



The McCurdy Ministries Message

McCurdy Schools of Northern New Mexico is a registered nonprofit corporation.
The corporation also uses the trade name McCurdy Ministries.

Volume 3, Number 4

Sharing God's love through education and mission

June 2015

Graduation success stories have McCurdy Ministries roots



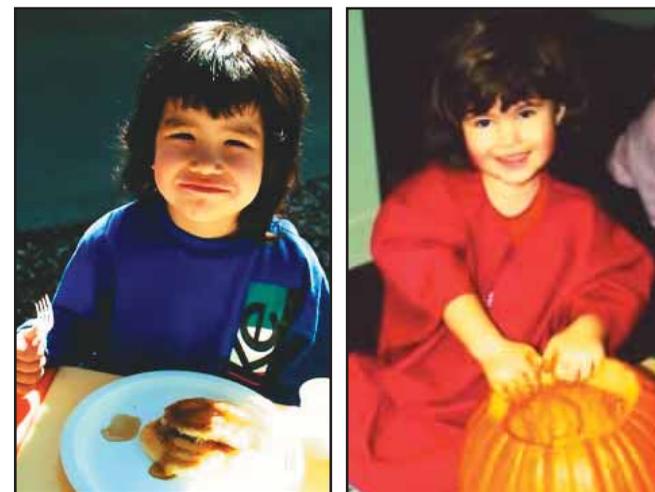
Left to right: Twila Casias, Jan Hathaway and Matthew Bryant reunite at the McCurdy Gala last February.

Some graduation success stories start at three years of age. On May 30 when the McCurdy Charter School class of 2015 graduated, Matthew Bryant was named valedictorian and Twila Casias was named salutatorian. Part of the story behind Matthew and Twila's educational success started when as three year olds they were enrolled in the McCurdy Schools of Northern New Mexico preschool taught by United Methodist missionary Jan Hathaway. After their pre-school years both Matthew and Twila were enrolled in the United Methodist mission school and when the charter school opened they enrolled as students. With their entire educational lives being spent at McCurdy, McCurdy Ministries and McCurdy Charter School take great pride in the success of these two students.

Jan Hathaway describes the preschool program both Matthew and Twila were involved in saying, "We were working on the physical, emotional, spiritual and academic activities which prepared the students for school." When asked whether she saw clues in the young Matthew and Twila that would lead to their educational success she said Twila and Matthew "had very involved parents. They also had a curiosity about them. They wanted to know how things work." In February at the McCurdy Gala, Jan had an opportunity to reunite with Matthew and Twila because all three were volunteering there. At that time Jan beamed when she learned that the two

would be valedictorian and salutatorian. When asked about their success Jan said, "It just makes my heart happy. Getting to see them this winter was wonderful. Sometimes you plant seeds and don't know how they will turn out. These seeds are blooming now and I got to see them blooming. I thank God for the opportunity to teach them."

When asked about their McCurdy experience Matthew said, "One of the best things about McCurdy is that they allowed me to learn and grow and be the person I wanted to be." From his preschool days Matthew remembers, "show and tell because it was the first time I learned to talk in front of people." When asked about the most important aspect of Twila's McCurdy experience she said, "The focus on Jesus and the fact that McCurdy is a community. I guess you could say we've always been a family." At graduation it was announced both students plan to attend college. Twila will attend Northern New Mexico University and Matthew will attend University of New Mexico. McCurdy Ministries wishes both Matthew and Twila God's blessings in all their endeavors!



Left: Matthew enjoys a preschool snack.
Right: Twila enjoys a pumpkin.



Camp Stars students work on a Northern New Mexico tin art project.

Camp Stars to launch June 15

The 2015 Camp Stars students will learn what it means to "move, act, care, follow and share" when this McCurdy Ministries program launches its third summer on June 15 on the McCurdy campus. Camp Stars is for children who will enter kindergarten to 6th grade in the fall of 2015. This summer educational enrichment camp combines the best of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education with Vacation Bible School fun and faith building.

The camp will run for six weeks and end with a Closing Program and Open House for families on July 28. There will be a holiday for Independence day July 2 to 5. The daily schedule for Camp Stars will be 8 AM to 3 PM Monday through Friday. Breakfast and lunch will be provided to each camper at no charge. Financial aid will be available for students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Information on Camp Stars is posted on the McCurdy Ministries website at www.mccurdy.org.

