

## Letter from the Head of School

This article marks my 30th lead article for the Friends Circle, a publication that was known as the “Friendly Circle” when I began writing these twice-yearly updates to the school community 15 years ago. Recently, I browsed through the past issues of the Friends Circle and re-experienced the excitement of a young school meeting its various milestones: enrollment goals met; grades added; conflict resolution outreach commitments made; a building purchased, renovated and expanded; accreditation earned; our hundredth graduate; an endowment established; the eighth grade Boundary Waters canoe trips; and all those examples of children’s poetry, prose, and art with accounts of our students’ successes in History Day, Science Fair and more.

The past 15 years have been filled with the life of our students. They have been filled with the satisfaction of working with highly skilled and committed fellow teachers. And there has been the inspiration that comes from working with the key volunteers and supporters who have been critical to the founding and growth of Friends School, individuals such as those you will read about in elsewhere in this newsletter as “Pillars of Friends School.”

The present moment marks not only my 15 years as head of school at FSM, it marks the close of my 22nd year in independent school education. During these two decades in education, my views on what makes an outstanding education have



Mark Niedermier with a Chuck Close-style portrait painted of him by FSM students.

steadily evolved. There is the primacy of talented and committed teachers who truly care about children and who have high standards for each student. The high quality interactions between student and teacher are what make a student light up, acquire a love of learning and excel in learning and life.

In the most general way, I think of schools in terms of their educational philosophy and their ethical culture. This parallels what Douglas Heath in *School of Hope* terms as “mind” and “character.” Heath sees the development of mind and character as what yields human excellence and reports on the 35 years of research as to what teachers and parents see as the nature of these vital human qualities:

- **Ethical values**, such as honesty and integrity
- **Self-attributes**, such as confidence

- **Interpersonal strengths**, such as empathy and sensitivity
- **Cognitive strengths**, such as intelligence, knowledgeability and good judgment

There is a tremendous overlap between Heath’s definition of human excellence and what is described in the FSM mission statement. At Friends School of Minnesota, I have seen how its mission of preparing children to embrace life, learning, and community with hope, skill, understanding, and creativity – in the context of the schools commitment to the Quaker values of peace, justice, simplicity and integrity – is ideally suited to nurture our students in the pursuit of human excellence. It has been an honor and privilege for me these past fifteen years to work in partnership with parents, teachers and the Quaker community to help make FSM what it is today: an institution that embodies Gandhi’s sentiment that “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

—Mark Niedermier

### Inside

Faculty News .....	2
Alumni News .....	2
Changes at the School .....	3
Pillars of FSM .....	4
Quaker Values Murals .....	6
Service Learning Project .....	8
Student Art .....	9
Multicultural Festival .....	10
Conflict Resolution .....	11

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## Faculty News

### Welcome, Jeanette Lutter-Gardella

Jeanette Lutter-Gardella has accepted the position of as FSM's first-ever Assistant Head of School. This full-time position combines FSM's two previous half-time lower and middle school director positions.

Jeanette has worked for 11 years as a classroom teacher in kindergarten through 8th grades. She earned her B.S. in liberal arts and her M.Ed. in Pre-K-6 and 7-12th grade English from the University of Bridgeport. She also has worked as a Character Education

Coordinator, Upward Bound English teacher, and instructional coordinator for the Stanford, Connecticut, School Readiness Program. Jeanette begins at FSM on August 1.

### Farewell to Sally and Kristen

Sally Wiedeman has been a teacher and lower school director at FSM for nine years. She is leaving FSM to be at home with her two young children.

Kristin Hortenbach taught middle school math at FSM for four years. She is leaving to work with her fiancé at his Internet business.

Thanks to both Sally and Kristin for all their years of service at Friends School of Minnesota. We will miss you!



Sally Wiedeman



Kristin Hortenbach

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## Alumni News

The annual alumni party was held at FSM on April 21st. There were over 40 alumni in attendance. They had pizza and ice cream, chatted, played volleyball and foosball. It was wonderful to see everyone and be updated on their lives after FSM. Here are updates on some of the attendees.

### Class of 2005

**Abdul Ali** is a freshman at Saint Paul Central. He is on a TV program "Set it up" on channel 16 about issues, art and music. It airs Monday nights at 7:30. He is also in the Muslim Society at Central. **Jake Althoff** and **Si Nasnan** are also at Central.

