

# Play Mountain Place

# Community News



Sonja Smith (left) with Naoko Watanabe and Jemina Ocampo-Ong at the Spring Party

## Thanks for Joining Us!

### Dear Alumni, Friends and Families of Play Mountain Place,

Thank you to everyone who joined us by giving to Play Mountain Place this year! By giving, you have reaffirmed and renewed our historic commitment to the respectful treatment of all people and to valuing the differences between people.

#### Campus Improvements

Top right: In August 2017, we repaired the outside steps to Mountain House. A professional crew worked to replace steps, landing, and railing in time for school to start.

Bottom right: The Buildings and Grounds Crew shares a lunch after a morning of cleaning and making light repairs to our school. We are so thankful to the parents for their work commitment to improve our campus. Clockwise from left: Guy Reid, Reirani Taurima, Gregg Fleishman, Chris Towery, Liliana Rodriguez, Stephen Murray, Jonas Tauber, Naoko Watanabe and Ida Reid.

With your steadfast support, we raised **\$93,400** in support of the students, staff, facilities and programs through our Annual Giving Campaign. Our dedication runs deep, and so again, and for the **9th year in a row**, we had **100% participation** from our current parents, staff and Board.

Your donations, no matter the amount, make a tremendous impact each and every day at Play Mountain Place. If you haven't had a chance to make a contribution yet, or if you would like to give again, please take a moment to give. A return envelope is attached for your convenience.

Giving annually can help us stay connected – and we so very much want to stay connected with you. With gratitude,

**-Sonja Smith, Director of Development**



## Neighborhood Walks

By Rosie Frost, Teacher

Our intrepid wanderers in House Group this year adventured up and down our neighborhood streets, greeting people, hearing their stories, learning about our local businesses, and growing empathy through the knowing of others.

Together, our group facilitated visits to many local businesses over the course of the year. We heard from their owners what they do, building a sense of community spirit, and in turn, understanding and trusting our place within that community.

We mapped our visits and walks, opening up a dialogue about where we went, how we walked there, and where we wanted to go next.

As this curriculum grew, we heard from the children about their curiosities and creativity. Together, we developed the "I Don't Know" walk, where we used a coin with "Left" and "Right" on each side, and flipped it each time we came to a fork in the road. On one such walk, we happened upon three businesses and were gifted a delicious popsicle (sugar-free) in the end!

All of our neighborhood walks helped us to connect with our neighbors and make the most of our beautiful days!



## We Love Our Outstanding Teachers!

Every day in the program at Play Mountain Place, we witness our teachers tuning-in, respecting, seeing and celebrating life with their students.

As children learn and grow, teachers offer freedom in many areas of their student's lives – the freedom to be themselves, to inquire, to explore, to trust themselves, to make mistakes and to have problems – all without judgement. As children discover what their problems

are, teachers guide them to their own solutions. Within the space of this trust of their student's ability, they begin to offer a curriculum that evolves out of the children's interests, goes in many different directions and at each child's own speed. They inspire and guide, but only when there is a truly shared passion. In working this way, they protect the love of learning and creativity for many children and establish long-lasting relationships.

Many alumni children tell us they remember their teachers more like a family member, someone who was deeply involved in their lives, and as someone whose close personal relationship continues to inform them through life. In a recent Alumni Panel Parent Meeting, a former student said, "I really value the adult support that I got from Play Mountain Place. Whenever I come back, or see my teachers at an event, I still have people who miss me. It's like hugging an aunt or uncle. They really help you through life." Another student from the same panel added, "I feel very connected to the teachers, still. I live close to my elementary teacher, and every time I see her, she makes sure I'm OK. She is very caring. It's a motherly feeling. It never goes away."

The teachers at Play Mountain Place are truly full of heart. We simply love and cherish them!



Teachers and Staff gather for our annual photo in August 2017.

## 2018-19 Board of Trustees

**We appreciate our Board of Trustees who have dedicated their time, talents and energy to keep the school's present and future strong.**



Alonso Cephus (Board Treasurer) at last year's Board Retreat.



Kristin Hall (Board Member) with daughter Sonja and husband Jeff at the Spring Bazaar.

The continued success of Play Mountain Place would not be possible without the support and hard work of the Board of Trustees. Their ongoing dedication ensures that our school stays true to the vision of the founder, Phyllis Fleishman. This year alone, they've shepherded property refinancing, participated in fund raising, updated Board policies, and worked on strategic planning.

We have Board Committees working consistently in the areas of Executive, Leadership, Development, Nominating, Personnel Practices, and Finance. In addition to our current Board members, Ginger Emerson, a former parent, volunteers on our Development Committee and current parent, Naomi Roberts, has recently begun a volunteer role on the Board.

