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Connecting with Quaker Values Service Learning—Water from the Well

By Tracy van der Leeuw

Service learning is a hot topic right now and many educators have adopted this approach for its teaching potential. At FSM, service learning has been an essential element of what we do as a school.

As Assistant Head, Jeannette Lutter-Gardella, puts it, “If the SPICE values (simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality) are the wellspring, then bubbling up out of that well is the action of service learning. By tapping into children’s natural motivation to be a positive part of their world, service learning is the force that moves the water out of the well.” The Friends Council on Education affirms embedding service learning into all curricula to foster student appreciation for similarities and differences across humanity.

It’s not only students who act on this. This is something that we all do as a community, as teachers, volunteers, alumni, parents, relatives and friends. Our Development Director, Sarah Deschamps, speaks of the importance of service learning and its relationship between the school and wider community. Sarah invites everyone to help us “move the water from the well.” Some of the ways one can help are: Plant



FSM middle school students with Jane Goodall. Photo from jgiusa on Flickr.com

Sale, recycling/composting program, landscaping around the school, Project Home participation, Feed My Starving Children, or even next fall’s Pennies for Peace campaign. I’d like to highlight two projects that illustrate the nature and extraordinary power of service learning at Friends School: Spanish work with Centro and Middle School Student Council efforts with Roots & Shoots.

Centro

Our Spanish teacher, Veronica Guevera, identifies four components of

service learning that guide the design of projects: preparation, planning, action, and reflection. Action is the heart of the service learning project but not the end. Reflection may be the most important step of the process. Students learn about both the community served and themselves in the process.

Five years ago, Veronica wanted to give students a real world opportunity to practice their Spanish.

She was familiar with Centro, a non-profit agency in Minneapolis that provides a range of services to the Latino community. Together the Middle School students forged a project with the preschoolers of Centro’s Siembra program.

That first year, students decided to share storybooks that they had written in the style of Spanish fairy tales. They read to the preschoolers, gave them the books for their school library, and then played together outside. This afforded students the opportunity to hear and speak Spanish — running up to Veronica frequently asking, “¿Cómo se dice ‘___’ en Español?” Everyone had such a great time that FSM now visits Siembra every spring sharing in Spanish games, craft projects, safety

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INSIDE THE FRIENDS CIRCLE

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What a pleasure it is for me to share with you lots of good news about Friends School of Minnesota. We have had a great year, full of accomplishments. The top ten:

1. We completed our campaign to raise \$1 million! Through the great generosity of many donors, we have been able to complete several needed projects at FSM, including major grounds renovation, installing a new heating system, and adding a half-million dollars to our endowment. That increase essentially doubles our endowment value and the amount of funds we use for need-based tuition aid.

2. We had a successful ISACS accreditation visit, resulting in continued full accreditation and affirming our many program strengths.

3. We implemented a new teacher support and evaluation process, which has received positive reviews from faculty after this first year. All teachers are assigned to a "peer support team" which meets regularly to meet the needs of the teachers in terms of professional growth and practice.

4. We have grown in enrollment over the last four years and at this point appear to be growing again for next year, especially significant in these challenging economic times.

5. For the first time at FSM, we have an art teacher! Laura Pereira teaches art to all of our students K-8. She

is also working with teachers to integrate art into the classroom. Our walls are covered with amazing evidence of new skills and depth in art education.

6. We had a great fundraising year, meeting or exceeding our goals with our Gala, the Friends School Fund, and the Plant Sale.

7. The School Committee and faculty together identified key elements of our next strategic plan. To be completed by fall, the plan will address major directions for the school over the next five years.

8. Faculty have worked hard to evaluate the curriculum areas of arts, technology, Spanish, and social studies. We have reviewed ways we want to change our programs to further enhance learning.

9. We have made it a priority to be responsive to potential needs of our community, relating to economic stress. We added a "contingency fund" to our operating budget, meant to help families who might find themselves in changed circumstances during the year.

10. Our amazing staff and faculty are all returning next year!

I invite you to contact me or visit FSM to hear more about the great work being done by the whole community. It is a remarkable place. At our graduation this year, the eighth graders articulated the ways they feel prepared by their FSM career for what is next. They are competent and kind people, and I am excited to hear about how they change the world, starting in high school next year!