**Matt Jarvis** is a freshman at DeLaSalle. He plays sax in the band.

**Ben Jones** is a freshman at the Blake School. He has been in many drama productions at school, including *Les Miserables*.

**Connor Soles** is also a freshman at Central. He is in the play *Romeo and Juliet*, where he stabs someone with a sword.

### Class of 2004

**Sarah Clinton-McCausland** attends Central High School. She was in the musical *Anything Goes*. She is on the A

honor roll with a GPA of 4.61.

**Hannah Chaffee** is a sophomore at South.

**Violet Hoffman-Castillas**, also a sophomore at South, in a tap company called "Keen Sense of Rhythm." She also plays flute in the band.

**Katlin Ziehr** is spending a year at the Mount Friends School in York, England. When she returns, she plans on attending Perpich Center for Arts Education.

### Class of 2003

**Ben Corner** is a junior at Highland Park Senior High. He is on both the track and cross-country teams. Last summer he went to China.

**Emma Olmsted-Rumsey** is a junior at Southwest High. She was just accepted into the National Honor Society.

### Class of 2002

**Freia Fenelon** is a senior at Creative Arts High School. She works at the Selby Avenue Mississippi Market.

**Dana Hoffman-Casillas** is a senior at Washburn High School. She just returned from France with her French class and had a great time. She is going to massage therapy school.

**Patrick Raines** is a senior at Mounds Park Academy and will attend Earlham College in Indiana this fall. His public policy class project was a proposed bill that

may get passed: a bill requiring driver's education to include teaching about organ donation. He is also an intern at Como Zoo and Wildlife Rehab Center, working to improve animals' lives.

**Jen Winston** is a senior at Creative Arts High School. This fall she will attend Douglas College in Vancouver, Canada. Currently, she is a communications fellow at "Out for Equity." She was recently named a "Student of Excellence," one of five students in all of St. Paul. The award is based on GPA and extracurricular activity.

### Class of 2001

**Kelsey Stanford** is at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, studying liberal arts.

### Class of 2000

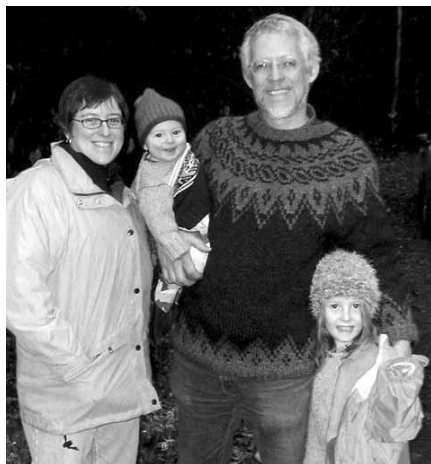
**Amina Philips** moved back to Minnesota from Japan. Next year she will be attending the College of St. Benedict.

### Class of 1992

**Jared Maliga** is teaching English in Nagoya, Japan. He continues to write stories and seems to be heading toward a career as a teacher.

**FSM Alums—Keep in touch!**  
Send your updates to  
[head@fsmn.org](mailto:head@fsmn.org).

# Changes at Friends School of Minnesota



Karen and Mark Niedermier with children Caleb and Sophie.

## Thank You, Mark!

In February, long-time head of school Mark Niedermier announced his decision to leave FSM after 15 years for a headship position at Pacific Northern Academy in Anchorage Alaska. Mark's accomplishments at Friends School were numerous, including moving from an enrollment of 20 in rented church space in Minneapolis to purchasing the current building on Englewood

Avenue in Saint Paul and seeing enrollment as high as 150 students. Thank you to Mark for his dedication and long term service. The Friends School community wishes the Niedermier family the best of luck on their new adventure.

## Searching for a New Head of School

The School Committee has formed a 10-person search committee, which has been meeting weekly since April. Focus groups and surveys with different members of FSM community, including parents, students, staff and Quakers, took place in June. Interviews and visits will occur in October, with a candidate recommendation to school committee by December 1st. The School Committee wishes to have the new head of school begin July 1, 2007.

## Interim Head Appointed

FSM is pleased to announce the board has appointed Lili Herbert as interim Head of School. Lili started her journey at Friends School as a parent in 1992, and served on the school



Lili Herbert (right) with husband Tim and daughter Ruth.

committee and as chair of the committee in 1994. Lili was instrumental in creating Friends School's Middle School. After a national search for a middle school director in 2003, Lili emerged as the clear leader.