Ann T. Rosato (President), Bhaskar Krishnamachari (Member), Michelle Weiner (Secretary), Trudi Forristal (Staff Representative), Judy Accardi (School Director, Member Ex-Officio), Naomi Roberts (Board Volunteer), Jan Kirsch (Vice-President). Not pictured in group, see individual photos: Alonso Cephus (Treasurer), and Kristin Hall (Member)

## Magic with Microbes

By Ayla Stern Kang, Teacher

This year in Mountain Yard, we experimented with fermentation in our Magic with Microbes class. In one of our projects, we cut up cabbage, radishes, carrots, garlic, and ginger and added salt and spices to make sauerkraut and kimchi. Children enjoyed punching, hitting, and squashing the cabbage in order to extract more liquid. One child suggested that we add some cabbage to the moosh area because it felt so good to punch. Children wrote and drew predictions about what would happen; and then we let the sauerkraut and kimchi sit for about a month. Along the way, we tested it and observed changes to the taste and texture. We learned about the tiny bacteria living in our ferments. Even though we couldn't see them, we could see evidence of their actions - bubbles, a softer texture, and gradual change from salty to sour. When we decided that the sauerkraut and kimchi were ready, everyone had a chance to taste each variety and discuss what they noticed. Most of the children enjoyed eating it, especially the sauerkraut. We had so much that the children decided to sell it, organizing a rather tasty and successful fund-raiser.



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Clockwise starting with photo to the right:



# A Note From The Director

## Welcome to our Community Newsletter!

It's been another busy, productive year at Play Mountain Place. September to June just flies by and in the Summer, we get to slow down, evaluate the past year and plan for the next year. Our Community Newsletter is our way of sharing with all of you some of the highlights of the year – visits and correspondence from alums, photos of the Spring Bazaar and Party, news from the children's program, and of course, the results of our fundraising efforts.

This year, several of our longtime teachers decided to move on to new adventures in their lives. In thinking about them and their contributions, we wanted to recognize and appreciate all of our teachers in this newsletter. We will have new teachers and interns joining us in the Fall. And "the beat goes on." As the years go by and staff and families come and go, I think about Phyllis a lot and how important it was to her to send people out into the world and to welcome new people here – both in order to spread the philosophy and ideals of Play Mountain Place as far and wide as we could.

Thank you to all of you who stay in touch with us and who work together to keep Play Mountain Place strong and vibrant.

Whether together or separately, we can all impact our individual communities with the values we learned and shared here.

Sincerely,

– Judy Accardi, Director

# Alumni News

Since our last newsletter, so many of you have stopped by or contacted us. Here are some of the people we have heard from, seen, or know about:

### In 2017-2018, we had visits from:

**Robert Frangenberg** and **Ingrid Lamirault** stopped by to say hello in September (see photo). They said their son **Nick Frangenberg** is currently attending Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

**Marson and Andrew Rice** stopped by in October (see photo). Marson is attending Palisades High School and had just written an English paper about his experiences at Park Day while he was in Mountain Yard.

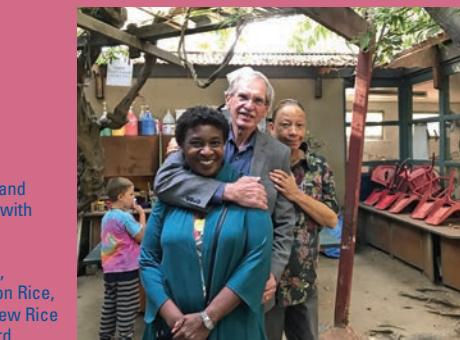
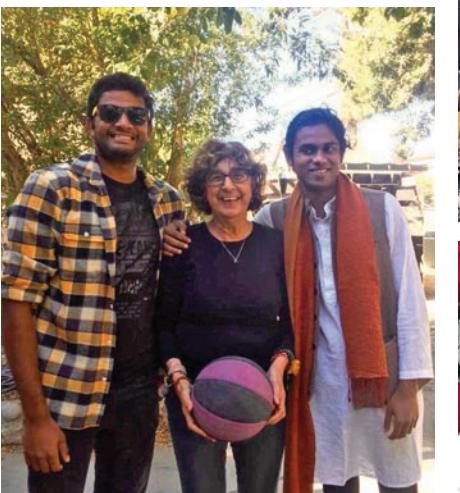
**Georgina Bates** stopped by in November. Georgina was a student here in the 1990s and lives in New York. She is currently working as a theatre director there and says that much of the person she is today was informed by Play Mountain Place.

**Ashik Kumar** and **Abhay Nambiar** also stopped by in November (see photo). Ashik is attending Columbia University and Abhay had just started at Santa Monica Community College.