—Lili Herbert, Head of School

Letter from the Head of School

Words from Graduates Congratulations to the Class of 2010!

Athena Anderson, Great River School

I will take Meeting For Worship with me. I learned how to write a paper.

Vivian Big Eagle, South High School

The most important thing I learned was to approach new things and new people with an open mind.

Asialy Bracey-Gardella, St. Paul Academy

I have learned to speak my mind if I have a strong opinion about something.

Amanda Cline, DeLaSalle High School

The most important lesson I have learned at Friends School is how to approach everything with an open mind.

Guananí Gómez-Van Cortright, South High School

At FSM, I've learned to keep an open mind and think critically about my surroundings.

Maddi Kraft, South High School

FSM has taught me to have my own opinion big or small.

Lydia Newman-Heggie, Highland Park High School

Don't hesitate to try on as many different selves as possible—it's worth it.

Josie Paul, St. Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists

At FSM, I learned to notice the beauty in everyone.

Kay Sheehan, DeLaSalle High School

I learned to dig beneath the surface instead of just believing what I see.

Shadrach Hyneh, DeLaSalle High School

Friends School has taught me to use words to solve my problems.

Nick Pemberton, DeLaSalle High School

The most important thing I learned was to accept everyone for who they truly are.

Austin Sankaran, DeLaSalle High School

At Friends School, I learned how to solve problems nonviolently.

Jared West, Benilde-St. Margaret's

The most important thing I learned was how to solve problems in a mature and respectful way.

Will Wharton, DeLaSalle High School

The most important thing I have learned is that people can change dramatically, and that when I meet someone I don't understand, I keep this lesson in mind.

SPOTLIGHT
ON GRADS

Connie Archbald

By Sarah Deschamps

Connie Archbald has made many deep and meaningful connections for Friends School of Minnesota. She has given of her time, her talent, and her treasure in so many ways, and continues to be a very strong voice in our community.

Connie attends Minneapolis Friends Meeting and it was there that she first became aware of Friends School. She began her volunteer work at FSM on the development committee. Soon afterwards, she was asked to join the School Committee and served a total of twelve years, including time as clerk of the committee.

In addition to the development committee, Connie has served on all of the major committees including finance, capital campaign, and equity and justice. Lili Herbert, Head of School, says how fortunate Friends School is to have



QUAKER
FRIEND
SPOTLIGHT

such a good friend in Connie. "She has been supportive and engaged in our work as long as I have been at Friends School."

For Connie, it isn't about the amount of time she has been involved, but about the children she observes at Friends School. She says, "When you walk in Friends School, there is a different aura. It is a place of growth, development, change, and positive

energy." Her greatest joy is to see how Friends School has developed and grown, and to see the wonderful children who have gone into the world.

Connie sees herself as a connector for Friends School. She says that she has made lifelong friendships for herself and is so pleased that she has been central in making connections for the benefit of Friends School. Lili Herbert adds, "Connie is the one who is always bringing new people into our community. She is a leader for the school in making connections with new friends."

Connie believes that the Quaker values that are taught and observed each day at Friends School demonstrate the quality of the education. She says with amazement that she loves watching the children diplomatically handle situations through the conflict resolution program.

Connie is a true positive influence. She says, "If I were to choose sunshine or darkness, in my world, the sun is always shining." She has brought that sunshine, energy and commitment to Friends School and we are so much better for it. ●

Art Program and Teacher Laura Pereira

by Tracy van der Leeuw

If you've been to the school building recently you've certainly noticed it. If you're a parent, you've benefitted from what's been brought home. But if you've not seen it, you have got to learn that the student art adorning FSM is quite incredible—prints, clay masks, wire sculptures, water colors, collages, and so much more.

Of course this is no accident. As many schools are forced to curtail their art programs, we've been extremely fortunate to hire Laura Pereira half-time to teach two art classes each week to all students, and to work with faculty to integrate art with other curricula. Laura is a licensed art teacher with an M.Ed. in art. She brings not only many years of experience in a variety of venues, but also a strong understanding of progressive education to her work.