Lili's experience in Quaker education includes her participation in the Friends Council on Education's Institute for Engaging Leadership in Friends Schools for the past year. This selective program prepares high-potential candidates for leadership roles in Quaker schools.

### Editing/proofing

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Friends School children

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**The 2005-2006 Friends School Committee. Standing:** Jim Lee (outgoing Clerk), Michael Nation, Emily Slowinski, Jennifer Cornell, Richard Pemberton, Fred Dulles, Don Holmes, Alice Johnson, Julie Caruso. **Seated:** Joanne Esser (incoming Clerk), Connie Archbald, Sally Wiedemann, Jill Pennie.

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# Pillars of Friends School Honored at Concert

A special ceremony took place on April 23rd as part of Friends School's Lower School concert, to recognize ten Quaker elders who have strengthened and supported FSM. The Pillars are:

- Connie Archbald
- Ralph and Kay Hilgendorf
- Don and Kathy Holmes
- Don Irish
- Emil and Emily Slowinski
- Frank and Raquel Wood

These people have been given the name "Pillars of Friends," because, like pillars of a building, together they have helped hold up the structure of FSM's community. Each pillar is different. Each holds up different sections, yet each is essential. They do not serve alone in isolation, but in coordination.

A short list of the Pillars' work includes:

- Serving as clerks of the School Committee, FSM's governing board,
- Providing significant financial support
- Painting classrooms over the summer
- Cleaning up after "Back to School" picnics

- Working tirelessly for the success of the Plant Sale

- Raising money for on the Capital Campaign

Several Pillars have also had children or grandchildren who attended Friends School.

As Tim Sheldon, clerk of the development committee, said at the ceremony, "Most importantly, the Pillars have been our conscience. These 10 individuals have linked us, and continue to link us back to our Quaker values. We are proud to declare those values of peace, simplicity, equality, community and integrity. These values are lived out in our work when we value each child who walks through our doors, as we strive to pass on the values we hold dear, and as we seek to expand access to the school."

Friends School of Minnesota thanks all of the Pillars for their positive impact and support.



FSM kindergarteners sang to honor the Pillars at the concert.

## Meet the Pillars of Friends School

**Connie Archbald:** Connie first heard about FSM through Minneapolis Friends Meeting and Raquel Wood. As a graduate of George School, Connie thought it was very important to have a Quaker school in Minnesota. Connie has been very involved in FSM, both as a donor and a volunteer. She is a past clerk of the School Committee, and is on the Development and Finance Committees. Connie says, "The continual growth of Friends School is of vital importance. It has a very strong foundation but I hope to see it even stronger with more community service and more recognition in the community. It's based on the principles of Quakerism and that makes it different than any other school. It's important to practice what is preached, which is what Friends School does."

**Fun Fact:** When not volunteering at Friends School, Connie travels the globe extensively and attends many Friends world meetings.

**Ralph and Kay Hilgendorf:** The Hilgendorfs are marvelously active volunteers in Friends School's Plant Sale, collecting thousands of fruit boxes night and day for the months leading up to the sale. Kay and Ralph are committed to making a difference and have raised their children to do the same. Along with their daughter, Kris, they helped found Friends School. Dhaviyd, their son, has been a key staff member at Friends for many years. Three of their grandchildren also attended FSM. Kay and Ralph believe that "Friends is a school that helps kids understand that they should care about the world and each other. The teachers and parents are an important piece in working together." They hope Friends School won't ever lose its sense of community and think the school has a great spirit.

**Fun Fact:** The Hilgendorfs have shared their home with about 30



**Some of the Pillars of Friends School took to the stage that evening. Pictured from left to right, Kathy Holmes, Don Irish, Raquel and Frank Wood, and Emil and Emily Slowinski.**

foster children plus their own five children. This year is their 50th anniversary.

**Don and Kathy Holmes:** Kathy has served as clerk of the School Committee and as head of Friends School's first Self-Study Committee. Don currently serves on the School Committee. Both Don and Kathy were active during the middle school expansion and during the original Capital Campaign. "We continue to be attracted by FSM's progressive education and conflict resolution, as well as its efforts to remain economically diverse." Kathy adds, "We have always been impressed with the people we have met on the committees and by the faculty over the years. Friends School makes kids want to be good citizens. Kids have a sense of themselves but also what they need to do for the world. Friends is a beacon."

