



# Media-Providence Friends School

## *Dragon Tales*

Summer 2014

Narratives of the Magic of MPFS

## We Dream a World

The aim of Quaker education is that of preparing students not for society as it is, but for how it ought to be. [1] It *ought to be* self-evident that we are all part of a single human family in which each member is equal. Peace *ought to* perennially prevail. Resources *ought to* be rightly-shared. Tolerance and kindness *ought to* rule the day.

At MPFS, equipping students to pursue the “ought to be” is grounded in the teaching of essential competencies: the ability to appreciate diversity and listen with an open mind, to synthesize information and think both critically and mindfully, to be flexible, optimistic and inventive, to value community and collaboration, to have a social conscience and act with compassion, and to know that their voices and choices matter. The belief that they will make a better world informs all we do.

It’s why PreK-4’s learn about the Earth’s richly varied geography and consider what people everywhere need to live: water, food, shelter and hope (which might take the form of education or a livelihood). 1st graders practice building consensus in groups of increasing size until they are able to reach accord as a class. After a year of exchanging correspondence, 3rd graders meet pen pals from a large public school in North Philadelphia, discovering how alike they are despite different backgrounds. 5th graders Skype in English with “5th form” buddies half-way around the world in Switzerland, while 7th graders Skype in Spanish with middle schoolers in Columbia, encountering both common interests as well as fascinating dissimilarities.

By 8<sup>th</sup> grade, within their capstone Quakerism course, students survey the Abrahamic religions that have informed and continue to influence history, politics, economics, art and literature around the globe. Their completion of as much as 2 years of high-school level Spanish has offered windows into other countries and cultures, and contributed to a more global worldview. They participate in Junior Model UN, endeavoring to shed their own cultural and political views, seeing the world through other eyes as



they investigate global issues, conflicts and trends, and attempt to resolve real-world problems with hundreds of other middle school students from around the region. They explore the Women’s Movement as an example of the ways social, political and economic change can be made, and identify the characteristics of change-makers. Current events, such as Russia’s annexation of Crimea, the Boko Haram kidnappings in Nigeria, and the continuing Syrian conflict afford opportunities for increasingly nuanced class reflection and debate.

Through these experiences, MPFS students grow from recognizing and respecting alternative perspectives within their own class to discovering that they are members of a global community whose voices count. They’re challenged to apply lessons learned from history, current events, and literature selections drawn from diverse cultures and genres as they consider their own responsibility to family, school, community, society and the world at large.

Dr. Martin Luther King said, “We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Did you ever stop to think that, before you finish your breakfast in the morning, you’ve depended upon more than half the world?” (Ponder for a moment where your sugar, coffee, tea, and cocoa come from). [2] Our interconnected world greatly needs individuals capable of assessing for themselves what needs changing and what merits sustaining, and who

have the knowledge and confidence to act upon their convictions. That’s why, from the very start, we call students to lives of inquiry, integrity and purpose. We call them to make a difference in the world. It’s a task MPFS graduates have been up to for 137 years.

[1] Brinton, Howard H. 1967. *Quaker Education in Theory and Practice*. 3rd edition. Wallingford, PA; Pendle Hill Publications.

[2] King, Jr., Martin Luther. 1967. *Christmas Sermon on Peace at Ebenezer Baptist Church*. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Massey Lecture archives.



## **MEDIA-PROVIDENCE FRIENDS SCHOOL**

125 West Third Street  
Media, PA 19063  
610.565.1960  
www.mpfs.org

### **HEAD OF SCHOOL:**

Earl Sissell  
esissell@fox.mpfs.org

### **ADMISSIONS:**

Francy Strathmann  
fstrathmann@fox.mpfs.org

### **BUSINESS:**

Fred Keffer  
fkeffer@fox.mpfs.org

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

Janice Peterson  
jpeterson@fox.mpfs.org

Cristina Perachio  
cperachio@fox.mpfs.org

### **DEVELOPMENT:**

Cynthia McGoff  
cmcgoff@fox.mpfs.org

Dawn Greenlaw  
dgreenlaw@fox.mpfs.org

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES, 2013-2014**

Donna Allen  
Michael J.J. Campbell  
Jennifer Conway '86  
Shannon Davidson  
Susan Elliott-Johnson  
George S. Forsythe '41  
Donn Guthrie  
Bruce Haines  
Brian R. Harris  
Susannah Henderson '88  
John R. James '47  
Eugene Jarrell, Clerk  
Alex Kendrick  
Ina Li  
Dana Mancini  
Katie Miller  
Ann Murray  
Evelyn Ridgeway  
Parker Snow  
Debra Will

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.