Art instruction at FSM is classically progressive and deeply connected to other subjects. Students' learning is guided



CLASSROOM
SPOTLIGHT

through a focus on the process; sequential skill building, and moving between inspiration, technique and reflection; as well as cyclical project design in which the end of one project is the beginning of another.

Laura views her role as the one to inspire students, walk them through their tasks, and afterward have them loop back to ask "So, how did I accomplish that?"

One particularly exciting example for her was the print-making project in middle school this past fall. The process for these pieces was long, complex, arduous—and fun! The kids worked through it, into it, then took it and ran—eventually demonstrating the confidence to experiment.

To illustrate how art is interwoven into the learning experience of students we might point to the kindergarteners who recently designed animal homes and built pasta models as part of their study of architecture. As you can see, for both the process and the product, art instruction at our school is truly inspiring. ●

Persida Cifuentes—Crossing Borders

By Kelley Garry

Persida Cifuentes is a classroom aide at FSM. Born in Guatemala, Persida started her human rights work by being naughty.

When Persida was a girl in Chimaltenango, Guatemala, she'd sneak out of bed at night and hide behind a door to listen to her father, human rights attorney Eliezer Cifuentes Cifuentes, talk about his cases. "I was [thinking] 'Oh my gosh, those words are great. I don't know what they mean, but I am going to find out one day, and I am going to use them.'"

With Persida's interest in human rights, it's no surprise that she spent her spring break this year on the Arizona-Mexico border with the humanitarian group, No More Deaths. The group distributed humanitarian aid—food, water and medical care—to immigrants who had crossed the U. S. border illegally and were caught, detained, and deported back to Mexico. Persida's interest in human rights comes honestly—she knows what it's like to have them taken away.

In 1980, Guatemala was a country splintered in revolt against the military backed government. Persida's father ran for mayor. He won. But, before he could take office, he received death threats that kept him from taking the position. Persida's dad continued working as a teacher, lawyer, and activist for human rights. A few years later, he was injured in an assassination attempt. "Immediately, that same night, he was asking for asylum from the embassy of Costa Rica," said Persida. At age 15, she and her family were forced into permanent exile in San José, Costa Rica.

Moving to a peaceful country was a shock, said Persida. "I was full of anger and very afraid. The military became my enemy." Persida's life has as many twists and turns as any good political thriller. Eventually, she moved to



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Persida Cifuentes (second from right) with other volunteers from the humanitarian group No More Deaths.

Minnesota, graduated from Macalester College, and worked for human rights organizations before leaving her full-time work to become a mother. About that time, Persida visited Friends School.

"When I first brought Abby for kindergarten I just loved the school," Persida said. "I love the values of this school." Persida sees working at Friend School, with our core values, as a natural extension of her interest in human rights. "I think it is part of our duty to know more about our world and bring it to our students," she says. Her trip reflects this commitment.

Most days you see Persida laughing, or shepherding children around the school; but when she talks about her border experience, the sparkle in her eye becomes a brilliant fire. Part of No More Deaths' mission is to work for humane immigration reform. "We believe that if they [immigrants] are going to be caught, they are

going to be caught," said Persida. "If they are going to cross, they are going to cross, but in between they need to live. Water is a major factor there."

No More Deaths famously leaves water in the desert for immigrants. Recently, this practice was outlawed in Arizona. "Every tank of water, every bottle of water is going to be crushed," said Persida. "The funny thing about it is there are several immigration officers that have gotten lost in the desert and it is that water that saved their lives!"

Each morning, Persida crossed into Mexico to meet deported immigrants at aid stations set up by affiliated aid organiza-

tions. She and her fellow volunteers served food to about two hundred people daily, collected immigrant's testimonials about their treatment while in U.S. custody, and since immigrants usually receive no first aid from the border patrol or immigration on the U.S. side of the border, Persida used the first aid training she and the other volunteers received. "While we were serving breakfast, we were also observing who was wounded, and who needed help. So after food [service] ended we started helping everybody."