**Fun Fact:** Don and Kathy painted the bathrooms and halls at FSM. They met at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**Don Irish:** Don is a former clerk and member of the School Committee. With more than 80 years behind him, Don remains a very active Quaker in the peace movement. He and his wife helped found a Quaker school in Chapel Hill. Don strongly affirms the values of Friends School, believing "Values are taught and caught." According to Don, Friends School continues to spread the values of tolerance, non-violence, and conflict resolution out into the larger community through its programs, graduates and families. Don paints walls during the summer and continues to bring in his "soup labels for education" nearly every week.

**Fun Fact:** When Don is not helping out at Friends or working for justice, he is out bicycling or playing doubles tennis.

**Emil and Emily Slowinski:** The Slowinskis found out about Friends School through Twin Cities Friends Meeting. Emily serves on the School Committee and Emil was key in the

success of the last Capital Campaign, by introducing many new people to the school. When Emily's mother died, they gave a scholarship in her name and have been very generous ever since. A chemistry professor at Macalester, Emil has come to Steve's class to help teach science. "We are tremendously interested in the school. We see it as an example of what is possible. The conflict resolution program, the fact that the school accommodates children with special needs, and because it is a caring and accepting community, fuels our commitment to Friends."

**Fun Fact:** Emily is a music scholar. Emil co-authored the all time best selling chemistry textbook *Chemical Principles in the Laboratory*.

**Raquel and Frank Wood:** The Woods were the early visionaries for the inception of Friends School. Raquel was an original founder of Friends School and its first head of school. Originally from out east, Raquel had taught at Haverford Friends School and understood the value and uniqueness of Quaker schools. Raquel and Frank were instrumental in getting Friends School of Minnesota off the ground. Four of their grandchildren have attended Friends School. "It's the values—the ideological underpinnings—that make Friends unique. The values spread from the children, to the parents and then out into the broader community," says Frank. Raquel adds, "The school is on the right track for the future. It has a good feel to it."

**Fun Fact:** When the Woods founded FSM in 1988, it had only one teacher and 11 students. Students gathered in a church basement.

# Quaker Values Visualized in *Simplicity Peace*

By Amanda Hand

**A**t a point in the school year when one more project could easily have been subsumed by the tide of year-end activities, the Friends School community pulled together with energy and joy to complete the Quaker Values Portable Mural Project. The project, also known as SPICE, was funded by a grant from the Friends Council on Education. It involved nearly the entire student body, classroom teachers, five volunteer artists, classroom parents and a volunteer carpenter in the creation of five large murals.

Each mural, painted on a 5x6' canvas and facilitated by a single artist, depicts one of the Quaker values of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community and Equality (SPICE). Because Friends School places a strong emphasis on the participation of children in their own learning, it was critical that artists find a way to facilitate children's involvement and not overwhelm the project with their own ideas and expertise—a particularly challenging task, given the complexity of the concepts and the fact that some artists were working with as many as 34 students on one mural.

Also challenging was the desire for the murals to be visually unified while still honoring the differences in ability and understanding of children ranging from 5 to 13 years of age. It speaks to the integrity and wisdom of the five facilitating artists that these challenges never had to be mentioned, but rather, grew naturally out of their own brainstorming session: a session that artists attended on a beautiful Sunday, Mother's Day morning no less! And whose heads were put together in a south Minneapolis coffee shop to come up with the idea of using Mandalas to bring cohesion to the



**Five artists from the Friends School community worked with students to create five portable, mandala-inspired murals.**

**Left:** Parent-artist Carreen Heegaard confers with a student artist on the Equality mural.

**Below:** Parent-artist Rachel Madden with the nearly completed Simplicity mural.

**Right:** Parent-artist Emel Sherzad with the Integrity mural elective group; **far right:** the nearly complete Integrity mural.

**Right, below:** Extended Day director and artist Kathy Glover works with a student on the Peace mural.

project? Who spent two hours flipping through books for techniques that would bring children's unique vision to life on the canvas? Who approached children with the question, "what does Peace look like"? Kathy Glover, Friends School aide, Extended Day director and water colorist, worked with the kindergarten to create "Peace." Clea Felien—professional painter, art educator, artist-in-residence and mother to Cooper, created "Community" with the first and second grades. Carreen Heegaard, mother of



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# Portable Murals...

