

Follow *the* Child

THE MSGH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE

Mary's Article: <i>Follow the Child</i>	2	Winter Celebration	13
Mystery History	6	Mindfulness by Jacki Romano	16
Grandparents' Tea	7	MSGH Music Highlight	19
Student Community Projects	8	The Alumni Corner	20
Independence by Leslie Wetmore	10	Alumni Picnic	21

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CHAIR

Ellen Brown

Alumni Parent

VICE CHAIR

Rebecca London

Current Parent

SECRETARY

Brian Osoba

Current Parent

TREASURER

Gulen Tuncer-Senecal

Current Parent

TRUSTEES

Jennifer Apgar

Current Parent

Steven Bonafonte

Current Parent

John Bourdeaux

Current Parent

Julia Erlikh

Current Parent

William Gilyard

Alumni Parent

James Giuliano

MSGH Friend

Patrick Scully

MSGH Friend

Carlos Stetzelberg

Current Parent

Lauren Toppin

Alumni Parent

Mildred Unfried

Current Grandparent

OBSERVERS

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Mary McHale

FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Gia Aldo

Melanie Subin

BOARD LIAISON

Erica Killer



Follow the Child by Mary McHale

"Anyone who wishes to follow my method must understand that he should not honor me, but follow the child as his leader."

-Dr. Maria Montessori

The phrase "follow the child" is a tricky one that should not be taken literally. Several years ago at the inception of this publication, we deliberated on the title and chose *Follow the Child* for its simplicity, but also because there is so much to draw from these three simple words. Montessori used the term and it is one that has made its way into common usage, but it needs to be qualified and understood. Needless to say, it does not mean give your child free reign and follow them willy-nilly!

Montessori, a physician, approached her work in a scientific manner. She observed children's behaviors carefully and methodically, identifying tendencies and characteristics that revealed the inner workings of the brain. These universal tendencies and characteristics are seen across cultures and time, and are the means nature has given the child to become a fully functioning human. In other words, these tendencies and characteristics make up the blueprint to become an adult. This blueprint interfaces with the environment to develop the child in an ongoing and incremental manner. Knowledge of the blueprint gives us important information about how we should prepare the environment and how we should behave in order to ensure optimal development. "Follow the child" is an easy-to-remember phrase to guide our work, but the work is complex and weighty, requiring us to inform ourselves (and sometimes reform ourselves).

But wait, don't stop there, when you read the words "complex" and "reform ourselves," as I am going to give just a simple idea for each of the

different age levels that I hope will give some nuts and bolts to the fairly vague notion of following the child.

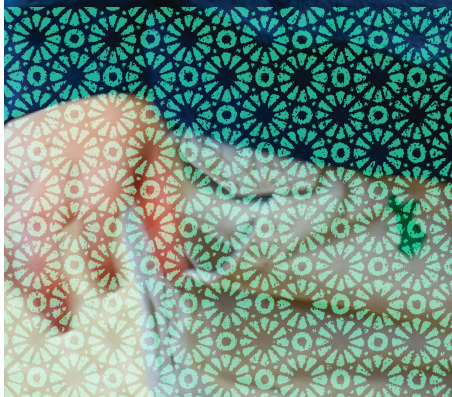
- » **For the young child, give real experiences**
- » **For the elementary-aged child, sow the seeds of culture**
- » **For the adolescent, give real responsibility and be authentic**

GIVE REAL EXPERIENCES

The human infant, like all species, is "programmed" to become the adult of its species. Instinct plays a lesser role than in other species and in the human infant the absorbent mind takes precedence. Babies and young children indiscriminately absorb their world whole, experiencing all aspects of the environment, the good and not so good, without logic or reason. The absorbent mind needs to be fed, so it comes with an indefatigable drive to move, touch and explore the world. These are the tools given to the young child.

Real experiences with real objects are what feed optimal development and this is where to focus your efforts as you "follow the child." Go outside. Time outside feeds the senses. Grass, water, soil, snow, sand, warmth, wind, cold, worms, insects, etc. should be experienced with all the senses and often. The importance of unhurried time in nature is paramount at this stage of development.

