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WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

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## Welcome Back Foxes!

By Ali Benjamin '23

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Lawn sign on the oval welcomes MFS students back to campus. (Photo: Ali Benjamin '23)

On September 9, 2021, Moorestown Friends School welcomed all 638 students back to campus to start the school year together

for the first time in over a year. After a 2020-2021 school year filled with changes in learning modes, plexiglass-covered desks, and one

way hallways and staircases, coming to school on the first day felt almost normal. Although there was much excitement sur-

rounding this return to campus, there were also several aspects of returning to school that took some adjusting. Shelby Noel '23 noted, "It's definitely been a hard transition, but I found it easier being in person towards the end of last year, so it made [the transition] a lot smoother."

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, many of the simple practices associated with coming to school were lost, such as small group discussions and physical copies of assignments. Noel noticed, "A challenge is organizing the handouts because last year we didn't really get any papers so it's been hard to remember what folders are with which [class]."

Upper School history teacher Steven Baumann had a unique experience with returning to cam-

pus this fall, as he began his MFS career in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many aspects of leading a class had to be adapted and changed, including the physical teaching environment. Baumann commented on this transition: "I think it's been really good and I'm really excited to have a classroom in my classroom so far."

The beginning of the 2021-2022 school year gave both students and staff a sense of much-needed normalcy—one that many hope will continue throughout the year. Full class discussions, spirit week, and in-person assignments are just some of the ways the MFS community is slowly making its return to a standard school experience.

## Keeping up with the Beekeepers

By Julia Tourtellotte '23

This summer has brought about some big changes within the Beekeeping Club, not only regarding the bees, but also to the club's structure itself. Members have been working diligently, visiting the hive every 3 weeks to ensure the bees, as well as their hive, are well-maintained and given the resources they need to develop.

The bees themselves have made a lot of progress this summer. According to Daniel Sorokin, the colony expanded much faster than anticipated, so much so that the club has installed another box, called a super, on top of the original box to provide more space for the new bees.

This rapid expansion is seen as great news to those involved. "Because of the great progress the

bees have made," Daniel Sorokin '23 explained, "we were actually able to collect two frames of honey that we are planning on giving to the administration as a gift."

Additionally, red reflectors have been installed as a barrier surrounding the hive for students to keep a safe distance.

"You should only pass the red reflectors if permitted to do so by Mr. Newman, Sam DeJoseph, Aidan Short, or myself," commented Sorokin.

The beekeeping club itself has undergone a few new changes as Agenda appointed them as a student government subcommittee at the end of last year. This will enable the club to act on ideas they otherwise would not have had the approval to accomplish. Clerks



Beekeeping club working at their first meeting this school year. Photo: Campbell McHale, Beekeeping Club Photographer.

are yet to be decided for this committee. The process will follow the format of nominating committees used for Agenda and Diversity Committees.

Sam DeJoseph '23 said he is excited about this change: "I think

that the club becoming a committee will help us progress further as a group, as we have lots of ideas that may not happen if we had to wait for approval in the club setting."

"I'm looking forward to further

expansion and honey harvesting," DeJoseph said, "We hope to clean out and replant the nearby garden beds which will not only benefit the bees, but also help to beautify the school!"

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## Summer Upgrades

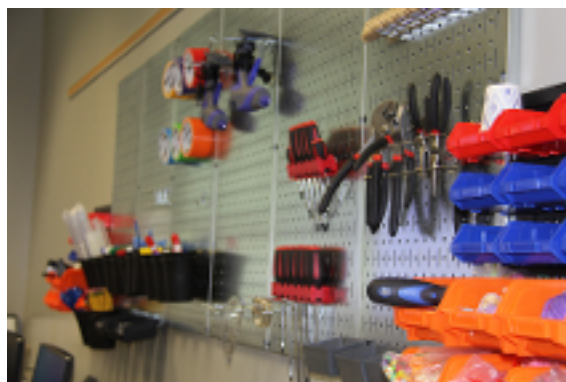
By: Emma Vernick '23, Hannah Puc '24, Julia Tourtellotte '23, and Ishaan Shah '22

Photos By: Julia Tourtellotte and Emma Vernick



### Lower School Rainbow Repainted

The Lower School rainbow was repainted two weeks before school started by Tyfanee Pratt, a former assistant teacher at MFS. Ted Harnwell, Director of Physical Plant, said, "The students really enjoy seeing it, and it really brightened up that area."



### Lab 1 Renovations

Computer Lab 1 underwent notable renovations over the summer to transform the lab into a maker space environment. Steve Kolaris, Director of Technology, spearheaded the project, working with the Maintenance Department to keep expenses to a minimum. Two brand new 3D printers and a laser cutter were among the many tools and equipment added. Kolaris said the Technology Department wanted "to create a more hands-on and creative approach in technology classes."