# As I Leave This Friendly Place

It's been my privilege to serve as editor of *DragonTales* for nearly a decade, sharing stories of the transformative experiences that happen here every day. With the graduation of Aidan, my youngest, I'm turning over the reins to a new storyteller -- Cristina Perachio, an alumna who appreciates firsthand the value of an MPFS education. Before I go, however, I have one more story to share: my own.

At a Memorial Day picnic some 18 years ago, shortly after we'd moved into our present home, my husband Phil and I, not knowing any attendees, found ourselves conversing with the three teen-aged children of our neighbors, Bill and Lynn Oberfield (Lynn would later serve as MPFS' Head). Immediately upon meeting Josh, Zach and Jillian, we were struck by their curiosity, engagement and composure. Our teen years weren't so far behind us that we'd forgotten how we "presented" at that age and the contrast was sharp! Later, we agreed, "We need to figure out what Lynn and Bill did, because their kids are remarkable."



Those who know the Oberfields know that there was amazing parenting in the mix, but it was augmented by a big dose of MPFS. As we met other MPFS graduates, it became clear to us that Friends School kids were indeed unique. So, in 2000, when it came time to enroll Haley in pre-school, we chose MPFS. My daughter Paige was simultaneously enrolled in 4th Grade. Together with Gerry and Alison Frey, her dad and step-mom (best co-mom ever!), we were excited to have found the close-knit community and values that'd been lacking in large public school she'd attended.

As our children would spend most of the year in school, it was vital for us that their teachers would know them deeply, model integrity, intellectual curiosity and kindness, and care about the kinds of people they would grow up to be. My 13 years as an MPFS administrator have provided a unique vantage point from which to view the school's philosophy and teachers in action. I've witnessed the tremendous thought that goes in to devising curriculum that speaks to students' individual strengths and builds skills that need development, the energy and investment that are afforded each child, and the excitement in watching kids flourish.

I too have benefited from the wisdom and examples of my MPFS colleagues. Boy, has it been a boon to have had them as partners in parenting, knowing that they always had my children's best interests at the heart of all they did. Just being in their orbit has given me more than I could ever repay. Words can't express my gratitude for this wonderful little Quaker school.

All my best,  
T. Janice

# Profiles in Philanthropy

Since joining the MPFS community as a parent in 2001, **Harry Shreckengast** has been open-handed, level-headed, and wholehearted in his support of and service to the school. Our 2013 Murry Engle Lauser Cornerstone Award honoree, Harry is part of our philanthropic bedrock. (And he rocks, too!)

When Harry and his wife Susan enrolled daughters Julia (Class of '07) and then Caroline ('10) here, he reports that “all we knew about Quakers was that William Penn was one!”

Eager to learn about MPFS and Friends education, Harry began attending Board meetings before Julia's first day of school. “I'd been in corporate America my whole career and wanted a better understanding of this environment,” explains Harry, executive vice president, MCS Management Services. Through Harry, MCS has been a longtime financial-aid donor via Pennsylvania's EITC program.

Asked to join the Board of Trustees the following year, Harry served a 12-year term, six of those years as Clerk of the Board. During his tenure, MPFS embarked on a massive facilities upgrade, which included a new classroom building and renovations to add the library, art studio, science and computer labs.

Harry was instrumental in a three-year Capital Campaign that raised \$1.5 million for the project. “Harry understood the importance of integrating facility improvements with excellence in academic programming,” recalls Phyllis Mincer, former Director of Development. First, Harry himself donated. Then, he asked others to add their support. “Unless you've given yourself, you can't go out and ask others to give,” he reasons.

The Shreckengasts have been among the school's most consistent and generous benefactors. “Harry and Susan were early contributors each and every year to the Annual Fund, and students have benefited from the EITC scholarships MCS funded,” Phyllis attests. “Harry is a true gentleman with the biggest heart, and a fantastic ambassador and cheerleader for MPFS,” chimes in current Director of Development Cynthia McGoff.

Harry's enthusiasm extends to school events. “I love the Spring Auction,” he notes, considering it a “same time, next year” night out with friends. Harry has contributed to the Auction via donations and advertisements, and as a working volunteer.

In 2014, Harry and Susan joined the 1876 Society, MPFS's planned-giving community, with bequests to fund endowment. They know that a strong and growing endowment is essential to the school's long-term financial health, providing support for financial aid, faculty compensation and professional development, technology, and facilities for generations to come.



