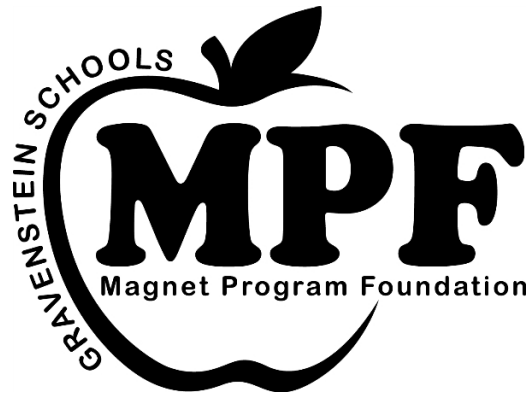


Wondering what's happening with MPF? Here's the latest on our budget, volunteer opportunities and other exciting news from the program.



MPF News & Updates

President's Message: What is the Price of Curiosity and Excitement?



By Jim Barrios, MPF Board President

Several classes are in the middle of enjoying exciting field trips funded by YOUR generous donations to MPF. I suppose the funds for these field trips could have come from anywhere and the field trips would still be amazing. But the fact is the field trips are only possible BECAUSE of your donations. Simply put, they would not happen otherwise.

The value of these ventures into the real world around us goes far beyond the monetary value assigned to the trip. The value includes the mercurial ignition of a child's curiosity about why something works. The value includes the infinite wonder children experience when they realize they can one day do the same things as their adult counterparts. The value also includes the self-realization that very little in this world is beyond their reach if they want to go get it.

What value would you assign to your child's excitement about seeing the performing arts live, studying the local habitat or observing wildlife around us. Would that value exponentially grow if your child decided that he or she wanted to become an actor or veterinarian because of what they experienced during an MPF trip?

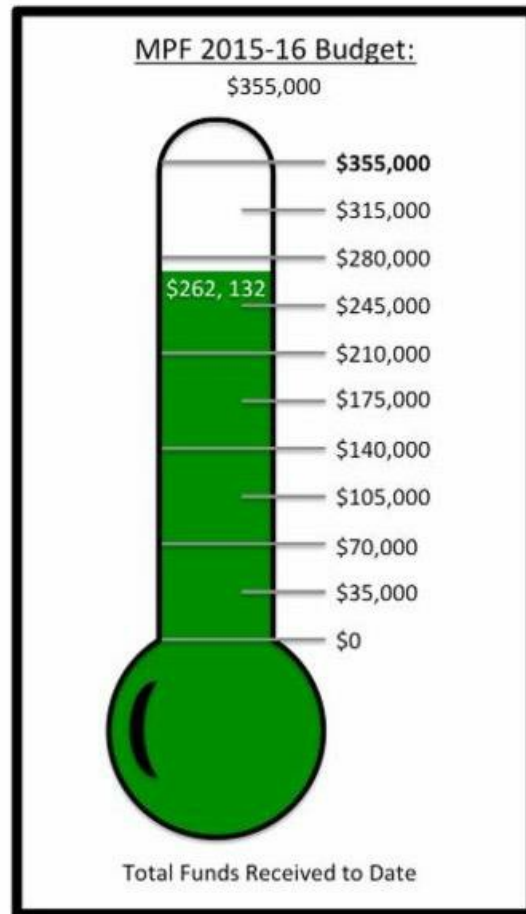
I offer that we cannot put a price on the field trip experience. Further, these experiences are not simply expenses on the MPF annual budget. They are critical elements which make up a well-rounded education. Field trips are sometimes considered secondary expenditures by some who argue that the integrity of the MPF program resides in the classroom component. There is little doubt that the academic enrichments anchor the MPF program. But what good would any of these academics be if children couldn't take what they learn in the classroom and apply it in the real world around them?

The value of these field trips is real. It is tangible. It is in every question we hear from from our child that begins with the word, "Why?"

- jim

Fundraising Snapshot

We are on our way to making our budget for the 2015-16 school year. Making our budget means we won't have to consider program changes because of funds shortfalls. Please keep up the good work. Get those monthly donations in. You can find information on submitting your donation at the bottom of the newsletter.



Reports from the Field(trips):

The MPF field trip schedule has moved into high gear. These are just a few of the field trips and activities funded by MPF in February & March.



Kindergarteners Flip Out at RPGymnastics

Our daughter, Lulu, was very excited when we reminded her that the Rohnert Park Gymnastics trip was coming up. When she was dressing on the morning of the trip, she told her Mom exactly how to fix her hair so it wouldn't get in her way when she tumbled, flipped and climbed. At the gym students tested their balance with skills challenges and their courage riding the zip line and jumping into the foam pit. She had a great time with all her friends and kept telling us at dinner that she really, really, really liked going there. It's a new found adventure spot for us that we had never known about before.

