

## The Inaugural “Friends of Raintree” Newsletter

What makes someone a “friend of Raintree”, what’s the difference between a “friend of Raintree” and a “Friend of Raintree”, and what is the “Friends of Raintree” organization? If you care to learn the answers to these questions, then you, dear reader, have come to the right place. Further, hopefully we can interest you in learning more about and becoming involved in the “Friends of Raintree”.



### *What it is*

A “friend of Raintree” is anyone who has fond feelings for the school and recognizes its unique and special character. For instance, anyone with progeny that attend Raintree, or whose progeny once attended, knows what a stellar incubator of childhood wit and character the school is. You might not fall into either of these categories, but you may feel the same way because you yourself once attended Raintree. If you meet any of these criteria then you too dear reader are a “friend of Raintree”. We thank you for perusing this newsletter, and we hope you’ll agree that all “friends of Raintree” recognize the tremendously positive influence this school has on our community’s most precious resource, its children, through the distinctive intellectual and physical space that it represents.

Now, what is the difference between a “friend” and a “Friend of Raintree”, beyond the obvious addition of a capitalized first letter? The difference arose because some members of the Lawrence and Douglas County community who value the institution that Raintree is decided to come together and form a charitable organization: an organization of “Friends”. These “friends of Raintree”, by forming an organization that made them “Friends of Raintree”, obtained a non-profit status that allows them to affordably and sustainably contribute to the material and fiscal benefits of the school. The formation of such an organization obviates some of the constraints that exist for the

school itself which prevent it from easily acting in this manner. We hope to spark your interest as a “friend” who seeks to join a group of “Friends”. There are no barriers to entry in this organization, not even fiduciary. We simply want your ideas and your passion. If it would help, or if you’re one of those that likes precision, we’ll give a shout out to the *de rigueur* aspect of any 21<sup>st</sup> century organization, its Mission statement. So, here goes, “ahem”, drum roll please: “the Mission of the Friends of Raintree is ‘to raise funds to help benefit the education of children who want to attend or currently attend Raintree Montessori School and to promote the goals and educational ideals espoused by Maria Montessori.’” If you’d like to learn some more about the Friends of Raintree, please check out our website <http://www.friendsofraintree.org/>. Or, read on, as we tell you a bit about what we’ve been up to.



*What's going on*

COVID challenges and financial aid.- If there’s anything that’s obvious about the years 2020 and 2021, it’s just how atypical they’ve been. Thankfully we’ll soon be able to see this challenging annual pilgrimage around the sun in the rearview mirror, while we look forward to the rest of a 2021 that hopefully trends inexorably better and brighter. Be that as it may, you all recognize the numerous challenges that 2020 and 2021 have wrought in several areas, especially those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has impacted all of us to varying degrees, and such impacts have been sorely felt in the education of children. The setting at Raintree is no exception, and the pandemic has fundamentally impacted the school in various ways including how teachers work with their students. The pandemic has also had financial impacts on some families that have made it harder for them to continue to send their children to Raintree. And this is one critical area where the “Friends of Raintree” was able to step up and help by providing Raintree tuition scholarships to several families who were hard hit by the economic downturn that COVID-19 wrought.

Guitar, um, scratch that, ukulele heroes.- The positive impact that music has on children’s minds is well known, and at Raintree it was decided that the ukulele would

be a good addition to the music repertoire. This is why you may have seen children carrying ukuleles at Raintree, and it was the “Friends of Raintree” that provided funds to support the purchase of ukuleles for every student in music class (more than two dozen). We look forward to hearing something stirring on the ukulele from the Raintree music group in the not-too-distant future.

*What can you do?*

Well, that is a quick rundown of what we’ve been up to and what we’re about. What further steps are required on your part? None. But we really hope you’ll take them just the same, because there are two things that we do need from you. Number one, please “like” us on Facebook. Number 2, we need your ideas. Please reach out to us with any thoughts you have on ways you think the “Friends of Raintree” can help the school. Furthermore, if you share a passion for Raintree, please consider joining us and becoming a “Friend”. We’re looking for volunteers who can contribute in various ways to our mission. Reach out if you know one of us “Friends”, or drop us a line using the “Contact” tab on the “Friends of Raintree” website. We look forward to hearing from you. Here’s wishing you and your family a safe, peaceful, and very happiest of summers, and all the best for the rest of 2021!

