we collect clothes or make casseroles, we are caring for others that have a need and we have the ability to provide it. We have more so we share with those who have less: that is a simple idea that really resonate with kids," T. Laura says.

Mindfulness is another piece of the testimony that is an integral part of the learning experience at MPFS. Across grades, teachers use "brain breaks" to calm, refocus, or reset busy young minds throughout the day. "It's a very powerful way to connect students to the present moment and whatever that truth is for them. So in the present moment they can be feeling all kinds of things: but to recognize it, acknowledge it, and then to learn how to either let something go or be able to communicate something or respectfully handle whatever it is that's on their minds is so important," says Teacher Shannon Hohl who teaches third grade.

Teacher Christy Chang, who joined MPFS as our middle school humanities teacher last year, finds that this kind of mindfulness is also present in the communication that happens on campus:

*When I first came to this school, what stood out was the availability of teachers and staff to meet with parents or with kids. I realized that (communication) was just deeply ingrained in the culture. You sit down whenever there is something to talk about and you simply have a conversation. There's no time limit. It's so important with building relationships.*

The simplicity in building strong relationships and creating open communication between teachers and parents, teachers and students, and parents and students is vital to the MPFS community. The testimony of simplicity shines through the educational experience at MPFS in many ways. Through lessons on stewardship and the environment, being a citizen of the world, authenticity, mindfulness, and much more, students are exposed to the testimony from several different angles with the hope that they will find a place for simplicity on their own, in the lives they will lead outside of MPFS.

learned that in the classroom at MPFS."

Jacob Kleinman-Phillips, Class of 2009, attends the Savannah College of Art & Design. He is majoring in Industrial Design and works as an intern at Design More, a design studio specializing in home furnishings. Jacob credits his time in spent in the science lab with Teacher Daryl Ballough with finding his passion for design and fabrication. "I'm very curious, and that's why I'm doing the kind of design I am. I think that can be traced back to my time at MPFS. The tinkering part is what lead me to this curiosity of how things work," Jacob says.

Beyond their academic and professional lives, our alumni say that they value the support and openness teachers showed them during their formative years. The freedom to explore topics in greater depth or the challenge offered in tackling a brand new subject gave these students the confidence, as young adults, to keep an open mind and discover new areas of interest. "One thing that MPFS taught me is the importance to have a balance in life. So for me that means a balance between work and the other passions I have in my life," Alexis says.

Similarly, Asia says that the emphasis on self-reflection at MPFS helped her decide what area of medicine she wanted to pursue. She says that she looked to emergency room doctors and saw that they were able to spend very little time with their families in many cases. "That's one of the reasons I want to become a radiologist versus emergency care," Asia says. "I want to help people but still have time for my own family. That's important to me."

Andy tells us that at MPFS, he was encouraged to always look for opportunities to better himself. During his time at MPFS, he discovered one of his favorite books, *The Outsiders*. As a high school student, he bought the book in French and made it a personal goal to be able to read it, even though at the time he couldn't speak the language. By the time he reached college, he was able to read the book and he plans on taking it with him to China as a reminder of this.

Jacob reflects on his time at MPFS and how it sparked his love of travel. He spoke about the impact off-campus trips like camping in Bear Creek and the 8th grade trip had on him. "With all the different experiences available at MPFS, you are allowed to see things from many different perspectives. Even though you are at a young age at MPFS, being exposed to everything is the most important thing you can do," Jacob says.

Every day at MPFS, students across grades are encouraged to follow the thread that ignites their imagination, ask questions, go deeper, and rise to the challenge of a new subject or problem. With the intentional teaching of self-awareness and the importance of individuality, MPFS teachers build students' confidence academically to prepare them for high school and college. Finally, the core values instilled in students at MPFS will aid them in their path to becoming helpful, purposeful members of their community.



## MEET Teacher Heather Chamberlain, Kindergarten Teacher

### How long have you been teaching at MPFS?

I started teaching in the fall of 2006. So this would be my tenth year. Nine years of kindergarten and my first year was Pre-K 4.

### Where did you go to college and what is your background in teaching?

My degree was in special education. I went to Lesley College (now Lesley University.) First, I was teaching at a transitional kindergarten program – I was hired to start and run the program, which I did for five years. The goal of the program was to help modify the curriculum for kids with moderate special needs and then to integrate the students back into the mainstream environment.