- Bill Nolan, Kindergarten Parent

2nd Graders Go Native at the Sonoma Co. Wildlife Rescue

On February 11, 2016, the 2nd Grade Enrich! classes headed down the road to one of the gems of West County. The Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue is tucked into the hillsides in Petaluma just south of Sebastopol. A small team of dedicated staff work to save local native animals who have been injured or are lost and need to be rehabilitated or need basic care. Our second graders attended a session where they were taught about local animals and the challenges they face in our area. A tour through the grounds was eye opening for a lot of the kids who had never been up close to a coyote for instance. There is nothing like seeing gray foxes, raccoons, hawks and wolves up close in a woodland setting. We think the animals found the kids equally entertaining, especially the chatty, crafty raccoons. They were the favorite of the day. We are grateful that our children can be in an outdoor classroom and have the opportunity to learn about the world right in their backyards. An organization such as this empowers them to feel that they can make a difference in the welfare of our native wildlife where humans can help those in need no matter how large or small.

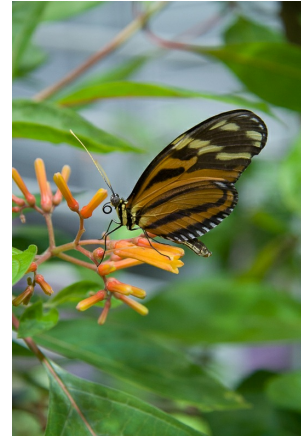
- Amanda Dawson, 2nd Grade Parent



3rd Graders Blast off at the California Academy of Sciences

Miss Mattish's third grade had a fabulous trip to the California Academy of Sciences in March. To round out their education about planets, they were treated to a show at the Planetarium which furthered their education about the planets in our solar system. Afterwards, the kids were able to explore the rain forest complete with live reptiles and beautiful butterflies. In the aquarium they saw a variety of aquatic life and were even able to touch the starfish and other tide pool sea life. The kids discovered the new earthquake section, complete with an earthquake simulator. They even had time to visit the penguins in the natural history museum, which also included life-like animals displayed in their natural settings.

- Cara Miles, 3rd Grade Parent





6th Graders Learn While Hiking the Marin Headlands

The 6th grade four-day trip to the Marin Headlands was exemplary. I can think of no other word for it. Students hiked the dramatic sea bluffs with inspirational and entertaining naturalists. They learned about native plants and wildlife, human adaptations, geology, geography, history and themselves. They even did a little habitat rehabilitation by rolling down a hill of ice plant to allow native plant species space to return to the area. Staying in the barracks at Fort Cronkhite was an adventure for the students and parent chaperones. One day was set aside for a challenge hike of over 8 miles. The kids did great and the chaperones managed to make it too. Well-rounded educational experiences like this are why I am such a huge supporter of the ENRICH! program.

- Beth Craven, 6th Grade parent





Hillcrest ENRICH! Showcase

During the month of February, our middle school students demonstrated what they have been learning in some of their enrichment classes this year at three showcase events. Each showcase featured a single grade, and included drama presentations, art displays, glee club performances, and poetry readings. All of the events were well attended, and served as a wonderful opportunity for the students to share and celebrate their accomplishments.

During the first and second trimesters, Bronwen Shears taught 6th through 8th grade drama at Hillcrest, building on the prior years that she has been teaching in the program. Bronwen explained to audiences that she has designed a progression of skills and experiences through the grade levels that will not only prepare the students for performances on stage, but will build their confidence and presentation abilities. Each of the homeroom classes performed drama presentations that included all of the students in the class.



6th Grade Artwork

Our 6th graders presented dramatic interpretations of poems, mostly by author Shell Silverstein. The performances were irreverent, and fun, evoking many laughs from the audience, providing opportunities for individual student monologues, as well as small and large ensemble performances. Shakespeare is a focus in the 7th grade program, with a culminating field trip to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, so our 7th grade classes performed scenes from William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. It was impressive that the students conveyed the true meaning and emotion of the complex language of Shakespeare. At the 8th grade showcase, each class presented a large ensemble piece that combined famous quotes, and quotes written by the students, that were based on observations. Not only did the

students execute their performances with synchronicity, their unique perspectives and voices were expressed through these custom drama pieces facilitated by Ms. Shears.

The other performance element at each of the showcases was the glee club, a Friday elective taught by Spencer Burrows. In glee club, students help select the songs that they perform, which are usually from the contemporary rock or pop genres. Glee club includes singers, and instrumental musicians, giving the students an experience of rehearsing and performing music in a setting that is less formal than a typical chorus, concert band or orchestra. The 6th grade glee club performed two songs, featuring student soloists, and instrumentalists on drum set and ukulele. The 7th/8th grade glee club also performed two songs, featuring student soloists, and instrumentalists on drum set, guitars, bass and piano. Both groups gave rousing performances of reimagined pop/rock songs, employing vocal harmonies and original arrangements by Mr. Burrows.



