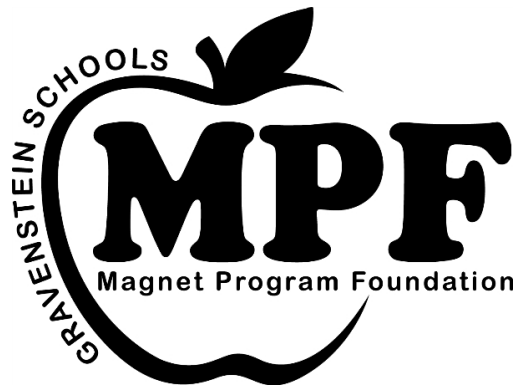


Wondering what's happening with MPF? Here's the latest on our budget, volunteer opportunities and other exciting news from the program.



## MPF News & Updates

### **President's Message: The Patient is Going to Live!**

By Jim Barrios, MPF Board President



The primary purpose of the MPF Board is to maintain the financial integrity and health of the MPF program. The Board is essentially acting as a physician, overseeing the health of the patient, or in this case, the MPF program.

As every good television hospital drama lays out each week to the patient's family (that's you), "There's good news. And there's bad news."

I'm a "good news" kinda guy, so let's first go there. The good news is that this year's Board was very effective in stopping a major hemorrhage of funds. Last year, the MPF absorbed an \$80,000 hit which quickly put the MPF Patient, er... umm... I mean Program, in darn near critical condition. Several factors contributed to a decline in the patient's condition including a significant drop in donations, specifically many fewer families donating something instead of nothing. This year, we are anticipating only a deficit of approximately \$11,000. This drastic change is directly due to the fact that many more families contributed something instead of nothing. However again, we cannot sustain the MPF program on annual losses. The patient may not be critical, but the patient isn't out of the hospital either!

Enter the "not so good, but necessary" news! After much thought provoking discussion, your MPF Board approved, on a split vote, a modest increase of \$10 monthly in suggested donation amounts. This increases the suggested monthly donation amount from \$167 to \$177 for grades K-3 and from \$278 to \$288 for grades 4-8. This course of action was chosen in favor of reducing enrichment offerings.

This is the first increase in the suggested monthly donation amount in the program's history.

This was not an easy decision, but it was an important choice made to improve the health and integrity of the MPF program. Your Board's goal is to end each year with a modest surplus which can be returned to the program's savings to protect against years where the program incurs a deficit such as this year. Many people may not have even noticed this modest requested increase in donations, but your Board is committed to a 100% transparent course of business. We always invite parents' and guardians' input and ideas at all MPF Board meetings.

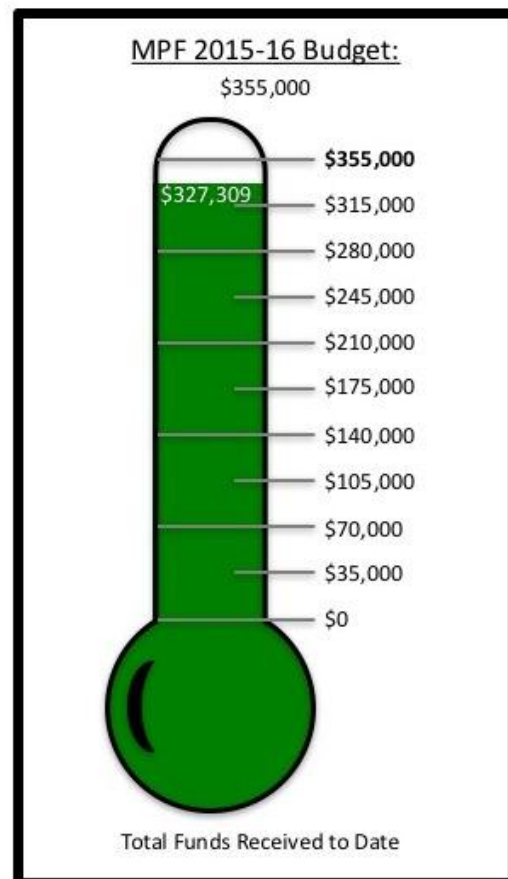
We all want an MPF program which will sustain itself and which will be around for the next generation of children. Your Board is dedicated to this mission and we are optimistic that the Board's course of action this year positions MPF to become financially healthier and more viable in 2016-17.

Lastly, your Board asks two things of all our families this year. Please accept our thanks for supporting us in a year of significant transition and enjoy your summer! Be safe, have loads of family fun and your Board looks forward to serving you in 2016-17!

- jim

## Fundraising Snapshot

Well, we almost made it. It's not too late to send in your donations. We are very close to making our budget this year. That means we won't have to consider program changes because of funds shortfalls. You can find information on submitting your donation at the bottom of the newsletter.



## Teaching, Leading, Volunteering

By David Fichera, Incoming MPF Secretary and parent of 3 ENRICH! students

When I started as the music teacher in the Gravenstein Union School District in the fall of 2006, I was excited about Gravenstein's tradition of excellence in music education, and the fact that the district was developing and nurturing a creative arts magnet program. I had decided to leave the technology industry in pursuit of a career that leveraged my background in music and other performing arts, and the stage at Gravenstein was set for an energetic educator like myself to elevate the performing arts program to new heights. As the performing arts director for GUSD, I collaborated with Superintendent Linda LaMarre and Principal Keri Pugno to further develop the district instrumental music and theater art programs, earning first place awards in Apple Blossom and Rose Parades, superior ratings at band festivals, and directing celebrated musical theater productions.