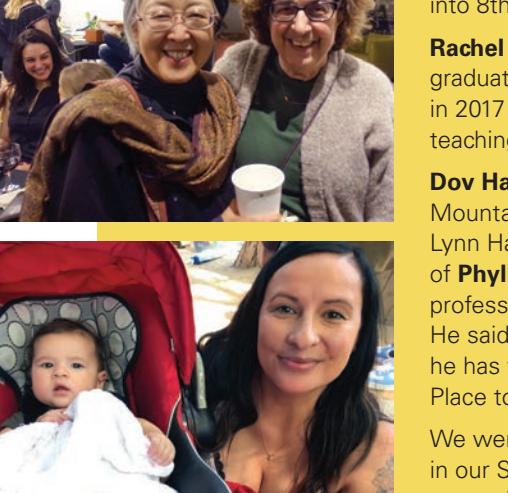
**Doug, Jennifer, Jack and Owen Miller** also stopped by in November (see photo). They were on their way to visit **Alonso Ramirez**. They said that Jack is currently in 9th grade and Owen is in 7th grade.



Clockwise from above: Jeff Smith, Judy Accardi and Caleb Jaffe share some time after the Bazaar in April; Gregg Fleishman and Kanako Kumaki at the Spring Party; Hisayo Watanabe and Judy Accardi at the Spring Party; and Abhay Nambiar, Judy, and Ashik Kumar pose with a basketball in November.



Adrian Dyer visited Play Mountain Place and Judy Accardi in May. He was in Los Angeles for a workshop and is doing well.



At Thanksgiving, Judy Accardi ran into **Bob Glouberman**, **Stefanie Klein** and their daughter **Lexey Glouberman** at the San Francisco Airport. Lexey attends Wildwood High School. They said, "We all have wonderful memories of Lexey's years at Play Mountain Place."

In March, **Val Lawson** stopped by with a donation for the program. She is excited to stay in touch with Play Mountain Place and loves our Newsletter. She said that her sons, **Eric and Alan Lawson**, are both doing well. **Greg Lawson**, her husband, is retired.

**Adrian Dyer** visited Play Mountain Place and Judy Accardi in May. He was in Los Angeles for a workshop and is doing well.

**Willow and Geri Vergara** visited in July. Willow is going into 10th grade, and **Amara Vergara** is going into 8th; both are pursuing dance.

**Arlene Goodwin** stopped by in July (see photo). She graduated from college in Early Childhood Education in 2017 and is currently living in Sacramento teaching gymnastics.

**Susan, James and Katie Lee** wrote in with a contribution and said, "Sending our best and love to everyone at Play Mountain Place. Hope to come and visit one of these days!"

**Goldie Samp** wrote in with a contribution (see photo). She said, "Thank you for being YOU, PMP!!!"

**Hector & Hisayo Watanabe** wrote in with a contribution for a teacher's annual health benefit "on behalf of my [family] **Naomi Watanabe**, **Naoko Watanabe & Kade Velasquez**."

**Grant Powers** (teacher Benny in the '70s) spoke with **Ginger Emerson** in November. He said that working here was one of the greatest learning experiences of his life. He met **Phyllis Fleishman**, was hired as an intern, and then became a teacher. He said, "I will continue to give back to Play Mountain Place. It's one of the few ways I can repay what I got from the experience."

We were so happy to see so many alumni, current parents, parents of alumni, current and former teachers at our 2018 Events, the **Spring Party on March 17** and **Spring Bazaar on April 14, 2018**. Thanks to all for coming to and supporting our annual events! Many thanks also go to our Board of Trustee President, Alumnus, and parent of an Alum, **Ann T. Rosato**, for coordinating the party and the Bazaar Raffle for so many years. Check out the photos here from our wonderful gatherings!



Fun at the Bazaar: (left) Eddie Rosato Johnson, Ann T. Rosato and Mike Johnson; and (right) Summer (Saldana) Nouri and her family.

### We've heard via email and snail mail from:

**Janice Evans** wrote in with a contribution in honor of her son **Zachary John Hibbing Mathewson**.

**Arlene Goodwin** wrote in with a contribution in honor of **Patricia Pool Gross**, who has given so much to Play Mountain Place over many years."

**Susan, James and Katie Lee** wrote in with a contribution and said, "Sending our best and love to everyone at Play Mountain Place. Hope to come and visit one of these days!"

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Above: Alums at an annual family gathering. L to R: Sean Sevitski, Summer (Saldana) Nouri, Shawna (Wells) Urbano, Nichole (Kessler) McGinley, Ayana Boze (spouse of Jason Boze), Jennifer Vylasek, Andrea (Brown) Welch, Maurice Welch (spouse of Andrea).