The Camp Stars 2015 theme will be "God's love in action" and kids will be encouraged to explore how to put their faith and minds into action on God's behalf. In this mission focused camp, kids will experience God's unstoppable love and discover how to fuel up and move through life with God. The scripture theme will be "In God we live, move and exist." Acts 17:28a.

McCurdy Ministries Preschool Director Sandra Archuleta will be the Camp Stars director. Teachers and camp counselors will be hired to staff the program. For more information on registering your child for Camp Stars or for Camp Stars employment call the McCurdy Ministries office at 505-753-7221, ext. 210.

Notes from the McCurdy Ministries executive director



Patricia Alvarado
Executive Director

As I was traveling from Albuquerque to Española this morning after having spent the weekend helping take care of my Mom, I was able to enjoy the beautiful sight of the early morning sun's rays peeking through the partly cloudy sky and in the near distance, I saw six hot air balloons ascending at different heights. Amid the fast-paced traffic on Interstate 25 with everyone rushing off to work on a Monday morning, I considered this moment of serenity. I contemplated on the beautiful gift our Lord gave me at that moment, reminding me that despite a busy weekend filled with mixed feelings of joy at spending time with my mom but sadness at seeing her aging body failing her and knowing that after a week's vacation, I was facing an inbox filled with emails and business to catch up on. As I drove further north, the most beautiful sunrise once more reminded me to intentionally make time to speak to my Father, to thank him for a beautiful week with my children and grandchildren, my mom and my sister and her family. He reminded me that no matter what work waits for my attention or what matters may have arisen in my absence that he is in control and I am but an instrument to be used by him to bring him honor and glory. What a blessing indeed!

I encourage you to consider an intentional time of reflection especially when life's circumstances seem to overcome you. Making time several times a day to invite our Father into your midst, to invoke the Holy Spirit, and to do all this in Jesus' name brings peace. We have our plans, but if all our planning does not sincerely involve daily giving it all to God, our efforts will be for naught. The hope we have amid delayed answers to prayers can only come from a firm stronghold in our faith that God truly is in control and his timing is the best timing.

At our end of year celebration for our Pre-K students, we thanked our parents for

having entrusted their children to our care and we thanked the children for their curiosity. We received wonderful rewards as we guided these preschoolers in building an important foundation for their school career. I am so proud of each and every one of them. I thank our staff who have done an outstanding job in hitting the ground running after a late start and am proud to say that due to their commitment and dedication, all our children made significant gains. At least 95% of our preschoolers ended the year having met or excelled all 26 essential indicators as set forth by NM Pre-K program guidelines. In all cases, the children increased by at least 3 levels of achievement and are well prepared to enter kindergarten. If you have any doubt about the importance of preschool and the quality of our work please see the article about two of our former preschool students who graduated from McCurdy Charter School on page 1 of this newsletter.

As the summer unfolds and we roll out Camp Stars as well as plan for next fall's Pre-K, After School Care, extended preschool, and food services, we are excited to announce our board of directors has approved a long range strategic plan for McCurdy Ministries that includes pursuing collaborative partnerships to provide community services in the areas of parent/grandparent support, adult education classes, youth ministry, and children's ministries. These expanded ministries will greatly expand the impact McCurdy has in our community. (See the article below for more on our long range strategic plan.)

We also look forward to the Volunteer in Mission teams who come every summer, not only to put on a fresh face on our campus, but to help re-energize our staff. The energy and passion they bring with them is contagious and helps refocus our attention on our faith in Jesus Christ who is the reason we are here.

As always, I request that you remember us in your prayers and support. I pray that you will have a beautiful summer and that our Father will continue to sustain you and your family. In Christ, *Patricia A. Alvarado*

Please help us share hope in Española by supporting our ministries



In Española the need is great. U.S. Census Bureau 2013 statistics say 25% of adults over 25 have not graduated from high school and 28% of the population lives below the federal poverty line. In addition, New Mexico has one of the highest high school dropout rates in the U.S. McCurdy Ministries is a sign of hope in the midst of great need. Together McCurdy Ministries and McCurdy Charter School reach 21% of the under 18 population of Española every school day. Through Project Cariño, Pre-K, Preschool, After School Care and the Breakfast and Lunch Programs McCurdy Ministries touches the lives of more than 500 students daily. Our ministries happen because of your support. Your donations help us keep our facilities in shape for our children and youth.

