



MONARCH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Fall/Winter 2015

MONARCH SCHOOL

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Monarch Parents Foundation

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New Orientation Course Added!

Monarch School's Orientation class recently added an exciting new component to the curriculum. Students will now learn a variety of outdoor skills throughout the course which will culminate in a four-day backcountry trip at the end of the semester. Skills taught include:

- Proper bear country technique (bear hangs)
- How to read weather patterns (low vs. high pressure; cloud meanings)
- Wilderness First Aid
- Risk management
- How to pack a backpack
- Navigation and orienteering (map reading)
- Leave No Trace principles (lessens our impact on the environment)
- Proper clothing for proper weather (down vs. synthetic; fleece vs. wool)

The final trip will not only allow students to practice the skills they have learned, but will also provide them the opportunity to reconnect with their wilderness experience and refocus on their goals as they head into their first full semester at Monarch School. Thanks to

our Orientation class teachers, Charley Nish and Jade Stevens, for their enthusiastic attitudes and creative curriculum planning.

~Jamie Jones, Academic Director~





A Graduate's Parting Speech

The road to success is not paved. The path to success is rocky, circuitous, treacherous and unforgiving. Happiness does not come from a lack of things that force you down to your knees and humble you to the insurmountable power of the universe. Happiness comes from being brought to your knees time and time and time again, until the only thing you know how to do is to rise. To rise, and move forward. That is how we gained our identity as a species, and moreover how we gain our identity in the face of imminent destruction. How I respond to the gravel under my bare feet, or the looming mountains which I have to climb defines me. When I've blisters of blood on my soles, or I trip and gash my knees on broken glass, what I do in those pivotal moments of choice sculpt the impossible answer to the impossible question: who am I? Where do I come from, and where do I want to go? Do I want to be happy?

I imagine life in the smallest things. I imagine that I can learn from every single thing in this room and the world. I'm scarred from my self-loathing and my lack of rationality. And while those scars mean a past of hatred and irrationality, scars also mean healing. Scars mean growth. So while I could easily shame myself for the tumultuousness of my past, I could also learn from what has failed me. All the blood stains on the carpet, and lungs full of poison. I have love from within now, and my calloused knees will take me wherever my heart may lead.

Friends come and go, but family is forever. I don't know who said that originally, but I like to think it was my mom. Mothers are the wisest people in the world. Yes? I remember, in the past, my mother was my only thread of hope, she was saving me from my own destruction and my dad, who was always so affectionate. Until now, I realize I had to have my ego shot, with time in the mountains, hillsides, and the mind to see it. Thank God I now know that in this world of hate, evil people and solitude, I'll never be alone, because I have an incredible family. I never am without the people who love me unconditionally.

I don't think life is measured in years. A year in Montana is ultimately just time in another place.

Life is about stepping out of your comfort zone, and canyoneering and climbing to find the oasis you've dreamed of. Then, celebration and ceremony, and a forever repeat. My goal for the last 14 months was to graduate Monarch. Now, I'm there, and I'm moving forward. But if I were to forever live in this moment, in this infinitesimal moment of transition, the rest of my life would be blander than salt-less crackers. The truth is that we are eternally in transition, and Monarch is no more than the blink of an eye. A wise man named Joseph once said, "One day you will wake up and it will be over." We call this wise man Joe. Regardless, it's important to "count your blessings" as they say, and make the very most of your pit stop here, because there is no divide between Monarch and the "real world." How you do here is a direct reflection of how you would do anywhere else, be it home, Australia, Zimbabwe or China. Furthermore, outside of here, there are no safety nets. If you mess up, it's not a slap on the wrist, or sitting on a bench for two weeks. There are real, lasting consequences in the rest of the world.

The truth is that Monarch is beautiful, although at times it is so hard to see. Never again in my life will I have such a wonderfully open, safe and loving environment, except maybe in my own home. But truly, there is some tangible substance in the air that with permission, will fill you with a peace that you could never imagine. As I write this, I'm in disbelief that I will leave, and that I'll soon be reading this in front of people. But that's part of what's so rad—it snuck up on me, like the lion on the gazelle. "No, Monarch, don't eat me, please!"

My learning experiences and my journey to learn what it means to be a person are ongoing. However, Monarch has given me the "Batman's utility belt" of life, and the tools I've gained here will help me forever. I'm forever grateful to this experience and to the relationships I have built for bringing me what they have. Thank you to Patrick, my family, Jeremiah, Jesús, Jim, and Ella for convincing me to cut my hair, Anna and Bryan (the two best English teachers ever), Alysoun and Natty for teaching me cool things and helping me move my body (not literally), Nick Larson for being cool, Jason for also being cool, Brady for pushing me to push my creativity, Bill the night-staff for also being cool, Kally for being kooky, Ricardo for improving my Spanish, anyone that has told me good stories because stories are powerful, and everyone else that served to mold my psyche. Thank you forever. ~FC, Summer 2015 Graduate~



Monarch Parent Foundation (MPF) - Annual Meeting

We just finished our annual meeting on the campus and had the opportunity to meet many of the current Monarch families and students. Our mission and purpose is to support Monarch parents. While the school takes care of the student, we are here to support the parents. We have all experienced many of the same struggles—know that you are not alone.

The board worked on strategic planning at our annual meeting and reviewed our mission, vision and core values as well as our work program. Our theme this year is “Doing Your Own Work.” As parents, we have our own journey to travel and the only thing we have control over is ourselves. The MPF board is here to support you in your journey.

This year we are sad to see Amy Kekst (son Bryan, December 2007), one of our long-term board members, leave the MPF. Amy was instrumental in starting some of the board’s most successful efforts, including the Parent Mentor Program, the Monthly Phone Chats and the Parent Workshops. We are grateful to Amy for her friendship, kindness and support of the whole Monarch community!

This year we added two exceptional parents who bring a variety of experiences and backgrounds to our organization. I’m happy to introduce them to you:

Mary Borowka (son William – May 2015)

Patti Ruble (son Matthew – August 2014)
New board members mean new perspectives, ideas and new ways to effectively support our community. We are always looking for volunteers and possible future board members. If you are interested in helping in the areas of technology or fundraising, please let us know by emailing me at rhonda@monarchparents.org.

We would like to hear from you—any ideas, suggestions and comments you may have. Feel free to contact me by email at rhonda@monarchparents.org.

~With warm wishes from the MPF, Rhonda Bello, MPF Board President~



The Holiday Season Is Near

Say Something Nice Today

Giving compliments can boost confidence in others and promote positivity in your own life. Jan. 24 is National Compliment Day, so take this opportunity to make complimenting others a regular habit.



Jar of Happiness

Set aside an empty jar on New Year’s Day. Throughout the year, write down all the good things that happen to you—large or small—and place the notes in the jar. At the end of the year, empty the jar and recall the moments that made you happy.



November 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- 6 11/6-11/8 Transition Workshop
- 11 Veterans Day
- 13 11/13-11/15 Lower School Conference
- 19 11/12-11/22 Gift Trip
- 26 Thanksgiving

December 2015						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- 5 SAT Testing
- 6 Hanukkah Begins at Sundown
- 10 Fall Semester Ends
- 12 ACT Testing/Legacy Night
- 13 GRADUATION!!
- 14 Hanukkah Ends
12/14-12/23 - 3rd Home Visit
- 15 12/15-12/19 - 1st Home Visit
- 16 12/16-12/22 - 2nd Home Visit
- 25 Christmas

January 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- 1 New Year's Day
- 4 Winter Semester Begins
- 15 1/15-1/17 All School Conference
- 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