It takes about five days to cross the desert, depending on the point of origin, "if they don't get lost," said Persida. Immigrants travel at night, she explained, and the desert terrain is full of cliffs, sharp turns, cactuses, scorpions, wild pigs, rattlesnakes, criminals, and drug dealers. "Many immigrants die or disappear in the desert," she said. "We saw a lot of people who had sprained ankles and wrists when they

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Persida Cifuentes

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jumped over walls. The walls are not stopping them,” she said, “Nor is the threat of imprisonment. I talked to several of them who have been deported three or four times and they continue to cross.” Persida cleaned and wrapped blisters, and pulled cactus spines from flesh. She said, “There were several cases where we couldn’t do it because the wounds were so infected.” More severe injuries were triaged to a medical aid station.

Many times immigration authorities pose a danger as they try to round up groups of crossing immigrants by swooping down with helicopters and dogs. Why do immigrants keep coming? “Because they have families here,” Persida said. “Many immigrants have spent most of their lives in the United States before being deported.”

While working in the aid station, Persida’s own humanity was tested.

She noticed a man she sensed had been part of the Guatemalan military. They started talking. Persida asked, “How many [deaths] are on your hands?” But she wasn’t angry. She felt sorry for him. “For me, it was very interesting,” she said. “Here I was talking to a soldier in a neutral place, and we were from two different sides. And it was just two people.”

Seeing the immigration issue up close, Persida, an immigrant and an American citizen herself, is frustrated. “I am very frustrated with a system that is taking away the human part of us. My goal is to make sure that all of us come in touch with our own humanity and are able to see it in others.”

Today, Persida’s dad is proud of the work she has done. Maybe he realizes sometimes you have to stay up past your bedtime to learn how to save the world. ●

Service Learning

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demonstrations, and songs all in Spanish. Veronica notes, “We learn about Centro, what they offer, and who they help. We ask questions of ourselves. How can we help? What can we learn in our service?”

Since 2006, FSM’s summer programming includes *Manos Con Centro*, a week with preschoolers at Centro in the morning, and the food shelf, clothing distribution, or time with seniors in the afternoon. For Melanie Spewock, Director of Summer Programs, expanding the already established relationship with Centro was a natural fit that aligned perfectly with the Quaker tradition of service.

Roots & Shoots

On September 21, 2009, the Friends School of Minnesota Middle School Student Council registered as a group with Roots & Shoots, an international, youth-driven program of the Jane Goodall Institute. Like Centro, Roots & Shoots’ mission fits well with that of the school. Its mission is to “foster respect and compassion for all living things, to promote understanding of all

cultures and beliefs, to inspire each individual to take action to make the world a better place for people, animals and the environment.”

The Student Council wanted “to be about the greater good,” and this focus on community service led them increasingly to service learning. Their advisor, Humanities teacher Rebecca Slaby, believes that Roots & Shoots provides a solid framework within which students can design, carryout and assess their projects.

So far our Roots & Shoots Group has raised \$2,700 for Haiti relief and \$450 for the “Got Food?” campaign; collected gifts and grocery cards for a holiday sponsor-a-family program; and completed a project building eastern bluebird birdhouses. A highlight of the spring for the Student Council was definitely meeting Jane Goodall and hearing her lecture, Reason for Hope, in April.

Needless to say, it was an incredibly inspiring evening that will no doubt help our children continue to lead our community in service to the world. ●



My Legacy and Friends School of Minnesota

By Sandy Olson

Speaking candidly about end-of-life issues is challenging because we hesitate to admit that mortality applies even to us. We tend to think that all persons are mortal with the glaring exception of Yours Truly!

When I returned to the Upper Midwest in 1991 following the death of my husband, Albert Halsband, I learned that a single person with no children has a particularly strong need to write a will in Minnesota. If we do not, our assets will go to our closest living relative; for me, that’s my mother. Hence, I drafted my first will.

I recently revised my will to include Friends School of Minnesota as a beneficiary. I did so because I believe strongly in the values Friends School teaches. Also, I have not been able to contribute sweat equity by serving as a volunteer for you.

As a member of Minneapolis Friends (Quaker) Meeting, I want part of my legacy to be a vibrant Quaker community in the Upper Midwest. Many persons are exposed to Quaker values for the first time by being associated, directly or indirectly, with a Quaker school.

—Sandra K. (Sandy Olson)
65 years young. Member,
Minneapolis Friends Meeting

PLANNED
GIVING
SPOTLIGHT

1995

Jonah Sutton-Morse graduated with honors from University of Chicago with a B.A. in Comparative Literature and Medieval Studies. He has been working for the last four years at a software company, testing and designing software.