Real activities such as preparing food, setting the table, washing dishes, sweeping, raking, shoveling, folding laundry are of great interest to the young child and feed an important need for humans, even the youngest among us, to feel capable. Preparing your home so that children can be



"Within the child lies the fate of the future. Whoever wishes to benefit society must protect the child and observe his natural ways of acting. A child is mysterious and powerful and contains within himself the secret of human nature." -Dr. Maria Montessori



involved in such activities is a good investment. Providing child-sized tools and utensils, stepping stools, and placing items on low shelves is a good place to start. Independence in caring for oneself and one's things

adds to that feeling of capability. Setting children up for success by providing easy-to-get-on and -off clothing and limiting toys are practical and not difficult ways to support independence.

Read books with real characters who are having real experiences and use precise vocabulary for everything. Remember young children are confused by fantasy when their job is to make sense of the real world. Needless to say, passive exposure to screens is doing very little to serve young children in their quest for real experiences, and should be kept to a minimum.

SOW THE SEEDS OF CULTURE

Children arrive ready for their elementary years armed with an incredible store of knowledge about their world. Just think what that helpless infant you brought home has accomplished by the time he or she is six years old. Montessori identified the emergence of some new characteristics around age six, ones that provide an important set of inner directives that last through to approximately age

twelve. Just as before, it is the elementary-aged child's job to reveal these to us, and attending to them is how we "follow the child" and aid optimal development during these years.

Children at this age display a strong sense of imagination, which can be described as the power to picture objects or experiences in their absence, and which allows the brain to combine ideas and images in new ways. It is to this power of imagination that all the advancements of humankind can be attributed. Children have an interest in things extraordinary such as past times, far-away places and natural phenomena. With a growth in intellect, there is an increasing ability to think abstractly, using logic and reason. Children can hold ideas and facts in relation to each other and consequently naturally strive to understand how information relates to the whole.

Take your elementary-aged child to the library often, check out books on a wide variety of topics, and continue reading to your child (daily if possible), choosing books with text that is at a higher level of difficulty than your child's reading level. Visit all sorts of museums; attend plays, concerts, lectures and sporting events; and, travel to see local human-made and natural places of interest.

Eat dinner together and have conversations on a wide sweep of subjects. Your child is striving to make sense of the world by asking big questions. Where did I come from? What are the stars made from? What is right and what is wrong? Listen well and answer questions to the best of your ability. If you don't know the answer, research the information together. Make the quest for knowledge fun, and model your enjoyment and that's what your child will emulate. It is often during these years that the beginnings of life-long





interests get laid down. Montessori referred to this time of childhood as the Age of the Intellect as children can learn an immense amount of information, so don't be afraid to sow many, many seeds.

GIVE REAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BE AUTHENTIC

Adolescence brings a change in the direction of development. There are two periods in a human being's life when immense brain development takes place – from 0 to 3 years and again from 12 to 15 years. Montessori saw the toddler and the adolescent as analogous, with both stages requiring special care. The first stage results in 'the child' and the second ultimately 'the adult.'

This time of rapid physical growth and transformation comes with wanting to emotionally move away from one's family and move towards belonging to one's group. Adolescents are interested in the quality of society for themselves and others. At the same time, they can be filled with doubts and hesitations. These young students may experience difficulty concentrating, especially on academic work, and this is why it is important to offer a rich academic exposure in the elementary years when they are so open to it. Adolescents strive for independence and meaning in their lives; they want to make a direct contribution to society and have it recognized. Success in life depends on a self-confidence born from knowledge of one's own capabilities, worthiness and strength. They need real responsibility in their home, school and community lives. They benefit from facing challenges and learning to overcome them often, and in this way they build a repertoire of skills for adult life. They need a variety of work: manual, intellectual, collaborative, and individual. Earning some money gives them the opportunity to experience an element of economic independence.

They should know how to use technology, but not always be plugged in.

If met with a lack of sympathy and understanding the adolescent's sensitivity and self-doubt may manifest itself in a revolt against authority. They can spot insincerity a mile away. Whatever effort you put into providing real experiences for your young child, or learning opportunities for your elementary-aged child, you now need to double your efforts for your adolescent. Be authentic. "Do as I say, not as I do," just doesn't cut it. Being your child's absolute best role model in how you manage your relationships and responsibilities is your job now, and it can be the hardest of all. Make room for your adolescent to come to you with their problems, dramas and conundrums. They need a sounding board rather than suggestions. They need ideas rather than instructions. They need empathy rather than judgement. The parameters of the parent-child relationship have changed and the notion of "follow the child" makes us look deep *within* to be our best selves, so that we can be an aid to our child's optimal development as they practice for adulthood.