We ask that you prayerfully consider these ways of supporting McCurdy: **Donate and encourage others to donate regularly.** Make a donation of cash, stocks, land or an appreciated asset. **Send us Campbell's Labels for McCurdy**

Ministries and Box Tops for Education for McCurdy Charter School. Donate a gift annuity to earn income for you during your life and bless McCurdy with a donation after your death. **Organize a Volunteers in Mission Team from your church and come enjoy New Mexico.** Remember McCurdy Ministries in your will and become a part of the Mellie Perkins Society. **Set up an endowed fund in the McCurdy Foundation.** If you purchase a new car, donate your old one to McCurdy for a tax deduction. **Make McCurdy a beneficiary of a life insurance policy.** Remember McCurdy in your estate trust. **Invite McCurdy to your church program, dinner or worship event.** Donate to McCurdy through Advance #581479. **Pray for McCurdy daily! For information on making a donation to McCurdy Ministries** please call Diana Loomis, director of development/church relations, at 505-753-7221, ext. 352, email her at dloomis@mccurdy.org.

McCurdy Ministries Board adopts a road map for ministry

The McCurdy Ministries Board of Directors and staff have worked for three years to develop a long range strategic plan. This plan will be a road map for McCurdy Ministries which shapes future directions and priorities for our ministries. The planning process was started by asking the question, "What is God calling McCurdy Ministries to do in this time and place?" We looked at community demographics, community needs, researched what barriers to education exist in the Española Valley and developed plans for ministry that will impact these needs. The foundation of this plan is our continued cooperative work with McCurdy Charter School. The board adopted a working mission statement: **McCurdy Ministries is called by God to create a community center ministry informed by faith in Jesus Christ that supports and assists children, youth, adults and families of the Española Valley in achieving their educational and life goals.** The following priorities for ministry were proposed at our May 2015 Board Retreat.

1. **Develop a cooperative Children's Ministry** which supports the spiritual, mental and emotional health of our children and families.
2. **Develop a cooperative Youth Ministry** which supports the spiritual, mental

and emotional health of our youth and includes educational, economic, mental health, spiritual and recreational opportunities.

3. **Develop a cooperative Adult Ministry** which provides educational, mental health, spiritual and economic programs to help strengthen the family and therefore strengthen the educational success of students in the Española Valley.

4. **Develop a cooperative Art, Drama and Music Ministry for all ages** with emphasis on Northern New Mexico's culture and history.

5. **Strengthen our Volunteer Ministries (including individual volunteers and Volunteers in Mission teams)** by providing spiritual, art and cultural retreats as well as mission opportunities for our volunteers.

6. **Designate Bachman Hall as a Nonprofit Hub** to provide office space for non-profits and agencies that are consistent with McCurdy Ministries' mission.

The board gave its approval of these priorities and set staff free to begin developing program partnerships, to secure grants and donations for funding these programs and to further develop these ministry plans. Watch the *McCurdy Message* for further details on this plan.

Project Cariño news and updates



Michelle Esquibel,
Project Cariño Counselor

Every year Project Cariño serves students and families who experience the death of a loved one. Grief and loss are common therapeutic focal points in counseling at Project Cariño. The emotions that are part of the grief process often impact the learning process for our students in addition to other facets of their lives. For many, nothing is more traumatic than losing a parent, parental figure, grandparent, or sibling. Sometimes our students face multiple losses in a single year, compounding the grief and trauma.

For many years, Project Cariño has hosted a day to honor the students who are surviving the painful experience of loss. It is marked by a gathering we call, "Celebrate Survival." The celebration is tailored to the age and developmental level of the participants. Elementary students meet together. Middle school and high school students form a separate group. All find comfort and support from their peers experiencing similar struggles.

The gathering consists of many layers of ceremony. We begin by creating a safe and sacred space that serves as a container for the feelings we express. Each person has an opportunity to name their loved one and pay tribute through a story or fond memory of this person. Art is a fantastic tool for the healing process. Students engage in a hands-on activity to create a banner containing the names of those who have passed. It is beautiful to see the colors and images that students use to represent their loved one. During this activity, many students interact with each other and begin bonding in special ways.

The students are then prompted to write. This writing can be a letter, expressing feelings, fears, worries, prayers, hopes or just about anything the students want to release or express. The writings are then taken to the fire pit. Ms. Alvarado blesses the "Fire of Life and Death." Students then share how they interpret this special fire. When they are ready, they burn their writing, releasing their burdens in the flames and offering their prayers up in the ribbons of smoke. This part of the ceremony can truly be cathartic for students.