Left: Charlie Smith, Jamie Persky, and Ambrose James say hello.

**Jennifer Scott** wrote in with a contribution (see photo) and said, "Greetings from Nevada City. **Lucia Lifland** is in her junior year and **Noah Lifland** is in his senior year of high school. Jen is volunteer coordinator at Mountain Stream Meditation Center."

In December, we heard from **Ken Simpson** who was spending some time with **Jayro Dyer, Lynn Unroe, Kai Bravo and Pat Sevitski** in Northern California. He recalled the time in 1977 when **Phyllis Fleishman** had just died, and he and Jayro said, "We couldn't just go ask Phyllis or **Manny Fleishman** about a problem. At that point, it really hit home for us that we were now the ones who would run the school without Phyllis."

**Gary Abreim** wrote in with a contribution saying, "How fortunate we are to have Play Mountain in our life experience, old & new."

**Darby Bayliss** wrote in with a contribution and said, "We are still farming in Michigan. Keep up the good work giving kids the tools to understand themselves and others and grow up into people who make the world a better place." She also said that **Maeve Bronson** is a freshman at University of Michigan and **Brenna Bronson** is living in Los Angeles.

**George & Nancy Turner** wrote in with a contribution saying, "We loved our visits there when **Otto Turner** attended."

**Mia Visyak Glass** called in with a donation and update on her children. She said that they are "Really thankful for the road they took, figuring out schools based on who her children are." **Aidan** is currently in 8th grade and looking at various high schools and **Josephine** is in 11th grade about to travel to Spain with a school program. All are doing well.

**Lee Coopriider** wrote in with a donation in honor of his daughter **Zoe Coopriider Randol**.

**Charlie Smith** visited with **Ambrose and Charlie James** in July (see photo). Charlie James is heading to Kobe, Japan, to teach English. Ambrose James had just returned from visiting his Grandmother in Japan and is currently studying Graphic Design at Santa Monica Community College.

**Greg Falken** continues to generously host the Play Mountain Place website through his company **Webdancers**. Thanks Greg!

Off to college in the Fall are: **Aiden Samp**, **Carlos Flores**, **Diego Chiat**, **Eddie Rosato**, **Johnson**, **Eliot Vartian-Foss**, **Emilia Zielinski**, **Lakan Ong** and **Nathalie Morales**.

Congratulations go to **Aron Liebig**, **Dante Park**, **Gabby Morse** and **Kyoko Van Dyck** for graduating from college this year.

We were so sad to hear of the following death in our community: **Pam Emerson** in March 2018.

**We sincerely apologize if we have forgotten any of you.** We would love to hear what's up with you! Please send any news to [info@playmountain.org](mailto:info@playmountain.org)



Clockwise from top left: Scenes from the Spring Bazaar: Gaile Price and Rosie Frost enjoying the day; Arden and Abby Zielinski share a hug; Amar Vergara and Anya Neilson in the memory cafe; and Jen Scott, Aiden and Goldie Samp visit.



### We have also heard news about these alums from their families:

### From the top down:

**Gwen Ross** called with her annual donation recently and said her grandson, **Mark Ross**' son, is going to Tuskegee University in the Fall. It's the same college that both **Ellyn and Mark Ross** attended. She also said that her granddaughter, **Ellyn's** daughter, just graduated from St. John's University in Queens, New York and is now employed by the University. She said, "We owe all of our great communication in our family to all the humanistic training we had at Play Mountain Place."

**Isaac Perloff** was married in September and is currently working as a Physical Therapist in San Francisco.

**Eli Perloff** is currently living and rock climbing in Bishop, CA, and working at Mountain Rambler Brewery.

**Ethan Emerson** and family have bought a home in Sherman Oaks and are having a baby this fall. Ethan has been playing in his Jazz Band the "Icy Hot Club" at the Culver Hotel on weekends.

**Charlie Smith** visited with **Ambrose and Charlie James** in July (see photo). Charlie James is heading to Kobe, Japan, to teach English. Ambrose James had just returned from visiting his Grandmother in Japan and is currently studying Graphic Design at Santa Monica Community College.

**Jessica Smith** wrote in January with an update. She said, "I was there around 1982-86. I actually was just on your website and saw a photo of me in the history page! I am on top of the mountain in Mountain Yard with **Jacob and Sam**. Thank you so much! I have only the best memories of being at Play Mountain Place."

**Jameson Kleiner** wrote in. He let us know he was visiting Berkeley in the Spring and had attended an autism awareness event there with his cousin.

**Candice Foss** wrote us in July and said, "We just returned from **Eliot's** college orientation at Albion College in Michigan. He is interested in studio art and ceramics."

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