“I continue to be grateful for the values MPFS instilled in my daughters, who are now 21 and 18,” Harry declares. “And I have to say that I have received so much more from the school than I have given to it.”

## The 1876 Society

The 1876 Society (named for Media Friends School's founding year) was created to honor those who have included MPFS in their estate planning. Through bequests, charitable gift annuities, trusts, and other planned-giving arrangements, these members support the school's mission and future generations of MPFS students.

Alice Pennell Allen\*

Sam and Barbara Rose Caldwell

Katherine\* and William\* Camp

David and Margaret Camp

Ginny Christensen

Nancy C. DeMis and Bruce Turetsky

Nancy Fitts Donaldson

Geraldine Donovan

John and Deborah Ehleiter

Jessica and Gifford Eldredge

Marian D. Elkinton\*

June Evans

George Forsythe

Susan K. Garrison

Bancroft “Bink” Haviland\*

Bruce E. Hunt

Patricia Hunt

Murry Engle Lauser\*

Cynthia McGoff

Manley and Phyllis Mincer

Emily R. Myers

Paul Ness

Lynn and Bill Oberfield

Wayne Peischl and Greta Hudak

Mary H.\* and William D.\* Ravdin

Paul\* and Mary Ann\* Restall

William K. Scull

Harry and Susan Shreckengast

Doris E. Tirado

James Tyson Carson\*

Louise Wells\*

Althea\* and Douglas Whyte

\*deceased

We would be delighted to welcome you into the 1876 Society. Please let us know if you have named MPFS beneficiary of a deferred gift. For information about Planned Giving, contact Cynthia McGoff at [cmcgoff@fox.mpfs.org](mailto:cmcgoff@fox.mpfs.org) or 610-565-1960 x106.



# Alumni News

## Welcoming MPFS' Newest Alumni: The Class of 2014

We are proud to welcome the newest members of the Media-Providence Friends School Alumni Association....

Pictured are... (From l-r) Matthew Rhile, Lucy Jones, Aidan Peterson, Gia Matika, Christopher Palmieri, Elena Sissell, Cole Gaboriault, Janet Kelsey, Dan Marcolongo, Quinn Guthrie, Zachary Dainton, Summer Peterson, William Jarrell, and Peirce Eldredge.

The graduates have chosen from acceptances at area independent schools including Archmere Academy, Friends' Central, Kimberton-Waldorf, and Westtown. Several will be attending local public high schools as well.



## A Providential Reunion



April saw the first ever official reunion of Providence Friends High School, with 90 students and faculty-members from the classes of 1974-87 traveling from as far away as Oregon and as near as Media to meet up with each other "on campus" at Providence Monthly Meeting. Appreciative of the life-long friendships they made and the formative education their received at PFS, they're already rallying for their next reunion in 2019!

*"Having the opportunity to go to school with a group of kids who were so diverse in every way is something I'm really grateful for."*  
Carrie Little Keeler ' 81



*"My 4 years were one long best moment."*  
Linda Clark '78

*"Media is the best part of me – I can never forget my old school, it has made me who I am today."* Tammy Booker Woodson '76



*"It was wonderful to see all of you, both teachers and students alike (and your partners who came to see what it was all about). Everybody grew and changed and became even better. I smile when I think of you and how wonderful you have become."* T. Donna Noonan Allen

# Our Fair School

*Fair Trade empowers farmers and artisans in developing countries to better their conditions through commerce based on principles of economic and social justice. It ensures a living wage for producers, emphasizes the value of the work women perform, promotes safe working conditions, environmental sustainability, education and capacity building.*

MPFS was an “early adopter” of the Fair Trade movement, teaching about and advocating for Fair Trade decades before Media, “Everybody’s Home Town,” became “America’s First Fair Trade Town”. The school recently cemented its commitment, participating in the country’s first ever K-12 Fair Trade School designation program sponsored by Fair Trade Campaigns -- the sponsoring entity for Fair Trade towns, universities, schools and congregations in the U.S. In January, MPFS and 4 other schools became the nation’s first cohort of officially certified Fair Trade Schools. In a simultaneous additional “Fair Trade First”, Media became nation’s first Fair Trade Town to boast five Fair Trade certified institutions: MPFS, Media Elementary, Walden, Penncrest and Penn State-Brandywine.

As stated by the UK’s Fair Trade Foundation, “When you buy a product carrying the Fair Trade [logo], producers will have received the guaranteed minimum Fair Trade price plus an additional social premium to invest in their communities for the future. Fair Trade products guarantee that, however low world market prices fall, the producer organizations will always receive enough to cover the costs of production and a sustainable livelihood.”