1996

David Chrastek graduated from Macalester College with a B.A. in Biology. He is working in oncology research in Bournemouth, England. David is about to start medical school in the UK.

1997

Monica Bicking graduated from Goddard College in women's studies in August of 2009. She was one of the eight anarchists who were arrested prior to the National Republican Convention in August of 2008. Although she was not at the protests and there is little evidence against her, she is charged with two felonies. Her trial will be in October. She, along with a family member, started a nonprofit, Tombolo, to help families with children who have serious chronic illnesses.

2000

Kate Abrams attended Drake University and is in graduate school at Des Moines University working towards a doctorate in physical therapy.

2001

Martha Grant ('01 cohort) is working at a growing non-profit in Southeast D.C. that does HIV/AIDS prevention and education through community outreach. "While I'm primarily the office assistant and do administrative tasks, I also write grants and contract applications, assist in logistics for travel and programming and will be conducting a training I funded this spring. I'm also spearheading a new media campaign and taking the lead in developing a new website for the organization."

Brianne Macemon earned a Bachelors of Social Work from the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. She graduated cum laude with leadership honors, departmental honors, and university honors, "I'm currently volunteering with Dorothy Day homeless shelter, working as a case manager with ex-prisoners

and working part-time as a nanny for two children. I continue to interview and look for jobs in my field." Brianne also coached the FSM 7/8 soccer team last fall!

2002

Jonathan Chrastek graduated from Augsburg College. "Next year I will be attending grad school at the Colorado School of Mines. I will be studying humanitarian engineering."

Jen Winston graduated from the Creative Arts High School-ALC in 2006 then moved to Vancouver, BC to go to college. She took a few years off from college and worked as a house painter, a dishwasher and helped her mom fix up her house. She's lived in the Twin Cities, Berkeley, and Vancouver. "I am currently half way through a six-month veterinary assistant course at Granville Business College in Vancouver and living with my dog Izzy."

2003

Anna Nation says, "I've led canoe trips, spent time in the Amazon, and continued to fight for justice in my own way. I lived on a mountain for a month and I work at the Renaissance Fair every summer. Right now, I am living in Japan for a year. I go to school here and row on my Japanese University's team. I'm in my third year of college and am working towards a degree in East Asian studies with a minor in Japanese and in indigenous studies."

Emma Olmstead-Rumsey is a history major at the University of Chicago. "I am involved in Model U.N. I hold unofficial meetings/teas in my apartment every week where friends and friends of friends get together to hear talks by fellow students. I mention the latter because I give FSM credit for most of the democratic thinking and intellectual enthusiasm that I need to create that thing and have it run the way it does."

Katya Rouzina ('03 cohort) is graduating with honors from the University of Texas at Austin with a B.A. in linguistics. She studied abroad her junior year at Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel. "I am about to graduate, looking for jobs, preferably in the nonprofit section, mostly on the East Coast or in the Midwest. I am

going to grad school in 2011-2012."

Sara Van Vreede is attending Gustavus Adolphus College and will graduate in May 2011 with a major in social justice theater and a minor in gender, women, and sexuality studies. "I remain involved in theater and dance, am a member of GAC's social justice theatre group, I Am We Are, as well as the swing dancing club, and the Lucia Singers (a women's chorus that sings in the annual Christmas in Christ Chapel concert). I just returned from a January term in London, am finishing my junior year of college and hope to take my social justice theater major into the high schools and middle schools to perform skits that will open conversations with students about issues they face. My next year's project will be to write a curriculum/curriculum outline for a high school class regarding social issues faced by the students."

2004

Hannah Chaffee says, "I am almost finished with my second year at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash. I am in a program called Consciousness, Art, and Matter. Fall quarter we learned about the multiple purposes of consciousness, discussed in length about what consciousness is, where it is, and what it does. Winter quarter, we learned about dream psychology, the multiple ways to interpret dreams and about the many purposes they serve in our lives. Throughout both quarters, we explored our questions about the nature of reality, consciousness and the unknown through art. Spring quarter, we took on independent projects."

Louisa Harstad says, "I have been attending Columbia University in New York City, and I am currently finishing up my sophomore year. This summer I will be interning in D.C. at the USDA."