Montessori philosophy is layered and complex, yet also extremely simple in what it is calling us to do. To "follow the child" is to capitalize upon the blueprint for human development. A child's successful development at each stage depends on the attention given to the needs and characteristics of the previous one. There is no such thing as rushing through one stage to get to the next. Our ultimate goal is to support children to develop themselves fully in all aspects, so they will be happy and successful, and contribute to society in meaningful ways. Each stage of childhood comprises several years, so there is plenty of time to get it right (and sometimes get it wrong). So, after all, it is "complex" and does require some "reform of ourselves," but it is so worth it, as we are all the beneficiaries. Thank you for reading to the end!

Mystery History Day

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS DELIGHTED THE AUDIENCE WITH THEIR REPORTS

We hosted our annual and student favorite event, "Mystery History," with great fun and laughter. Before the big day arrived, an extensive amount of preparation was completed by the students. Historical figures were researched, including information on successes, tragedies, and personal attributes with it all coming together with costumes to complete the facade. The Lower Elementary students hosted their "Wax Museum" asking visitors to press a button to hear recited facts about their historical characters, while Upper Elementary shared their extensive reports. It was a memorable day!



Grandparents' Tea

A big thank you to Mildred Unfried for hosting our grandparents!



Join us for our next Grandparents' Tea on Tuesday, April 7!

PLEASE CALL THE MAIN OFFICE TO RSVP



IT WAS WONDERFUL TO HAVE EVERYONE HERE TO CHAT ABOUT WHAT WE ALL LOVE THE MOST, YOUR GRANDCHILDREN.

Family Association Events

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE MSGH COMMUNITY, YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY ASSOCIATION.

**FAMILY ASSOCIATION
OPEN MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27
3:00P.M.**

**FERN PARK PLAYDATES
APRIL 8, APRIL 28 AND MAY 7**

**NATURAL PLAYGROUND PLAYDATE
SATURDAY, APRIL 25 AT 10:30A.M.**

Please keep an eye out in the bulletin for dates of Family Socials and Parent Socials.

*If you would like to volunteer for the FA or have questions please email:
msghfamiliasociation@gmail.com.*

New Hartford Open Farm Day

ADOLESCENT STUDENTS GAVE PRESENTATIONS AT MILLSTREAM FARM

MSGH participated in the first Celebrate New Hartford Open Farm Day! We were 1 of 7 farms hosting visitors and giving demonstrations. Our students presented some of their lessons, for example, "The Biochemical Process of How to Make Goat Cheese." Everyone got a real "taste" of the Adolescent Program.

We will be participating again in September 2020 so come join us!



Montessori Around the World

A PRIMARY 3 PROJECT WITH MRS. LOCKHART

Our Primary 3 students have been greeting Montessori children around the world. Our children wrote letters, sent beautifully drawn pictures, acorns, newly fallen leaves and our MSGH magnet to Montessori schools across the world. Excitedly, we have been receiving letters in return – from Eureka, California, East Rockaway, New York, Scotland, and England. We continue to anxiously wait for our mail from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and more.



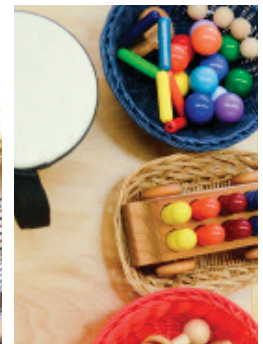
Veteran's Day

MSGH's Elementary classes honored and celebrated all of our veterans with speeches, sayings, poems and songs. Thank you to all of our veterans for your service!



INFANT CLASSES AT MSGH

ENRICHING CHILDHOOD



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Winter Classes

Free Infant/Parent Class (non-walkers)

Thursdays 9:00-10:00a.m.

March 5- March 26

This class is designed for non-walking infants and their caregivers. Adults will have the opportunity to observe and interact with their child as he or she explores an environment prepared to support their natural curiosity and developmental needs. Informal discussions will allow caregivers to share their successes and challenges regarding topics such as breastfeeding, weaning, toilet learning, issues regarding sleep and how to encourage freedom while maintaining limits. The Montessori trained teacher will facilitate these discussions as well as discuss ways to promote language, movement, independence, and self-discipline at home.

Spring Classes

Free Infant Massage Class (0-6 months)

Wednesdays 9:30-10:30a.m.

