

Introducing Martha Schuur

When asked what attracted her to Echo Horizon School, Martha Schuur says, “I was looking for a new challenge and wanted to return to elementary education. Luckily, a position opened up at Echo Horizon School. What attracted me specifically was my experience in working with Echo Horizon School graduates during my tenure at Marlborough. During that time, these students always showed a broad worldview and empathy for others. On my first visit I was impressed with the friendly and open spirit of the parents I met in the hallway. When I walked into a classroom and was met by the student greeters, I was in awe at how warmly and confidently these students engaged with me. The morning continued with friendly greetings everywhere. I knew that this was a community I wanted to join. I was sold!”

Since arriving here in July 2011 as Echo Horizon School’s first Assistant Head of School, Martha has continued to feel the warmth and support from students, faculty and parents. Her primary focus a year ago was curriculum development and teacher support. She has quickly immersed herself in all aspects of student and school life. Martha continues to be energized by the interactions and challenges that come each week.

Not all of her time at Echo Horizon School has been on McManus Avenue. Last summer she was fortunate to have been selected as one of 700 (out of 135,000 applicants) to attend the TEDGlobal 2012 Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, “one of the highlights of my professional career,” said Martha.

Prior to joining the Echo Horizon School community, Martha had accumulated over 20 years of classroom and administrator experience in the Los Angeles independent school sector, including most recently an 11-year career at Marlborough School. Prior to that she spent 11 years in independent elementary schools including St. James and First Lutheran School of Los Angeles.

Martha’s time at Marlborough began in 2000 as a middle school history teacher, where she taught U.S. History, Global Studies, and Financial Literacy. She authored the Global Studies curriculum, in addition to serving as an advisor to middle school students. In an extracurricular capacity she founded and served as an advisor for two student-run clubs. The Girls for Girls Club provided support and outreach to women in post-conflict areas of the world, and the Amnesty International Club focused on human rights education and activism within the school community.

In 2004, Martha accepted the position as Dean of Faculty. In this expanded role, she designed and implemented the Faculty Mentor Program, served on the admissions committee and lead school-wide diversity initiatives. In her spare time she teamed up with former Echo Horizon School parent Karen Stabiner to author a chapter in Karen's book, *The Empty Nest*.

During her tenure at Marlborough, Martha received a number of awards including the Who's Who Among America's Teachers (2004, 2005, 2007), the EE Ford Fellow: Fellowship for Aspiring School Heads (2005) and was a Center for Global Change Fellowship Recipient (2004). As the fellowship recipient, she was among 20 educators invited to attend the International Studies Summer Institute, a two-week course at Indiana University that addresses major world issues. Together, ten teachers from the United States as well as ten from Pakistan, India, Iran, the Philippines and other regions outside America explored a range of academic themes including global environmental change, populations at risk, conflict resolution and international economics and trade. It is clear that Martha is passionate about global studies and "creating future citizens who can make decisions for the good of all." This is a sentiment that resonates well within the halls of Echo Horizon School.

Early on in her teaching career, Martha built her classroom experience as a 5th grade teacher at Saint James School (1994-2000) and as a 1st grade teacher at First Lutheran School (1990-1994). She holds a BA in English from UCLA, as well as a MA in Education and an MBA from Pepperdine University.

Martha and her husband, Bob, are residents of Hancock Park and together they have three adult daughters. At home you can find her tending her vegetable and flower gardens (when she's not collecting chicken eggs from her henhouse!). In her travels, Martha has visited Honduras and Ecuador to study indigenous cultures; traveled to Tanzania to work with WEECE (micro-lending for women in rural Moshe); and participated in the Saudi Aramco Teacher Program in Saudi Arabia, as well as leading student trips to Juarez, Mexico and India.