## *Integrity Community Equality*



Elena and Ian, water colorist and student in the Minneapolis Institute of Art's rigorous docent training program, facilitated "Equality" with the third and fourth grades. Rachel Madden, mother of Maddi Kraft and a painter whose work is on exhibit at galleries in Minnesota and New York City, created "Simplicity" with the fifth and sixth grades. And finally, first-year FSM father of Mashal and Roshaan, Emel Sherzad, a prolific painter and busy owner of Khyber Pass restaurant, painted "Integrity" with an elective of fifth, sixth and seventh graders.

Now completed and first seen publicly at the 2006 graduation

at Sundin Music Hall, these five stunning murals will be on display not only at school but, because of their portable design (a key intention of the grant), at any and all off-site FSM functions where a strong visual, Quaker presence is desired. Friends School is so fortunate to have been given this opportunity to combine the energy and talent of our students with those of our artists to create this lasting, visual reminder of what FSM is about.

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# Service Learning Project

*FSM middle schoolers' visit to CENTRO, through their Spanish teacher's eyes*

By Veronica Guevara

**I**ntegrated learning, meeting genuine needs, youth voice and choice, reciprocity: It all began with the 7th and 8th graders' project to exercise their ability to write sentences and stories in Spanish, by reading and then writing illustrated primer books in Spanish.

I thought, "How could I make this more interesting and authentic?" Then I remembered CENTRO, a nonprofit agency serving the Latino community—a place that I visited last year. They have a preschool early childhood education program called SIEMBRA, in which mostly Hispanic children are taught in Spanish and English. This would be a great place for our students to share and read their writing projects!

But first, the students needed to rehearse and practice reading their books in front of a nonthreatening audience. So we invited Lower School classes to come to our Spanish storytime. Both the Lower School audiences, as well as the 7th and 8th graders, enjoyed sharing their stories and illustrations.

It was time to visit our friends at CENTRO. I decided to include the 5th and 6th graders, who would also visit SIEMBRA (four separate trips on separate days, in two weeks' time). The 5th and 6th graders, instead of reading with SIEMBRA students, would do projects. One day they played Bingo with the preschoolers. The Bingo cards had been hand-made by the 5th and 6th graders, with help from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders. (We had learned they were



**FSM student Ben with his SIEMBRA buddy**

focusing on shapes the week that the 5th/ 6th graders were visiting). The next day we made *papel picado* (cutting shapes into folded tissue paper to display as banners) and also made tortillas (in the shape of a *círculo*).

This was turning into an ever-growing Service Learning project, with multiple opportunities for students to learn about the larger Hispanic community, Hispanic immigrants, and the immigration issues currently being debated in

the Congress, and to give them real-world opportunities to speak and hear Spanish spoken in many different accents. We also learned about the many services that CENTRO offers its clients.

**Reciprocity, Civic Responsibility:** In discovering the needs of the families at CENTRO and in SIEMBRA, we decided to do a collection for their food shelf and for school supplies and diapers. The 5th and 6th graders made posters and flyers to encourage donations. We gath-



## Prints from the 5th–6th Grade Trip to Itasca State Park

ered and delivered the items on our last day of visits, as we toured the food shelf and other services offered at CENTRO.

**Reflection:** Upon returning, students were asked to write a brief, one-page reflection about their experience. What were the names of the preschoolers they worked with? What were they like? How did they feel during the visit? Would they go again? Stay a longer/shorter amount of time? What did they learn?

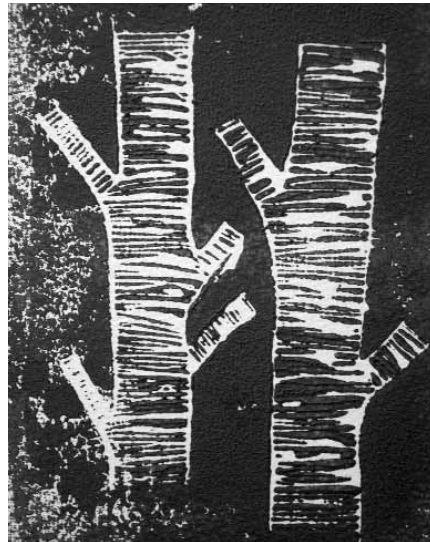
Most students responded that they would love to go back. “I had lots of fun at CENTRO. I think that next year people should go more and longer.” They also reported feelings of discomfort. “At certain points I felt kind of lost... I understood most of what they said, but some-

“At certain points I felt kind of lost... I understood most of what they said, but sometimes they knew more than I did.”

