Middle School Mixed Choir: Liz Bongiorno, Director
- Singing performances with music from Beauty and the Beast and Aladdin
- Choir reminded parents of upcoming Middle School Performances of ‘ELF’, November 15-17.

Welcome by Devon Gold and Christina Tudor, MSPA Co-Presidents
Quick reminder about ‘Must be Present to Win’ - raffle today is for coveted, legendary Angie Ball homemade bread. Winners will be drawn just before meeting adjourns.

- After watching a quick video with highlights from famous 80s movies the reveal: “A Totally 80s Knight - Come as You Were”
- Expanded Silent Auction
- Costumes welcome, but anything goes. No pressure to dress up. Jeans and tee just fine.
- If you have ideas, donations or want to be part of planning process please contact one of the co-chairs.

Fall Highlights and Insight: Than Healy, Head of School
Quick Story - this time of year Than watches all new teachers teach. Last week, he was observing Zachary Blickensderfer (math and computer science). Zack wanted to teach a Pre Calc concept and was trying to think of ways to do so, so he sent a message out to friends on Facebook asking who had taught the concept. A friend replied that he had. He works for Comcast and is responsible for deciding optimal placement for new cell towers. Then Zack asked kids how they would determine where to put towers, give an estimate and then justify. By using the example Zack then shared how it relates to math. He finished explanation and kids broke into applause. This example shows the blend of rigor, complexity and real-world relevance in teaching, and the deep connection between teachers like Zack and kids. This is Menlo.

Updates:
- New building is on time and on budget
- Homecoming was Menlo at its best, inspiring moment to celebrate who we are as a community.
- Three themes working on with John, Lavina and others:
Alignment with upper school and middle school
Assessment
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work headed up by Keith Wheeler.

Second Story - Denise Pope and Paul Tough spoke at Common Ground Series, hosted here at Menlo last month. The talk focused on educational inequality in our country. Paul talked about where we have trended as a country in the last 50 years. GI Bill was a great moment for education because we invested in EVERYONE’S children, not just our own. The GI Bill doubled the number of undergraduate degrees in the US in 5 years. Launched country on period of success, while not perfect was powerful. Then, Paul asked, ‘where are we now’. Our society today is generally only interested in our own child (Varsity Blues). Menlo is different - we are invested in other people’s children, proud moment.

John Shafer, US Director
- PSA - instead of asking how was your day? Here are some other questions you could ask.
  - If I called your teacher tonight what would he/she say about you?
  - How did you help someone today?
  - Tell me one thing you learned today?
  - When were you happiest today?
  - When were you bored today?
  - Tell me a weird word you heard today?
  - Tell me something good that happened today?
  - If there was a zombie apocalypse, which teacher would you go to for help?
- What happens after Menlo? Menlo surveys graduates - John shared results of 130 respondents form Class of 2016 and Class of 2017. Academically very prepared, socially slightly less so. Kids say they know how to write, they are able to manage time, they have the skills to complete assignments. Areas for improvement include ‘joy of learning’, an ability to lead a healthful life’, ‘an ability to commit myself to purpose larger than myself’ and ‘an appreciation of diversity’. Kids said they largely knew how to manage time effectively, advocate for themselves, handle bureaucratic issues. Where they are not prepared - ‘knowing how to do things for themselves - laundry, keeping clean living space, meal prep’.
- Menlo aims to get kids prepared for college. At recent Q and A for US meeting topic of parent accessibility to teachers came up. Menlo working to make kids self-advocates so they are prepared for today and beyond.
La Vina Lowery, Director MS
- Middle school new faculty setting in nicely. Mima has helped new faculty as serving as an advocate/advisor.
- 8th Grade currently in middle of sex-education curriculum in Human Skills
- At end of Trimester 1. Reports sent out week on November 18.
- Conferences will be November 21 and 22
- Transition meeting for 8th grade parents is upcoming.
- No school Monday, November 11 for Veterans Day. 98 year old veteran coming to speak with middle school students today.

Students Well Being at Menlo
Devon - Menlo has an incredible group of people here to support our children everyday. Life here is not a ‘Free Solo’. Counselors, deans, students, and advocates here today will explain how they support our children everyday.

Tony Lapolla, Dean of Students US
Menlo provides meaningful relationships for our students with one another, with faculty and staff and for adults on campus with one another. There are layers of support: Faculty Support, Wellness Related Courses, Individual Counseling, Student Groups & Services and Advocacy.