Just as the cycle of life-death-rebirth continues on, we transition to focusing on making meaning of our experience and finding a path to move forward. Keeping with the experiential nature of our Celebrate Survival gathering, the students stroll on a nature walk. The purpose of this walk is to tune in to the natural world and "listen" for objects in the environment that are "volunteering" to be used in the next part of the ceremony. This activity challenges students to quiet the mind and connect with nature in order to feel the peace that comes from doing so. Objects collected from the nature walk include: special sticks, rocks, flowers, leaves, various plants and anything else that catches the attention of the student.

When the nature objects have been collected, we gather to create a nature

mandala. Mandalas are geometric forms, often circles or squares. Students place their objects in the circle and collaboratively build a design. When the group feels the mandala is complete, we take meaning from our mandala. Insights students shared include, "The rocks remind me to be strong," and "All the objects are connected, like my family. We help each other get through this." One student noted the center stick was like a torch she would think of as she moved through dark times.

To end we share food in the Peace Garden before we disperse. Imagine students swinging on the hammock and sharing the bench under the gazebo. Their laughter fills the air and their spirits shine as they mingle with their new friends. The experience warms our hearts and lightens our spirits. Here is to another great Celebrate Survival! **Michelle Esquibel, LPCC**

Editor's note: Project Cariño is McCurdy Ministries mental health counseling program which provides services to the students and families of McCurdy Charter School free of charge. For the 2014-15 school year Project Cariño has received grants from the Monte Foundation, the Northern New Mexico United Way, the Con Alma Foundation and the Albuquerque District of the United Methodist Church. In addition, Project Cariño receives 42.5% of the profits of the McCurdy Gala. Funding is also provided by hundreds of faithful donors from across the United States. Project Cariño was started through a United Methodist Women grant and has been saving and transforming lives of the youngest, most vulnerable residents of the Española for over 30 years.



Project Cariño counselors, students and Compa the therapy dog stand around the mandala the students made to remember their loved ones during their Celebrate Survival experience.

Save the date for Gala 19!

Gala 19 will be held from 6 to 10 PM, Saturday, Feb. 6, in Memorial Gym on the McCurdy campus and the theme will be "Healthy minds, Healthy Bodies, Healthy Valley!" Tickets will be \$30 and an appetizer meal including beverages, veggies, cheese, hot appetizers, fruit and dessert will be served. Proceeds will be divided with 15% going to the McCurdy Ministries Foundation, 42.5% going to help fund MCS athletics and 42.5% going to help fund Project Cariño. It is not too early to buy an ad, make a donation, become a sponsor or volunteer for the Gala. Just email gala@mccurdy.org to learn ways to help our students and make this event successful.

Box Tops & Campbell's Labels news

Thank you to all the congregations and individuals who collect and send in Campbell's Labels for Education UPCs to support McCurdy Ministries. This school year from August through May we have received, cut, counted and redeemed a total of 211,484 points. The new 2015 Dodge Grand Caravan, purchased with Campbell's labels, will arrive in the next few weeks. Since we requested a 2015 model, the wait for the van has been longer than usual. Photos of the van will be in the McCurdy Message as soon as we receive the van. Thank you for your continued support of McCurdy Ministries through this wonderful program!

Please remember, do not trim the barcode off the UPC! To receive credit every UPC must include the barcode and the wording stating how many points the UPC is worth.

This is the correct way to clip the UPC:



MAKE OUR SCHOOL A CUT ABOVE!

We also thank all who submit Box Tops for education to McCurdy Ministries for McCurdy Charter School. This school year, we helped McCurdy Charter School earn a total of \$11,057, for a 3-year total of \$41,444.00!

Thank you to everyone who takes the time to trim, peel, count and separate the items you send! We also appreciate it when you take the time to check expiration dates. Remember we accept Campbell's Labels for Education and Box Tops for Education all year round. Please mail your Campbell's UPCs and Box Tops to McCurdy Ministries, 261 S. McCurdy Road, Espanola, NM 87532.

For our McCurdy students your small act of charity, added with someone else's act of charity makes a big difference!

McCurdy Charter School news



Congratulations to McCurdy Charter School whose students, faculty and staff ended their third year with a number of successes to celebrate.