April 29- May 27

Come and enjoy a relaxing bonding hour with your child and experience the benefits of infant massage in a welcoming group setting. The rewards for your child include improved sleep patterns and the ability to self soothe. It can offer your baby relief for digestion issues, including colic, and creates a beautiful space for you to bond with your little one. This class is open to all parents and caregivers of babies aged 0-6 months.

To register for classes, please call the Main Office at 860.236.4565 or visit <https://msgh.org/our-programs/parent-infant-workshops>.

Independence

By Leslie Wetmore, Primary Teacher

"Independence" is one of Montessori's most common buzz-words, and it's one just about everyone can get behind. We all want our children to be independent, to be able to do things for themselves – it makes things easier for them, and easier for us.

What is a little less obvious is how much work this journey to independence requires, both from the child and from the adults in their life. It is fairly intuitive that becoming independent is something your child must work on – after all, your child is the one who is learning to refine skills and to anticipate expectations, how to navigate the world we are already familiar with and to find their own place in it. We see the fruits of this work ("Look! I did it!"), as well as the frustrations. And because it is clearly the child's journey, we can make the mistake of thinking that we are not a part of it – but in actuality, the adult's role in the child's development of independence is just as important, although it can be a little harder to define.

Firstly, as adults in our children's lives, our role in aiding their independence is to prepare an environment where they can be independent. If we expect them to do something, whether it is pouring themselves a glass of water, dressing themselves, or cleaning up after a spill, we must make sure



they have everything they need to do so. Not only do they need a glass and a pitcher, clothing, or a dust-pan and brush, but these things must also be accessible and appropriately sized.

This sounds like it ought to be obvious, but it can be easy to overlook. Sure, your child has cups – but can he reach them without asking you? Is there a container of water available that he can lift and pour by himself? Your child has beautiful clothing for every season – but can she fasten her pants on her own? Does she have shoes she can put on by herself, or must she seek out an adult every time





she puts them on to tie them for her? You may have a dustpan – somewhere – but does your child know where it is? Is it too big and unwieldy for him to use easily? Having everything your child needs on hand, and being able to anticipate just what will be needed to take care of something independently so it is always available, is an enormous responsibility on the adult's part.

The other, wholly important responsibility we have as adults is to allow them the opportunity to be independent. Again, this is something that sounds so simple, so easy – but this responsibility actually can demand more restraint and self-control from an adult than we sometimes realize. When a child is practicing a skill that allows them to be independent – often times a skill they have yet to master – it can sometimes be the hardest thing in

the world not to jump in. Maybe your child seems to be struggling to undo that button, trying and trying (and failing and failing) many times over, when you could save them the sting of defeat in an instant. Maybe your child is theoretically capable of zipping that jacket, but it takes him five minutes to accomplish what you could do in five seconds. Or maybe your child can "fold" the laundry, but as soon as she finishes your fingers itch to snatch it up and do it properly, before things can wrinkle.

But as well-intentioned as you might be in any of these situations, an adult stepping in at this point only makes us an obstacle to the child's independence. If we are too quick to needlessly do things on our children's behalf, even with the kindest intentions in our hearts, there is only one message they receive: "You can't do this. I can do this easier (or faster, or better) than you, so don't even bother trying." This message, told to them by someone they trust the most, can be devastating and lead to learned helplessness: automatically assuming they shouldn't even attempt something, because they must inevitably fail.

Of course, there are times an adult does need to help – when it's an issue of safety, for instance, or if a child has become so frustrated at not being

able to complete a task that they have become too upset to continue. As their guide, it's our job, in that moment to leave as much as possible to them, and to allow them the opportunity to try (and sometimes fail!) and to learn that they are capable of perseverance even when they are not 100% confident of their skills. Even in instances where help is needed, we must be able to gauge how much help to give. Slowly and carefully demonstrating the steps and then undoing it (giving a "mini lesson") so the child can try gives the child the opportunity to "do it themselves." If the child still shows that they need help after this, we still should leave as much to them as possible – for instance, instead of just zipping up the jacket for them, we can fit the bottom stop into the slide, but allow them to pull it up. In this way, we can break difficult tasks up into smaller goals that the child can still be independent with, so that their confidence in their own abilities and their willingness to keep trying in the face of challenge is still intact.