After solidifying these existing programs, I began developing and teaching enrichment classes for the magnet program in 2008. Some of the highlights from the courses that I developed were Stomp, a course where students performed a percussive movement piece using found objects like brooms; Glee, a course where students sang popular songs while being accompanied by a rock band (modeled after the popular television show); and Music Technology, a course where students learned the basics of creating and manipulating music with computers. I was also involved in showcasing what the students were learning and achieving, both through performance nights and open house events. During my five year tenure as Performing Arts Director, I witnessed the magnet program blossom from REACH, which began as three classrooms in grades 4-8 on the Hillcrest campus, into ENRICH!, a K-8 full-day GATE/Creative Arts Magnet program serving 18 classrooms on two campuses.

I was promoted to Principal of Hillcrest Middle School in 2011, and in that role, I worked more closely with the ENRICH! Program, collaborating with Linda LaMarre, district teachers and the MPF board on the cultivation of an excellent roster of enrichment instructors. Some of the courses that I developed as an instructor were handed off to other instructors, while I also implemented new enrichment courses and instructors in the arts, academics and technology. It has been my pleasure to provide direction to the ENRICH! Program, and having been involved in the program's development, I have an interest in helping to ensure the integrity of ENRICH! in the coming years.

The unique combination of strong academics, enrichment courses, field trips, and positive community involvement are what motivated my wife and I to enroll our three daughters in ENRICH!. As a teacher and leader in the district, I saw first-hand how these experiences could benefit students, so it was with no reservation that we transferred out of our award-winning resident school district in East Santa Rosa in favor of ENRICH!. On July 1, 2016, I will be moving to the position of Communications Coordinator for Petaluma City Schools, and though I will no longer work for GUSD, I will not be leaving. We have decided to keep our girls in ENRICH!, because we value what the program offers, and I will remain on the MPF board as Secretary, to help provide continuity and a smooth transition. I am grateful for the teaching and leadership opportunities that I have had in the Gravenstein District, and look forward to my new role as a parent-volunteer.

## Hillcrest 8th Grade Graduation

By Madeline Laurence, 8th grade graduate, Mr. Spoerrers class

I feel the hot air flowing in through the auditorium doors. My graduation gown is sticky against my skin. It's not just the hot weather; part of it is nervousness. I'm sitting among one hundred other 8th grade graduates, packed like sardines onto Hillcrest's stage. I look out into the crowds of people as a sailor gazes out on the ocean. I listen to speeches, middle school experiences being recounted aloud. I glance down at the diploma in my hand. To some it just looks like just a folder with a few pieces of paper tucked away inside of it. But to me it means so much more. This folder is a reminder of all the memories I have from Hillcrest. It holds all of the laughter shared with friends, the hard work that went into every last assignment, and the bonds made within each classroom.



I look around me. I've gotten to know each and every one of these 8th graders over the past few years. Each person has something special about them, something I will remember for decades to come. I feel tears growing hot in my eyes. I'll be going to school with some of these wonderful people next year, but so many I'll be leaving behind. Some of my best friends will be going to different schools than I. We'll be going our separate ways and I have no idea how we'll find the time to visit after summer is over.

We'll find the time I hear a voice in the back of my head whisper; for now just live in the moment. So I wipe away my tears and enjoy the time I have left with all of these lovely souls.

Moving on is always a bittersweet moment. For me it's usually more bitter than sweet. Yes, we are going on to do great things. We are gaining more opportunities and responsibilities as we grow, but we are also leaving so much behind. I've felt comfortable and safe at Hillcrest and I've

learned so much here and have been so lucky to have so many enrichment classes. I'll miss looking forward to art at the end of each week with Mrs. Ricciardi and the different community within each classroom. There are so many friends and teachers that I wish I could stay with forever. At least I am left with the blessed memories that they have given me.

## Reports from the Field(trips):

Many field trips were taken in the last month of school. This just a few one of the activities funded by MPF in May. If you attend a field trip and would like to share your experience please write something to include in future newsletter. Pictures welcome too!

### Fourth Grade Living History Trip to Fort Ross

by Alexis Boutin

In May, the Enrich! fourth graders assumed new names (Russian, Aleut, Pomo or Miwok), donned clothes similar to those worn in the 1830s, and embarked on a voyage of adventure to Colony Ross (now Fort Ross State Historic Park, north of Jenner). Employees (students) and officers (chaperones) were responsible for fulfilling the duties of their chosen occupations, as well as serving a two-hour night watch shift to protect the Colony from potential intruders while drinking hot cocoa around a crackling fire. Other highlights included the flag raising and lowering ceremonies conducted by the Militia; a delicious dinner of beef-and-berry stew, bread with freshly churned butter, and pumpkin pudding prepared by the Cooks; and a performance of the troika dance by all Colony employees. This was an unforgettable way to cap off an amazing year, thanks to the organization and enthusiasm of our fearless leaders, Commandants Brown, Hillier, and Kindred!



The Militia prepare to check the passes of those entering the fort





The Hunters display their "catch"



Mrs. Hillier traveled back in time with baby in tow.

## 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.

## A changing of the guard

Please welcome Cara Miles as she steps into the role of MPF's new lead Social Coordinator. Cara has been an active social coordinator and a terrific addition to the team. She has some wonderful ideas and will bring so much to the table in the upcoming school year. Cara is taking over from Tracy D'Ambrosi who is stepping down after many years as lead social coordinator.

Tracy will remain on the MPF Board as a member at large. Thank you Tracy and welcome and thank you Cara!

If you would like to volunteer as a social coordinator contact Cara Miles at [cara.miles@sonic.net](mailto:cara.miles@sonic.net).

## Fun Times in the Fall!

Keep an eye out for your invitation to the MPF Fall picnic in August.

## 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](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](mailto: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)

MPF ENRICH! Program, 708 Gravenstein Highway N. #211, Sebastopol, CA 95472

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