- In February the AdvancED Accreditation Commission awarded the school accreditation for a five-year term through June 30, 2020. This is a significant achievement for the school in that it acknowledges the infrastructure and daily operations of the school are based on quality educational standards and the school is actively engaged in continuous improvement.
- McCurdy Charter School held its third graduation on Saturday, May 30. Twenty-six seniors graduated and **ALL** 26 are enrolled in college for Fall 2015. Once the New Mexico Public Education Commission announces graduation rates next fall the expectation is that the charter school will once again have a high graduation rate for the 2014–15 school year.
- MCS athletes excelled this year including five seniors who played in the North-South Football Game, the Girls Volleyball team who went to the State Tournament with one player named to the North-South Volleyball Game, the Girls Basketball Team who went to the State Tournament, several who went to the State Track Tournament, Alfonso Arroyo who was State Champion in the Shot Put, the Girl's Softball team who was District Champion with one student who played in the North-South Softball Game, several All District players and several All State players, Christian Lopez who was named District Softball Coach of the Year, the Boys Baseball Team who was District Champion and runner up in the State Championship game, with several players named to All District and All State, Alejandro Croff who was named Player of the Year by the Santa Fe New Mexican and Robert DeVargas who was named District Baseball Coach of the year.
- MCS elementary students worked all year long on their Spirit Challenges which are service projects, volunteer efforts and community involvement activities. Their projects for the year were collecting Campbell Soup Labels/Box Tops for Education, donating Soldier Snacks, providing blankets for St. Elizabeth's Homeless Shelter, collecting coins for Heifer International, donating canned goods for the Soup Kitchen, supporting the Crisis Center, collecting coins for Habitat for Humanity, providing Pop Tops for the Ronald McDonald House and providing supplies for the Animal Shelter. Elementary Principal Kiva Duckworth-Moulton says, "Pride in school, community, and generosity to those in need are not measurable on any standardized tests, but just as important to us as a "grade."



Above: Pictured are four first graders proudly holding their 2014–2015 annual. Through the Box Tops Program, generously supported by McCurdy Ministries and their volunteers, every student at McCurdy Charter School was given a yearbook, free of charge. This was received so gratefully by students and families who otherwise would not have been able to purchase a yearbook. Thank you to all our Box Tops donors! (Message and photograph provided by Kiva Duckworth-Moulton, MCS elementary principal.)



An After School Care child enjoys the slide.

After School Care news

This year has been a growing experience for our 25 After School Care students. One day while the students were making their way into the After School Care building, one of our first graders decided to stay outside and play for a little while on the playground. As the door opened one of the sixth graders walked in and kept repeating, "Just come inside." She stood there holding the door open and waited for the first grader to come inside. The sixth grader told me there was another child outside saying mean things to our first grader and she didn't want him to get picked on so she waited for him. Our After School Care students have learned how to value each other, be friends and look out for one another. They really bonded this year! What a privilege it is to provide a safe, caring, fun, learning environment for these students. *Alicia Cardenas, After School Care*

McCurdy Ministries Preschool news

As we wrap up another successful school year at the McCurdy Ministries Preschool, I am once again reminded of why Jesus said

"Let the children come to me, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14

Jesus wanted all people to love him and others the way that children love him and others—with complete trust and acceptance.

My staff and I were witnesses to this love and acceptance this spring, when our preschool received a new student. We only had four weeks of school left and we were blessed with another child. I was a bit worried as to how this child would do first of all coming in so late, second of all with a speech delay, and finally never having been in a structured school environment. I was concerned about how the child would do and the way our existing class would react to her coming in late when routines and friendships had already been established.

I am proud to report that the children all did a wonderful job welcoming our new friend. It brought tears to my eyes to watch as they tried every way they could imagine to understand what this child was trying to communicate to them. I watched as one child asked her to draw a picture of what she wanted to

play, another child took the child by the hand and showed her items asking her to motion either "thumbs-up" "or "thumbs down" if that's what she wanted and still another child said, "Don't worry, you don't have to say a thing, I will do all the talking, you can just smile."

On the day of our closing celebration, I watched the children all hug and say goodbye to each other and heard someone say to our new student, "I wish you could have been here since fall, but I will miss you just as if you had been with us all year. Have a nice summer." How is that for total love and acceptance! *Sandra Archuleta, preschool director*



Above: McCurdy Preschoolers practice their handwriting skills.



Above: McCurdy Preschoolers circle up for the news of the day, sharing time, story time, talks about the letter of the week, exercise and movement.