There is visible support and invisible support constantly here for students.

Mima Takemoto, AD and Human Skills Co-teacher, MS
- Identified the 5 pillars for success: social emotional learning, diversity and inclusion, citizenship and service learning, community building and learning strategies and skills.
- Explained that students meet in small groups with advocate each morning, twice a week for advocacy and for tutorial.
- Discussed advocacy themes for each grade: 6th - Transition to Middle School (teacher lead is Stark), 7th Character Building (teacher lead is Bongiorno) and 8th - Leadership (teacher lead is Chandler).
- Spoke about 6 habits of heart and mind explored
- Explained ‘Hearts Project’ which will happen in February: entire Middle School project focused on Empathy, Service Week, September Goal Setting, Trimester reflections, student led conferences and Outdoor Ed.

Eve Kulbieda, Dean of Student Life US
- Works with Freshman and teaches a 9th grade math class.
- Shared quote: “Becoming an adult means leaving the world of your parents and starting to make your way towards the future that you will share with your peers.”
Work with 9th grade in Advocacy on SEL skills, building relationships, community building, mentorship, support network and civil discourse.

For 4 years as they grow from seed to sprout to sapling to oak, they have the support of many at the school.

Focus for each grade: 9th transition to high school class culture building, 10th: citizenship and caring, self identity and self-purpose, 11th leadership, unity, meaning and self-care and 12th: gratitude, stewardship, life beyond Menlo.

Tracy Bianchi and Jake Fauvre, Counselors, US

When Menlo students see things they want to address, with counselor support they bring these initiatives to light on campus. Three examples are Spectrum Club, One Love and Body Positivity Alliance.

Menlo US has a 4-Year Wellness Curriculum on drug and sex education. Counselors try to incorporate ‘what do we wish we’d known in high school?’ For example, this coming Friday Jake is speaking with 10th graders about drugs and alcohol. What really is the impact of one drink?

Parent community supports Menlo Cares for community members who need help with meals and such while dealing with life issues. Parents also have access to Parent education conference which will be February 1.

Counselors always happy to collaborate with parents and if being helped at Menlo ‘counselor is too close to home’ they are always happy to work with outside counselors as well.

Students for Students Well-Being

Kate Richardson, Mental Health at Menlo Club, 10th grade

Club on campus here to support students and take the stigma away from mental health issues. Help refer people to counselors. Meet once a week to discuss issues and run an assembly each year where students share their own mental health stories with student body making issues ‘normal’. Helped create a wellness center with applicable resources and provides a place to gather.

Work with Safe Space in Menlo Park (mental health and suicide prevention)

Work to make a happier and better campus life.

Parent asked question about ‘Distracted Driving Program’. Tony L said Menlo working on building a program.

Sarah Norum, and Grace Wilson, Happiness Club

Generally like to destress campus and help bring happiness to campus. In the past the club has done things like brought in cereal for students to enjoy, post positive notes in bathrooms during finals, bring in puppies during finals. In November making a grateful wall for students to add own contributions to.
Announcements and Must Be Present to Win Drawing
Jenn Miller and Liz Weingart - Nominating Committee:

- Currently collecting recommendations (including self-nominating) for 2020/2021 MSPA Council. If you are interested or know someone you think would be good, you can go onto Menlo Website and search 'nominating committee' for more information.

- Held vote to formally approve MSPA VP of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Julie Floyd. Jennifer Jeffries nominated and Alison Aldridge seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming Events:

17th Annual Valpo Bowl - November 8, JV 4:00pm game, Varsity Game at 7:00pm, Sequoia High School, Redwood City.

Menlo Gives Day - Wednesday, November 13, 7:45-8:30am in the loop. We will be handing out muffins and buttons and will have a latte cart as a thank you. If you have not already given, this is a great day to donate!

Menlo’s Got Talent - Thursday, November 14, 12:00-2:00pm

MS Musical - ELF, The Musical, Friday, November 15 and Saturday, November 16 at 7:00pm, Sunday, November 17 at 5:00pm.

Winter MSPA Meetings:

Upper School MSPA Meeting: Wednesday, January 8 at 8:15am Latte Cart, Martin Family Hall
Middle School MSPA Meeting: Wednesday, January 15, 8:15am Latte Cart, Martin Family Hall