FAMILY ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETING

The Family Association invited the Board to present at their Open Meeting in preparation for the adoption of MSGH's new Strategic Plan. This meeting brought everyone together to discuss the successful future of our wonderful school.



Winter Celebration

Songs and performances shared at the 2019 MSGH Winter Celebration reflect music learning and exploration in a Montessori environment. The repertoire was a direct outgrowth of student studies in the fall. From Hispanic Heritage to Indigenous Peoples of North America, students delved into both traditional and dynamic contemporary aspects of culture. Montessori ideals of connections to the earth and to humanity, understanding nature and our relationship with the world – were all embodied in the music chosen for the 2019 Winter Celebration.

The Earth, our Moon and Sun were all represented as a turning from darkness to light – the Winter Solstice – was acknowledged.



WINTER CELEBRATION CONTINUED



SPRING EVENTS

COME SEE
MY SCHOOL

TUESDAY,
MARCH 3
5-6:30p.m.

MULTICULTURAL
POTLUCK

THURSDAY, APRIL 23
5:30-7:30p.m.

Bringing all cultures together and celebrating
community at MSGH!

Montessori School of Greater Hartford

PREPARE TO BEE CAPTIVATED

Sunday, April 26, 1-3 p.m.

Come meet our Bee Keeper, Brenda Nye, a published writer in
the Bee Culture Magazine and learn how the Adolescent
students take care of the bees at Millstream Farm.



ASK QUESTIONS!
RECEIVE THE INSIDE SCOOP AS TO WHY BEES ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR PLANET.

ADOLESCENT OPEN HOUSE
LOCATED AT THE MSGH'S NEW HARTFORD CAMPUS:
741 Steele Road, New Hartford, CT
860.236.4565 | msgh.org | Est. 1964

Recognized by Association Montessori International.
Accredited by Connecticut Association of Independent Schools.



SAVE THE DATE



ROOTS & WINGS
COMMUNITY GALA

FARMINGTON CLUB
162 TOWN FARM ROAD
FARMINGTON, CT 06032



SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2020

To ensure you receive the electronic invitation, please
forward your updated email address to Tokoo@msgh.org.

SPECIAL
PERSON'S DAY

FRIDAY, MAY 15

A family member or friend is invited for a
classroom visit.

BUSHNELL
PICNIC

THURSDAY, MAY 28
5:30-7:30p.m.

Located at the Bushnell Carousel.

Mindfulness

By Jacki Romano, Learning Specialist

“Take a deep breath.” “Count to ten.” Sound familiar? Parents and teachers for hundreds, if not thousands, of years have given this advice to children when they are overwrought. There is now an industry, called mindfulness, behind it. In the last 20 years, as the practice of yoga has grown in the United States, the fields of psychology and education have embraced aspects of it in their work with both adults and children. We now hear the word “mindfulness” almost every day.

In the 1960’s and 1970’s, Dr. Marsha Linehan, at that time a clinical behavioral psychologist, realized that she wasn’t reaching a large segment of her client population, so she began a journey that led her to study Zen with a master and to study meditation with a Benedictine monk in Germany. The monk was also a Zen master. Linehan trained under him for over 30 years, became a Zen master herself, and along the way developed a field of psychology called Dialectical Behavior Psychology (DBT). It is based on Zen practices (mindfulness) and the acceptance of self. DBT became known as the most effective therapy for suicidal patients and those with borderline personality disorder, a diagnosis considered the hardest to treat. Linehan’s work, along with that of other psychologists who, too, were influenced by yoga and realized its benefits for all clients, began a movement to include mindfulness as part of clinical practice. This movement eventually reached the educational community.

Currently, mindfulness is an integral part of many school programs. Yoga and meditation are being successfully incorporated into children’s lives. Many schools are backing away from behavioral charts and moving toward positive solution-oriented programs. Positive Discipline, and similar programs, notably Dr. Ross Greene’s Collaborative Problem-Solving program (whose teaching manual and that of Positive Discipline’s are almost identical) lead the way. Both employ mindfulness practices by helping children learn about, accept and improve themselves in a positive, respectful way. Additionally, a fairly new program, called the Zones of Regulation (discussed below), is being successfully employed in many classrooms to provide children with a concrete way of regulating their emotions, an integral part of mindfulness practice.