### Why did you choose teaching as a profession?

I think it was sort of a natural progression. I was a nanny. Then I got a job as a Pre-K teacher. That's when I started taking classes at night in early childhood education. I moved into special ed because I felt that was an area where kids weren't being taught to their potential and I saw a need to advocate for those students.

My own son was diagnosed with ADHD and executive functioning issues when he was at the end of 3rd grade. This is something that is applicable to students everywhere. It's something you can catch at a young age to teach those skills that may

not come naturally with kids who struggle with executive functioning. It should not be taken for granted but intentionally taught.

### Can you tell me about your family?

I have a significant other, Dan, who lives with us. He is a wonderful stepfather to my two children. Tommy is twelve and going into 7th grade. Phoebe is eight and going into 2nd grade. I really value the experience they had here. It made the transition easier. They had really positive experiences that helped them become who they are. They both really developed a strong moral compass here.

### What do you feel is unique about the education your students receive at MPFS?

I do feel like I spend a lot of time comparing what they do at the public school and what we do here. I think I have a unique perspective because I am now a parent of public school kids. I see what they are missing out on not attending MPFS: critical thinking skills, looking at different perspectives, not just being fed information and expected to regurgitate it. That's what our public school systems have become because that's what they have time for. I am fortunate in my classroom at MPFS to have the time to teach those important social-emotional skills as well as problem solving and conflict resolution.



*Continued on page 11*



### What do you think are MPFS greatest strengths?

I think our greatest strength is the teachers who work here. They are so dedicated to the students, to each other, and to the school. That kind of support applies to students who may be having a lot of challenges in their school life or their life at home. We ask, how can we best serve them? It's a collaborative effort.

Another strength is the way we teach Quakerism. There are Quaker schools that are based on Quaker philosophy and then there's our school that really practices and embraces Quakerism.

### What strikes you about the MPFS community?

Whenever I go to Meeting for Worship here and students as young as four or five years old can stand up and speak in front of their community -- these are such profound moments. There are not a lot of schools out there where kids can stand and express their thoughts so freely and openly. Every year at graduation -- I am in tears. I am in awe at how articulate our graduates are and how insightful they are. I feel like it really benefits kids, especially at that age, to reflect and feel safe in your environment. All these things are what I firmly believe you need to help kids grow up to be aware of more than just what's good for themselves. They look beyond themselves. They look to the community.

### What would you like parents to know about MPFS that they might not?

Speaking from my own experience with the transition into public school, I can say that yes, our students will be fine academically but it's the social-emotional part that will get lost. This isn't a bubble. I hear parents say that all the time. "Oh well, communities like MPFS are a bubble -- it's not the real world." But that's just not the whole story.

MPFS is giving these children the opportunity to have such a strong sense of self, that when they do graduate and perhaps go into schools with larger populations, they are not easily persuaded to join this group or that group because they want to fit in. They know what they like and what they want at a young age. That's something that most schools do not teach. To walk away from primary school having a sense of self is priceless.

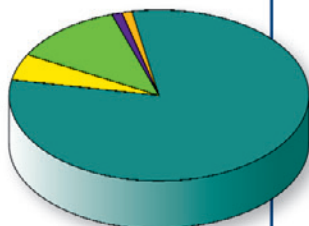
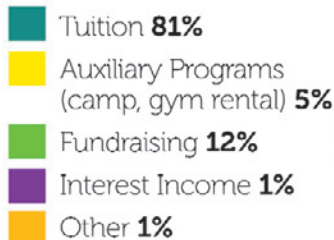
## 2016 Annual Fund by the Numbers

**Total:** \$100,527

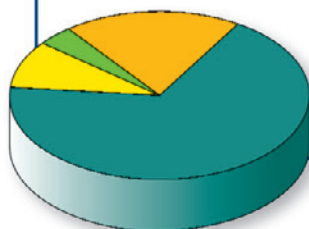
**Gifts:** 305

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**IMPORTANT DATES:**

**Winterfest**, February 3  
**Parent-Teacher-Alumni vs.  
Students Basketball Game**,  
February 24

**Spring Auction**, April 21

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



Our Middle School Dragons have wrapped up a fun and exciting season on the field. Visit our Around Campus section at [mpfs.org](http://mpfs.org) to read student recaps of the games!