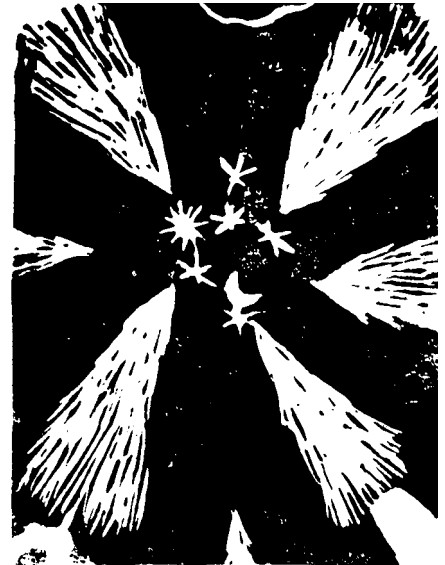
times they knew more than I did.” On the whole the reflections reported mostly positive responses, with feelings about preparing more for the trips, going back more frequently, and applying oneself to Spanish studying.

I wish to continue and develop our relationship with CENTRO, by bringing next year’s students back during class time and also with the new Service Learning Club. I think some of the most profound learning happens in relationships with the larger world. Spanish class affords us the opportunity to get to know this larger world, and it is important for us to venture out in the community and practice what we have learned, deepening our awareness of language and culture.

Veronica can be reached at [veronicag@fsmn.org](mailto:veronicag@fsmn.org)



Birch trees by Ruth



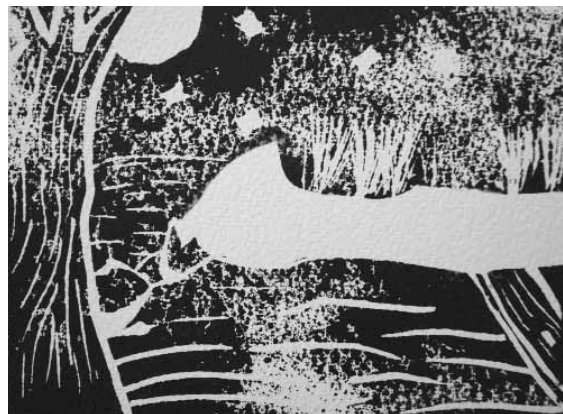
Pines at night by Arielle



Bare trees by Ruby



Night walk by Julia



**The March overnight trip to Itasca State Park was a great opportunity for FSM 5th and 6th graders to experience nature and spend time sketching in preparation for print-making once they were back at school.**

Snow across the Mississippi by Rhiannon

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# Multicultural Festival Celebrates the Many

On Sunday May 21st, Friends School of Minnesota looked a little different than usual. It was the first FSM Multicultural Festival. There was an interesting aroma of chilies in the air, and music— some familiar, some not so familiar. Children ran gleefully from room to room, wanting to see and learn Irish Step Dancing, wrote their names in Ojibwe and Chinese, and played dress-up with a jingle dress, flamenco costume, and Chinese silk outfits. After each experience, their passports were stamped and they proceeded onto the next station.

Wrapping up a year that began with the Harvest Festival in November, the Multicultural Committee called upon the community to share something from their cultures. Many responded with hands-on activities that could be done together. There was a salsa dancing station, Irish step dancing, Ojibwe nametags, arrowheads, and drumming, tamale-making and sampling, musical instruments station, world music musical chairs/ geography lesson, Esperanto (world language), Chinese calligraphy, Vietnamese traditional wedding dress and traditional fashions. And of course, there was food—Vietnamese sticky rice, pan dulce, salsa, tamales, and hibiscus tea.

The Multicultural Festival was about the community coming together to celebrate diversity. Joy Harjo says it best, in an excerpt from her poem, “Returning from the Enemy”:

“When entering another country do not claim ownership. It’s important to address the souls there kindly, with respect. And ask permission.”

By sponsoring these sorts of events, the Multicultural Committee facilitates students and their families’ journey into “another country.”