The Zones of Regulation is an outgrowth of the Social Thinking curriculum. By using colors for four different “zones” (energy levels), children learn in a concrete way about their gut feelings, what zone they are in at a given moment and, when necessary, ways to help themselves move toward a zone that is more appropriate for the circumstance they find themselves in. When we are in the Blue Zone, we are sad, tired, sick, and not at all alert. The Yellow Zone is when we are frustrated, excited, hyper and silly. The Green Zone is optimum for learning. We are in a calm and alert state. The Red Zone is the out of control “flipped lid” zone. We might be furious





and unable to control ourselves, in a meltdown. This is also the zone that includes a state of heightened elation, not anger, to the point where we can't bring ourselves out of it to learn. Deep breathing methods, counting to ten, exercising, carrying heavy objects, etc. are all practices that help children calm their sensory systems, which then allows them to focus better, to be in the Green Zone. At the end of this article, I include two websites that provide more details about various breathing methods with children and about the Zones of Regulation.

Those who enter their children into a Montessori school are lucky that these practices have always implicitly been part of the Montessori curriculum. Learning about "grace and courtesy" (my first introduction to Montessori!), in the early years creates a sense of calm in young children. That's mindfulness practice. Positive problem-solving with other children is a natural part of the curriculum. A structured environment, where everything has its place and where children are free to explore the materials after having had a lesson on them, is also a mindfulness practice. It calms children's minds and bodies. Using a floor mat does the same. Children feel secure. They don't need to worry that another child will interrupt their work by taking a material they are using. A non-competitive environment where children are free to explore their interests without worries about comparison is also implicitly a mindfulness practice. Children cheerfully learn that other children may have skills they don't yet possess and are often heard saying, "Go talk to _____ about this. S/he knows a lot." They are delighted with each other's accomplishments.

A final, yet most important, mindfulness practice is quality sleep, that is, sleep that is both long enough and includes the right amount of the proper stages of sleep. While we can't, as parents, determine the length and quality of our children's individual sleep stages, we can ensure that we provide our children enough sleep for their age. Without proper sleep, all of us, adults and children, easily slip into the three zones that aren't conducive to learning, and we find ourselves unable to concentrate well.



I am grateful to have lived through the educational transition from shame and blame as a standard teaching practice (my upbringing) to positive solution-oriented practices. Like many of you, my gut knows the feelings that arise from domineering, authoritarian teaching methods. When I first encountered Montessori in 1983, I knew that by enrolling my children into such a school, they would never live the steady diet of punishment as a learning tool. My wish is that children in all schools benefit from mindfulness practices as part of their learning environment. We are all very lucky that MSGH is a model of such practices.

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/deep-breathing-exercises-for-kids>

<https://hes-extraordinary.com/the-zones-of-regulation>

JACKI'S MARCH PARENTING CLASS: TEENS & TWEENS

4 week class starting Tuesday, March 10 from 5:15-7:30p.m.

Cost includes class materials, dinner and childcare.

\$150 per person and \$275 per couple.

Music Program at MSGH

CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR

by Colleen Casey-Nelson, Music Teacher

The sights of bright red clothing and the sounds of clanging gongs and drums mark the beginning of the Year of the Metal Rat, according to the Chinese Lunar Zodiac Calendar. MSGH Elementary students chased out the old year and any bad luck, welcoming in the New Year and good luck as they paraded down the school corridors and into classrooms. The Upper Elementary Chinese Luogu Percussion (Luo=gongs, gu=drums) played the Shi Wu (shi = lion, wu = dance). The Lion Dancers led the way, followed by Luogu players, red banners and dragon dancers bringing up the rear. Amid the dancing and parading, students called out “Gung Hei Fat Choy” (Cantonese) = “Wishing you great happiness and prosperity”. As the Upper Elementary students processed by, the Lower Elementary children joined the parade, ending with a gathering in the Van Scoter Room for a Lower Elementary performance of the Lantern Dance.

Each part of the celebration has meaning and dates back centuries; from the lanterns, which symbolize joy and good fortune, to the Dragon’s wisdom and power. The Shi Wu, or Lion Dance, is particularly important and is meant to bring prosperity and good luck for the upcoming year. The color red adorned people and instruments alike and is the symbol of happiness, success, beauty and good luck. Students even learned the music using traditional Chinese Luogu mnemonic syllables representing specific instruments and rhythms, just as it is taught in China.