The U.S.’ Fair Trade Campaigns is part of a global effort to normalize Fair Trade as an institutional practice and consumer preference across 24 countries on six continents. Through its Fair Trade Schools program, FTC aims to (1) consciously cultivate future consumers; (2) provide Fair Trade Towns an opportunity to deepen their commitment to Fair Trade; and, (3) provide more access points within communities to the Fair Trade movement.

To participate in the FTC pilot program, each cohort school had to form a Fair Trade “team”, include Fair Trade

in curriculum and school events, and source Fair Trade products. Although MPFS met all criteria from the outset, the faculty’s Fair Trade Committee wanted to integrate Fair Trade programming further. Throughout the year, existing lessons in each grade were mapped, new lessons were crafted, original assemblies were prepared for lower school, Fair Trade learning was woven into MLK Day education sessions, 6th and 7th graders presented a Fair Trade play, Fair Trade bananas were highlighted at lunch, the Spring Auction featured a Fair Trade theme, and T. Earl’s “faculty emergency chocolate basket” was filled with Fair Trade chocolates!

Friends were perhaps as the original “Fair Traders”: in the 17th century, Quaker business owners were unique in setting fair fixed price for their wares rather than setting a high price and haggling with buyers. Bruce Crowther, the UK architect of the worldwide Fair Trade Town movement who came to speak with MPFS middle schoolers in 2012, attributes his motivation as framed by the actions of Quakers, saying, “I had no idea about Quakers before. An example was the slave trade abolition

– it turns out that Quakers started that. Oxfam was founded by Quakers [and] Mahatma Ghandi visited the Lancashire cotton mills at the invitation of a Quaker. But Quakers don’t shout about themselves...”

Being two blocks away from a thriving Fair Trade town has provided unique opportunities for MPFS teachers to enrich students’ learning about Fair Trade and build upon the “Think Globally, Act Locally” ethos they first encounter as 3 year-olds at the school. Over the years, MPFS students have spent time with local business owners to learn about conscious consumption; met with visiting coffee, banana and pecan producers from Ecuador, Costa Rica and Georgia to learn about their experiences as Fair Trade pioneers and how to advocate for Fair Trade goods; hosted the MERASI, a group of marginalized Rajasthani folk musicians and artists who are direct beneficiaries of the Fair Trade movement; initiated an original research project comparing the quality of Fair Trade and conventional soccer balls; and even participated in setting the world record for the most fairly traded bananas eaten in a single day!

For more information about Media’s Fair Trade culture, visit [www.mpfs.org/parents/fair\\_trade\\_resources](http://www.mpfs.org/parents/fair_trade_resources)







## Media - Providence Friends School

125 W. Third Street  
Media, PA 19063

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

*Return Service Requested*



## Meet Maestra Lisa, 3rd-8th Grade Spanish Teacher

Teacher Lisa Morales' background in theater takes Spanish class off of the page and onto the stage. Though jazz is her preferred genre – she is a talented jazz singer herself! – Middle School parents may remember her from Middle School Arts Night as the emcee for a band of Spanish rappers.

Before joining MPFS, T. Lisa founded the Spanish program at Frankford Friends and taught at Plymouth Meeting Friends. “I knew that I didn't want to (teach) Spanish the way it was taught to me in high school. It was drills and rather boring,” she says. Incorporating her theater background, T. Lisa uses a teaching method called Total Physical Response, which involves whole body movement. After 13 years at The Philadelphia School she says it was the “quiet but intensive moral instruction” that drew her back to Quaker education.

MPFS' small community, where she could create close connections with students and staff, made it a perfect fit.

Always the adventurous spirit, Lisa fell in love with the Spanish language on a high school trip to Mexico. The experience had such an impact on her that she attended La Universidad de las Americas where she studied Psychology and founded the university's drama club. She has also explored Peru, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Spain, and Portugal, as well as Costa Rica, where she will be taking our 8th graders on their culminating year end trip in 2015.

“I always tell the parents (their kids) can't learn a language in a week but they can learn to love a language in a week,” says T. Lisa who hopes the trip will spark in her students renewed energy for learning Spanish.

Teaching allows Lisa to see the world from a child's perspective, fueling her passion. It's especially rewarding when her students' worldview expands. “It's such a small world now that it would be ignorant of us not to know more about Latin America and Spain,” she says. Whether it's learning about the economy and Fair Trade practices or cultural history through figures such as Cesar Chavez and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, T. Lisa is dedicated to her students' global education.

***IMPORTANT DATES:*** Back to School Family Swim Party:  
August 26 • First Day of School: September 3