**Above left, FSM parent Dave Larson makes a tamale; above right, student Riley and Spanish teacher Veronica Guevara; below, FSM parent Robert Danforth presents student Henry with an Ojibwe name tag.**

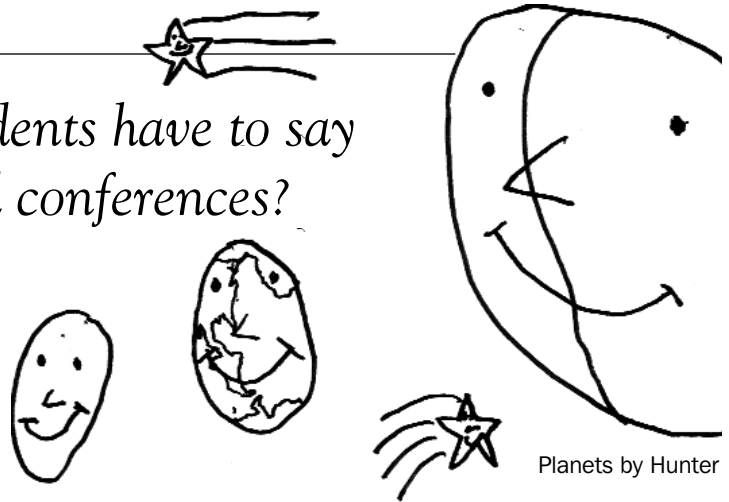


Although people may not have stayed there long this time, they learned how to explore and be together in a new setting. It’s a way of reaching out and trying new things, and opening our hearts and minds to the many ways of talking,

eating, dancing, dressing, music-making, and being.

The Multicultural Committee invites FSM’s community to join the events in the upcoming school year.

*What do Friends School students have to say about conflict resolution and conferences?*



Planets by Hunter

“When we finish the conference and we apologize for the behavior to each other, I try not to do that behavior that was part of the problem. It helps me be a better friend.”

—Tate, grade 3

“Usually, when I have a conference the kids in the conference end up talking to each other on the way back to the classroom. That helps me feel better.”

—Eva, grade 3

“Fighting is not the answer, not at all. I suggest signing up for a conference if you want to solve it.”

—Joe, grade 3

“I think conflict resolution helps me because it helps me talk with another person with a teacher there and then I feel better. It can be scary talking about problems, but it’s not that scary in a conference.”

—Maddi, grade 4

“Conferences are not about getting in trouble—they are about solving a problem.”

—Elena, grade 5

“Conferences make people all gooey inside.”

—Mohammad, grade 5

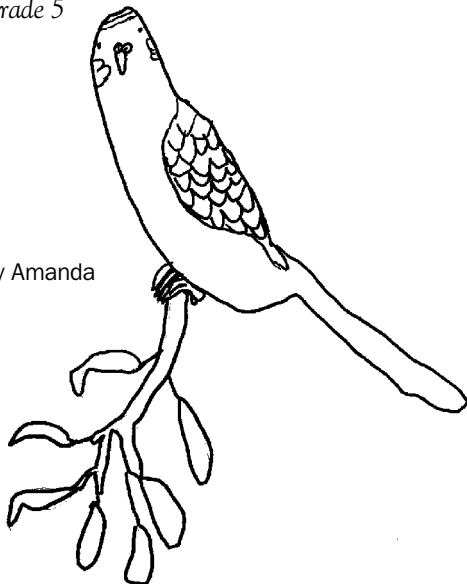
“Conferences might make you uncomfortable but in the long run, they make you better inside because you know how people feel.”

—Paco, grade 5



Chalk Dragon by Emily

Bird by Amanda



“When people sign up for conferences they let out their feelings, not physically but verbally. But when you don’t have conferences, you let out your feelings physically.”

—Alex, grade 6

“Conferences help people think about their feelings before they take actions. You don’t have as much guilt or bad feelings after a conference.”

—Mckinley, grade 6

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# Calendar

ARTS ETC! Summer Program	<i>June 26– August 4</i>
New Parent and Middle School Orientation at FSM	<i>August 23, 7:00 p.m.</i>
Back-to-School Picnic, Horton Park	<i>August 31, 6:00 p.m.</i>
First Day of School	<i>September 5</i>
Fall Picnic at Peterson's Farm	<i>September 30, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.</i>
Admissions Open House	<i>November 8, 6:30 p.m.</i>
Grandparent and Special Person Day	<i>November 10, 2:00 p.m.</i>
FSM Gala and Silent Auction	<i>November 18th evening, location TBA</i>



**The Friends School of Minnesota Class of 2006**

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