January 25, 2020 began the Chinese New Year celebration, known as Spring Festival. The second new moon after the winter solstice marks the beginning of the Lunar New Year. Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia, and Tibet are among many Asian nations that celebrate Lunar New Year. The Lantern Festival marks the ending of the Chinese New Year celebration, arriving 15 days later as the first full moon of the New Year arrives on February 8, 2020.



ALUMNI CORNER

Interview with Rain Hayles

One of our alumni, Rain Hayles, stopped by to reconnect with staff at MSGH. What a treat for all of us! Rain is currently living his passion, filming basketball games and travelling the country in the process. Below is a short interview we had with Rain during his visit.

RAIN, WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

I currently attend Husson University in Bangor, Maine. It is pretty cold there. In fact, the family joke is that when I visit home in the winter, it feels like springtime for me!

Following my time at MSGH, I went on to The Masters School in West Simsbury, CT. I then went on to two years at Middlesex Community college before transferring to Husson University. It was during my second year that my love for film began to really take off and my business started to take shape.

I posted a clip in the summer that went viral and people began contacting me for business. From there, I began working for a basketball team called CBC [CT based nonprofit organization committed to supporting young men and women basketball players, connecting them to American academic institutions]. I worked with them for roughly a couple of years and traveled all over the country. This year, I am sponsored by Nike and able to go to all their basketball events. One cool perk is I don't have to pay for shoes!

TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMPANY, SPLASH PRODUCTIONS.

Two years ago I started Splash Productions, a platform designed to showcase exceptional up and coming basketball talent. At first it started as a small YouTube page as a way to highlight basketball talent in the area because there really wasn't much of a platform for CT youth and I was hoping to connect them with college recruiters. I had a small Cannon camera and just started tinkering around. I began filming. It was hard at first, I didn't have a huge clientele. I worked mostly with one client. One of those clips went viral and before I knew it people were connecting with me. It has grown immensely since the start, and I now have 12,000 followers on social media. I still touch every part of the business: it's still just me updating the page. I love being courtside, filming the action.

TIME AT MSGH, PRIMARY TO UPPER ELEMENTARY.

I started at MSGH when I was 2.5 years old in Mrs. (Kathy) Aldridge's class. I then had Ms. (Melinda) Macca and Ms. Marsha for Lower Elementary. Ms. Marsha stayed on as my Upper Elementary Teacher.

The cool thing about MSGH was that everyone came from different backgrounds. I really noticed that after I left and went on to a prep school (The Masters School) where everyone there had pretty much the same backstory. At MSGH you see "all walks of life." It also applies to the different levels, preschoolers all the way to 6th graders (at that time). When I was a 6th grader, all the "little kids" wanted to talk to me and looked up to me, it encouraged me to talk circumspectly. Everyone did that for everyone.

You can find more about Rain's business through his social media presence on Instagram: [@splashproductions2](https://www.instagram.com/splashproductions2).

Thank you, Rain, for taking the time to visit and reconnect. We'll never forget the time you spent with us at MSGH, and will always be a place you can come visit, reconnect and catch up with staff and former classmates.



WELCOME BACK TO MSGH!

Thank you for saying hi, alumni families.



Yahel and Michael Gutman, parents of Atara ('18) and Liel, dropped by for a quick visit!



Annabeth Smith ('10), alumni student, pictured here with Orla Black and Lisa Cyr, her Primary Classroom Team.



Emma Stremper ('17), alumni student, at the CT State Capitol. Recently pictured here with Representative Johnson with whom she completed a two week internship as part of a senior year project at Watkinson School.

Tell us what you've
Been up to!
(students and families)

We wish to include your "news" in our next Follow the Child Newsletter. Current and "back in the day" pictures and fond memories of your time at MSGH are always welcome. Updated email addresses for the entire family are also helpful so we can stay in contact with everyone. Please email Tokoo@msgh.org.

We'd love for you to stop by and connect in person!



Calling all MSGH Alumni Families!

We welcome you to take a stroll down memory lane, reunite with old friends, and join us for an Alumni picnic on:

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2020 4:00-7:00 P.M. AT MSGH

.....Check Us Out on Social Media

MSGH Alumni has a Facebook Group: @MSGHAlumni
Follow us on Instagram: #Montessorischoolofgh

What Was Your Favorite Adventure?