Violet Hoffman-Casillas says, "Currently, I am enrolled at Columbia College, Chicago, studying ASL Interpreting."

Dane Schaleben-Boateng is pursuing a B.S. in Biology at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. He is busy with "classes, doing research in the Emergency Department at HCMC, and helping run a fitness and nutrition class for Minneapolis families through HCMC."

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

2005

Adria Denison says, "Started PSEO (free college classes) for my 11th and 12th grades of high school at Saint Paul College. Found my passion for art, sexual therapy, costuming for theaters, and bottle-raising orphaned animals through 'attachment-parenting.' I am working towards my Associate of Arts through Saint Paul College, which will give me more time to decide what I want to major in. At the moment I am deciding between being a sexual therapist, an interior designer, or a costumer designer. However I plan on eventually starting my own small business unrelated to any of those fields."

Emily Eckhoff-Bennett is attending Winona State University.

2006

Emily Brower is graduating from The Blake School and will be attending Union College in upstate New York.

Luc Bruggeman is graduating from St. Paul Academy and will be attending Lafayette College in Pennsylvania.

Isabel Bushway is going to attend the Interior Design Program at the U of M.

Josh Corner is graduating from Highland Park Senior High and will be attending Bard College in upstate New York.

Josh Draves-Kellerman is graduating from Lincoln High School in Lake City, Minnesota. He will start this fall as a bassoon performance major at the University of Iowa and will be touring Europe for three weeks in July with the Sound of America honor band.

Danielle Eckhoff-Bennett graduated from Tartan High School, Oakdale and has been attending PSEO at Macalester College full time this year. She will be attending Yale University.

Rebecca (Birdy) Engdahl writes, "I just bought my tickets to Russia for this summer. I'm going to Moscow for two days and then off to Ulan Ude in Siberia for two weeks. We might even take a few days to visit Mongolia! I'll be staying with Masha, my foreign exchange student for the past two years. Other than that, I'm off to the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities this fall. I think I might go into



The 2010 Friends School eighth graders made the traditional trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in May, a few weeks before graduation. For more on the most recent FSM alums, see page 2.

either some kind of environmental science or art. Who knows, maybe that will change! I have been big into photography lately. I still work at the Art Academy teaching kids from ages 4–15 how to draw and paint, and I recently got a second job at the Chipotle on Grand Avenue."

Kyle Finseth ('06 cohort) is graduating from Central High School and will be attending Iowa State next year to study chemical engineering and German.

Annie Gerard ('06 cohort) is graduating from Henry Sibley High School. She writes she will be "taking a gap year to volunteer and study Himalayan culture in Nepal."

Ben Gesensway is graduating from Henry Sibley High School and attending college at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois.

Chesa Greene will be taking a gap year "volunteering/traveling in India, then going to Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle (yay rain!!)"

Theo Mongeau ('06 cohort) is graduating from The Good Hope School, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands and will be

attending Ithaca College in New York.

Ari O'Sullivan is graduating from St. Louis Park Senior High School and is attending college at the University of Minnesota, Duluth.

Eleanor Pearson is graduating from Simley Senior High School. She will be attending Washington University in St. Louis to study biochemistry and English. Eleanor is a National Merit Scholar and received a writing scholarship. This summer she will canoe the Thelon River in Canada on a YMCA Menogyn Femmes du Nord six week trip.

Maddie Sankaran is graduating from The Blake School and will be studying biology at the University of Chicago.

Sierra Wolf is graduating from North High School and will be attending St. Catherine University in the fall.

2008

Ruby Thompson is finishing her first year at Avalon School. Her mom reports, "She likes it a lot, and will be continuing there, with the added possibility of doing PSEO to take Mandarin Chinese. Her hair is currently green."

Events

The **Annual Gala and Live Auction**

will be held on Saturday, November 6th at the Woman's Club of Minneapolis. The theme this year is *iNoche de Salsa!* Please plan to join us!

Our all-school **Martin Luther King Day Celebration** will be held on Sunday, January 16th at O'Shaughnessy Auditorium in St. Paul. Please plan to join us!

Grandparent and Special Person Day will be held on Thursday, February 10th at Friends School. Please plan to join us!

Friends Circle

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