### Playground Construction

Construction on the playground began over the summer. Head of School Julia de la Torre started the project when the playground began to age and needed restoration. de la Torre explained: "The playground has been around for over 20 years. And so, with any playground, it starts to deteriorate. You could start to see that things were cracking and breaking."



### Tennis Courts Powerwashed

Preparation for the fall tennis season began over the summer with the powerwashing of all tennis courts. The project took four weekends to complete. Ted Harnwell, Director of Physical Plant, said poor drainage on the courts causes pooling, which leaves behind stains that require powerwashing to remove.



### Hippo Repainted

Students of the class of '22 visited campus on August 31st to repaint the hippo, a beloved MFS tradition for seniors. Trisha Nelson, '22, one of the seniors who painted the hippo, reflected on her experience, "it was a really long day, but it was really fun." This year's theme revolves around the new Disney movie, "Luca."

## MFS 2021, the Return of the Dining Hall

By: Alicia Leung '24

After being unused for a year due to Covid-19, the Dining Hall made its anxiously-awaited return for student and faculty use in the 2021-2022 school year. However, it comes back with a few modifications and varied reactions.

Some of the new changes in the Dining Hall include new seating limits, payment options, and guidelines. While eating inside the lunchroom, only four students will be allowed at each table and all the windows will be open. There

will be a limit to the number of students that can eat inside, but there will still be the option to eat outside, or in other spaces around school. Cash will not be accepted, and students punch in codes as a contactless payment method.

While the new changes to the Dining Hall create a different atmosphere than before, students still expressed their excitement for some sense of normalcy to return during lunch time. Sophomore Olivia Neri shared her enthusiasm for seeing the space finally back

in action: "I've heard nothing but good things about the Dining Hall, so I'm relatively excited about it reopening. It'll be nice to have a little more normalcy again!" Neri has not used the Dining Hall before since last year was her first at MFS, so this will be the first time for her to socialize and interact within this space.

Students who have used the Dining Hall for a while also share feelings of excitement regarding the news. Roma Jha '22 talked about her appreciation for the

Dining Hall's return, as it allowed her to finally notice the "little things" she had missed before the space's closure: "A few days ago I was standing in the lunch line waiting, and I thought about how much I actually missed getting that opportunity" stated Jha. "So that's definitely the most exciting thing, just being able to be with people again."

Faculty, along with students, said they are eager to see the Dining Hall make its return. Middle and Upper School Health



Dining Hall open for use in the 2021-2022 school year.

Photo: Alicia Leung '24

and PE teacher Erick Cotter shared his sentiments on the Dining Hall reopening as well: "I am extremely excited that it is open. It's nice to be able to grab food, see people you normally wouldn't see throughout the day, be

able to sit down, and eventually eat with them." He believes that the Dining Hall's reopening is "really important for our community building," and seems one step closer to some sense of normalcy.

## Swinging into the New School Year as Playground Construction Continues

By Lauren Edelstein '22, and Jordan Grabelle '22



A sketch of the playground's expected outcome. MFS Playscape Artist Rendering by Studio .



Progress on the new Lower School Playscape as of September 17, 2021. Photos: Lauren Edelstein '22.



Stay tuned for more updates on the playground's progress and children's reactions to the project by checking [mfswordsworth.com](http://mfswordsworth.com).

## Reflecting on Reflection

### Students' thoughts on the first MFW of the year

By Dinah Megibow-Taylor '24

After 18 months of logging into Zooms instead of walking into the Meetinghouse, seeing each grade level through a computer screen instead of the opposite benches, and verbal "good mornings" sans handshakes, the Upper School experienced their first Meeting for Worship since the pre-pandemic world, but with a key difference: worship was held in the Red Gym, not the

Meetinghouse. The change of setting was necessary because currently the Meetinghouse has a capacity of seventy people, meaning that the Upper School is unable to gather as a whole in that space. The Red Gym can serve as a place to hold worship because it is large enough to accommodate the US student body in full. It's clear after the first Meeting, though, that there were some drawbacks to using the gym. Some

students took issue with the seating arrangements, as some advisor groups had to sit on the ground while others sat on bleachers. "[MFW] in the gym was good, but my only complaint would have to be that it was uncomfortable sitting on the floor for forty minutes," said Ben Batra '24. Ninth grader Anna Thompson, who experienced Meeting for the first time, said the seating, "could've been planned out a

little better," but "overall it was alright." Another difficulty was that the echo and great size of the gym made it hard to understand announcements and directions. Meeting for Worship for Business Clerk Lily Buchdahl '22, who delivered the daily announcements, said, "The acoustics were kind of hard to work with," but despite this obstacle, "it was nice to be back with everyone."