7th Grade Shakespeare Performance

Our 7th and 8th grade students shared some of the poetry that was written during their Trimester 1 poetry enrichment with Gwynn O'Gara. 6th grade will have poetry in Trimester 3, so this was not included in their showcase. Students shared a range of poems that were insightful, funny, thought provoking and moving.



6th Grade Glee with teacher Spencer Burrows

It was inspiring to see our students experiencing success during their performances, and gratifying to observe the benefits that the enrichment classes in the ENRICH! program provide. The synergy between the enrichment instructors, students and classroom teachers was clear through the well prepared and polished presentations at each showcase. As was expressed during the introductions at each event, a heartfelt thank you goes out to all of the teachers, enrichment instructors and generous parents, whose contributions make these enrichment classes possible.



8th Grade Performance



Building Community

MPF Social Coordinators organize socials for their grade levels to help build the MPF community. As with sports and extra curricular activities it takes a community to make exceptions experiences happen.

Teacher Appreciation Week Coming Soon!

Love your child's teacher? Do they make magic happen in the classroom? You should be hearing from your class' social coordinator about volunteering for Teacher Appreciation Week soon. Help out and show a little love for our hardworking, inspirational teachers. Teacher Appreciation Week is May 2nd-6th.

Fun Times Ahead!

Help celebrate and build our fantastic program at these upcoming events.

- May 15th - Incoming Kindergarten Social: Help introduce new families to our program.
- May 21st - MPF ENRICH Pool Party at Ives Pool

To volunteer contact Tracy D'Ambrosi at TDAmbrosi@rjo.com

Parent Testimonial

Art with Ms. Ricciardi, projects with Mr. Science, P.E. with Coach Paige, music with Mr. Pulley, our kids Rose (4th grade) and Sam (2nd grade) can't decide which is their favorite. They love them all. In fact, both recently had Ms. Ricciardi and they would argue over who got to tell us about the latest update to the story of the artist they were studying. They are enthusiastic about what they are learning and that is invaluable. Rose and Sam love school because of all these extra "fun" subjects. They actually look forward to going each day. Rose just got back from a four day trip to Clem Miller. She had a GREAT time. It is so worth paying each month for the ENRICH! program. Our kids get these great programs and field trips at school with their friends.

It is cheaper and more convenient than having to pay for after-school and weekend activities and it makes them love school. We love the ENRICH! program. Worth every penny.

- Cindia and Rick Brody

Board Meeting Date Change

The date of the April MPF Board meeting has been changed to April 27th at 4pm so that we may meet with teachers after their work day has ended. If you would like to attend future meetings the board appreciates input from all our parents. Dates for the remaining meetings this year are:

April 27th - 4pm

May 18th - 6pm

MPF ENRICH! in now on Facebook!

Always on Facebook? Well now we are too. Like "[Gravenstein Union Schools MPF Enrich](#)" to keep up on all the latest activities and events. This is also a great way to get reminders about Enrich functions and board meetings.



Visit the MPF
Website

Supporting MPF is Easier Than Ever!

Each family's donation is essential for funding the enrichment classes, social events, and field trips that make up our ENRICH! program. To help make donating as easy as possible, Drop-Off boxes are in both school offices for your monthly donations. No stamps needed, just drop off your monthly donation in a sealed envelope. Boxes will be emptied on an approximately weekly basis allowing timely processing of checks. Please do not leave cash.



You can also make your monthly donation to MPF by credit or debit card. Simply fill out the form at http://gravenstein-mpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/MPF_Credit_Card_Form.pdf and mail it to the address below. Then, your credit/debit card will automatically be charged each month at the pledge rate you have set.

MPF
c/o Alice Christensen
P.O. Box 750036
Petaluma, CA 94975

Please note that all major credit/debit cards are accepted, with the exception of American Express. If you have any questions about the status of your Donation Commitment Form, contact Alice Christensen at mpfalice@gmail.com.

Please also consider looking into your company's donation matching program. What is a company matching donation? A company matching donation, or matching gift, is when a person makes a donation to a non-profit organization and their employer donates an additional amount, often equal or greater than the employee's donation. To find out if your company does matching gifts your Human Resources department for specific information on whether they have a matching program and how to request a matching donation.

Thanks for taking the time to read about our amazing ENRICH! program. As always, feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

The MPF Newsletter Team
(Jim Barrios and Beth Craven)

Gravenstein Magnet Parent Foundation | mpfcontacts@gmail.com | <http://gravenstein-mpf.org>