In childhood the world is new and filled with endless opportunities for exploration! A recent family discussion reminded me of the sense of wonder that, as adults, we often take for granted. Following a recent family adventure, we began reminiscing on our favorite trips thus far. My daughter's response:

"My 4th trip around the sun. I rode my bike without training wheels. My BFF [best friend forever] invited me to her birthday party. I learned to write my name (my whole name!) and almost all the numbers. There are a lot of numbers in the world, you know. Oh, I even learned to tie my shoes by myself!"

Her sense of adventure is wrapped around her drive to learn and explore her world and the people in it. If only we viewed trips around the sun in the same way!

Since 1964, the Montessori School of Greater Hartford has been serving students from across the Greater Hartford area, preserving the wonder of learning and treasuring childhood. We invite you to support MSGH's call to serve every student (present and future) with a gift to our Children's Fund.

Unrestricted gifts to the Children's Fund support **classroom materials, cultural enrichment programming, professional development and MSGH's financial aid program**. Each member of the MSGH community is asked to participate in supporting the Children's Fund: **parents, staff, alumni and alumni parents, trustees, grandparents and friends**. We seek to attain the highest participation rate possible, and gifts of every size are cherished and impact each student in our care.

How you can help?

- Gift to the MSGH Children's Fund. We cherish every donor and every gift
- Share our social media page with your network
- Encourage others to donate and/or learn more about MSGH

We hope you will join us in making a meaningful contribution to the Children's Fund, at whatever level is comfortable for you. Each donation makes a difference in our ability to provide the nurturing and unique Montessori experience you have chosen for your family. Let us partner together in support of childhood and "education for life." Now that sounds like an amazing adventure!

Warmly,

Toko Odorcuk
Director of Admissions and Development

THANK
You
to everyone
who has
supported
MSGH.



Montessori School of Greater Hartford

2019-2020 Children's Fund

CATEGORIES OF GIVING

Education for Peace	\$10,000+	Benefactor	\$1,000-\$1,499
The Maria Montessori Circle	\$5,000 - \$9,999	Sustainer	\$500-\$999
The Pink Tower Circle	\$2,500-\$4,999	Patron	\$250-\$499
The Director's Circle	\$1,500-\$2,499	Supporter	\$100-\$249
		Friend	\$1 to \$99

I/We gift \$ _____

- Where MSGH needs it most
 Faculty Professional Development
 Facilities & Natural Playground
 Classroom Materials and Programming
 Financial Assistance

Should any fund become oversubscribed, MSGH will use the gift where it is most needed.

Name(s) _____

Maiden Name, if MSGH Alumna _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail _____

_____ Please initial here if you wish to remain an anonymous donor _____ Please initial here if your company will match this contribution

AFFILIATION TO MSGH:

- Current Parent Parent of Alumnus/a Friend
 Alumnus/a Grandparent Trustee

MY GIFT IS:

- In Honor of: _____
 In Memory of: _____

To give online, visit:

www.msgh.org ➡ Support MSGH ➡ Children's Fund



For questions, please contact Toko Odorcuk, Director of Development at 860.236.4565 ext. 112

MSGH is a 501(c)(3) organization and all donations are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

Thank you for supporting the Montessori School of Greater Hartford!

Montessori School of Greater Hartford | information@msgh.org | www.msgh.org | 141 North Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut 06107

860 236 4565 | f 860 586 7420 | Tax I.D. number: 06-0804807



Montessori School of Greater Hartford

141 North Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107

Have an idea for the Newsletter?
Let us know by emailing ericak@msgh.org.
We would love to hear from you!



Our Mission:

Montessori School of Greater Hartford fosters a strong foundation for confident, compassionate participation in the world by nurturing each child's unique gifts, passion for learning, and independence. As a community, we enrich families, live our diversity, and embody the Association Montessori Internationale standards of excellence.

FOLLOW THE CHILD

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Erica Killer

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Erica Killer, Toko Odorezuk, and Alex Pape

CONTRIBUTED WRITERS AND EDITORS

Orla Black, Colleen Casey-Nelson, Mary McHale,

Toko Odorezuk, Jacki Romano, Leslie Wetmore

For copies of FTC photos or articles, please contact
Erica Killer, ericak@msgh.org.

Neither this publication nor any portion thereof may be reproduced for any purpose
whether private or public without the expressed written permission of the Montessori
School of Greater Hartford. Copyright©2020.

Montessori School
of Greater Hartford

141 North Main St.

West Hartford, Connecticut 06107

860 236 4565 | f 860 586 7420 | msgh.org