Following the announcements, at the end of Meeting as grade levels were dismissed, there was some chaos exiting the gym that resulted in everybody leaving at once. Saiya Patel '22, a member of Worship Planning Committee, noted, "people weren't following directions." She attributed this to the loudness of the gym and because "people weren't as focused as they would be in the Meetinghouse." Looking towards

the future, many students said they would like to see different types of Meeting for Worship, whether that be in different locations or different groupings. Others said they were excited for the possibility of alternative MFW options, such as meditation and drawing. "Besides the Meetinghouse, I'd like to see grade-level Meetings or even advisory [MFW]," said Patel.

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## Got opinions? WordsWorth would love to hear from you!

Please write us a Letter to the Editor and send via email to [journalism@mfriends.org](mailto:journalism@mfriends.org).



Read tips for writing effective Letters to the Editor.

## A Letter to the Plexiglass

By Vani Hanamirian '22

Virtual: Screens, cameras, bed, school, class, sleep, dogs, four walls of home.

In person: masks, six feet, distance, separation, plexiglass.

Just like that — the school year came around again with new faces and new rooms, but something was missing: plexiglass.

It was a long year filled with scraped arms and legs; the plexiglass always found a way to scratch someone while they were standing up to

grab a tissue or on their way to the bathroom. Oh, how many bags were ripped as the plexiglass tore open seams allowing books, laptops, and blue light glasses to fall out. Some may say that the plexiglass helped us get a “normal” school year, yet it physically and metaphorically stood between friendships, relationships, and side banter in the classroom. It was like a wall separating

friends from friends and mentors from students.

The plexiglass stood tall on our desks for the 2020-21 school year. It was a reminder that we were as together as we could be. We tried to avoid it, leaning back to talk to friends around the plastic shields that were meant to provide safety. It tried to remind us we were physically safe, but that couldn't change the feeling of what students were dealing

with living in a pandemic.

Freshmen never really experienced high school, seniors were cheated out of their final year, and preschool parents learned how hard it is to teach a class of four-year-olds from home. It felt like barriers were being put up so that we would be separated from one another, physically blocked from communication.

Together MFS students went from

classroom to classroom and each entered their individual cage: three walls attached to the desk with sticky tack.

The plexiglass transformed rooms from free airspace to enclosures. It allowed us to learn, yet suffocated us, and made us feel trapped. The plexiglass was a metaphor, an example: it was placed there so we would know we were not in a normal year nor at a place where it was fully safe

to learn in-person. Its presence reminded us of those of us who had, or were impacted directly, by COVID.

Presentations on global news and Kahoot games and collaborative work still continued.

Plexiglass can't take away the MFS spirit of the classroom no matter how isolating it could feel at times.

## Heard in the Hallway

By Michael Huettl '23, Alicia Leung '24, Aadit Pande '23, and Amir Mashaqi '23



"My favorite highlight about school so far has been being able to have lunch with my friends again, and also being able to bond with teachers more. It's just another step towards normalcy that I'm happy about." -Himanshu Shore '24



"I'd say my back to school experience has been very positive because last year I was all virtual so this year it's good to come back in-person, see all of my classmates, and get used to having normal school again. I'm glad that for my last year of high school I'll have a good high school experience." -Haroun Shah '22



"[School's] a bit different now. I'm an officer of three clubs, but I'm getting acclimated to the responsibility of taking care of things around the school, and it's refreshing." -David Maturo '22

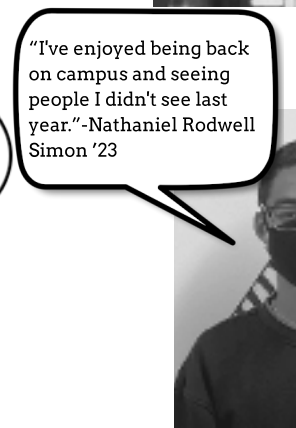
"One of my favorite things from being back to school is being a senior and having our senior privileges. We're able to go uptown to Main Street during free periods and lunch, and also we're planning to have a lot of senior bonding activities this year like having a barbecue night, so I'm looking forward to senior activities like those." -Kathryn Sebastian '22



"A highlight is probably seeing everyone at school and in-person learning and playing sports." -Jacob Tom '24



"One thing I've liked is that the dining hall is back open. I don't need to bring and make lunch everyday, and we can sit with our friends." -Michael Kowalski '23



"I've enjoyed being back on campus and seeing people I didn't see last year." -Nathaniel Rodwell Simon '23

"My back to school experience has been great. I got to see all of my friends and I got to be in school and it's better to be in person than online." -Derrick Phillips '23

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