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February 3, 2010

Dear Member of the St. Joseph Montessori School Community:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of St. Joseph Montessori School, it is my great pleasure to announce that the Board has appointed Elma Guevarra-Pundavela as the new Head of School, effective July 1, 2010. The Board's unanimous decision to select Ms. Pundavela followed the strong recommendation of the Search Committee, which cited a compelling match between the desired criteria established for the Head of School position and Ms. Pundavela's experience, interests, and skills.



Ms. Pundavela is currently in her eighth year as Upper Elementary Directress at Henson Valley Montessori School in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, where she has earned an impressive reputation for "living and breathing Montessori," as well as for her creative approach to curriculum development. In her role at Henson Valley, Ms. Pundavela has won the respect and affection of students, faculty, and parents across the school community. Her prior experience before moving to Maryland included tenure at two other Montessori schools, where she held various positions, including Lower Elementary Directress, Upper Elementary Directress, Science and Culture Subject Coordinator, and Grade School Academic Coordinator.

Academically, Ms. Pundavela earned her B.S. from Cavite State University in the Philippines. She has Primary, Elementary, and Elementary II training from Montessori schools in both the Philippines and the United States. Additionally, she has participated in the Lincoln Teacher Fellows Program (Washington, D.C.) and the Montessori Model United Nations Teacher Training (New York, NY). She is in the process of earning her M.A. in Education and Education Administration from the University of the Philippines.

The appointment of Ms. Pundavela concludes an extensive national search assisted by Dr. Richard K. Jung of Education Access Strategies, LLC, Bethesda, MD. The Search Committee was composed of nine current and former Board of Trustee members and community leaders, and was assisted by an Advisory Committee composed of eight members of the SJMS community, including parents and teachers who provided detailed insights and evaluations of each of the candidates' qualifications.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to express our appreciation for all of the diligent efforts that went into helping us successfully complete the selection of our new Head of School. This is truly an exciting time for SJMS.

Ms. Pundavela will visit the school several times in the next five months and we look forward to introducing you. Please join us in welcoming her to our SJMS community.

Sincerely,

Kent Rambo
President, SJMS Board of Trustees