

# Follow *the* Child

THE MSGH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



## Dear Families,



UNA'S CHAT

The pace of society has really quickened since we were young, and that can be seen most clearly in the after-school lives of children. Over the past ten years, I've noticed that parents come to me more and more to ask about how they should expose their children to activities and provide structure; yet, not overwhelm them.

I've also noticed that parents are growing increasingly more uncomfortable with how to manage unstructured time.

Current culture sends the message that children must participate in every realm imaginable: sports, music, art, etc. Considering the pressure that children face as they get older to be really solid in certain areas (sports in high school or music programs) it's easy to see how parents are facing tough realities when raising children in today's world. Parents also have dreams for their children, and they want them to be exposed to life in as many ways as possible. These combined pressures can slowly lead to over-scheduled children who are facing every waking moment with something they have to do. As adults we can choose to allow and sustain this stress in our lives; however, children often have little



### IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Una's Chat
- 5 Zoomerangs & Fort Building
- 6 Art of Learning Annual Gala
- 8 Photos
- 10 Highlights from the Primary Music Program
- 14 Tips From the Toddler Teachers
- 18 Come See My School
- 19 Parent Visits
- 20 Circus Week
- 22 Cirque du Montessori
- 24 Family Association News
- 26 Save-the-Dates
- 27 Wedding/Baby News
- 28 Annual Fund

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.

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or no control over their time and are at the mercy of what we choose for them.



## Managing Structured Time

### Be Deliberate In Your Choices

Before you dive into figuring out your child's extra-curricular activities, think first about your life as a child and the pace, simplicity or complexity you enjoyed. What memories do you have? What stuck with you? What did you carry with you into adulthood? What do you wish you had more or less of? As you consider the best use of your child's free time, keep these ruminations in mind and overlay them with the knowledge of who your child is.

### Weigh the Pros and Cons of Your Child's Requests

You may face situations where your child becomes very excited about lots of different things and asks to pursue all of them. Though you want to follow the excitement, you may have

reservations about the load that you can all handle. The reality is that while a child can begin many activities with excitement and motivation, an overwhelmed child can quickly become discouraged and demotivated. Just as you know that eating too many cookies will make your child hyper or sick, responding to requests is another area where your discretion is required to look to the future and determine what is truly in your child's best interest.

In those moments when your earnest child is using all of his considerable charm and guile to coax you into saying yes to the second or third activity, be comforted by this thought: Your child has time; time to pursue other interests at a later date. They don't all have to be learned at once. Recall your own life's journey. Did you learn all of your sports in the first grade and begin instruments at the same time, or did you learn some things during the school year and some in the summer? Some when you were in elementary school and others when you were in high school or college? While it may not seem it in today's culture, your child will have time to acquire the exposure you dream about. But by spreading things out, the exposure becomes richer, more enjoyable and more likely to be remembered as something positive.

### Choose Activities With Your Child in Mind

When trying to figure out the fine line between enough and too much, the factors you use to weigh your decisions will vary depending on the child, the day, and everyone's energy. Consider who your child is as a person: active, intense, a challenge seeker, or low key, easy going and content to dream?

Some of us need more “down time” than others and “down time” means different things to different people. Consider your child’s preferred mode of operation. Does he lean towards individual pursuits that are thoughtful and creative, or does he prefer team endeavors that are more active and physical? Parents sometimes choose activities that they feel will encourage their child to develop skills or expose their child to something they feel he or she needs to develop. This is an admirable goal, but one that should be undertaken thoughtfully and with caution. For example, the parent of a child who is inclined towards individual pursuits may feel the need to enroll his or her child in a team sport to offer experience or “toughen up.” If this causes undue stress, the strategy can backfire and reinforce the child’s

aversion to collective activities. There are other ways to support a child’s ability to manage collective activities when he is called on to do so.

### What is your child’s natural bend?

Music, art, science, drama, sports, technology? He or she may have one or many. Talk with your child about his or her interests and take some time to observe classes to check for tone and format. Narrow your list down to choices that suit your criteria, and once you are comfortable with the options, consider letting your child choose which activity he or she wants to enjoy during that season or part of the week. If you meet resistance when setting limits, remind your child that there will be opportunities to pursue the other activities, but they can’t all be done at once.

### What is going on in the rest of your child’s life, and almost more importantly, in your life?

This is a big one, as the pace of your life almost inevitably determines your child’s. Is your child in school or some sort of care for half of a day, or a full 8 to 10 hours? In other words, how much time does your child get to “just be,” to play alone or with friends using his or her own agenda?

If your child is in school 8 to 10 hours a day, it is unlikely that he or she will have the enthusiasm or energy during the school week for anything other than time to play alone with siblings or with neighborhood friends. Think about how you can’t wait to get home to change into comfortable clothes, get necessary chores done, get the kids to bed and have time to just do your thing. Your child also needs



time to play and “be,” so factor that in when looking at the weekly family schedule.

## Managing Unstructured Time

It is essential, even more so for an active/intense child, to have unscheduled time alone or with friends. It is during these times that children come to know themselves; they learn what they enjoy, how they function best, where their interests lie, what they're good at, what challenges them and how they respond to challenge. They learn how

of the adults in their lives.

Parents often ask me strategies for how to keep children occupied during unscheduled time. This question is moot if your child has nearby friends to play with. Remember, children 5 and above need lots of time in the company of other children; it's a burning drive for this age child. This is when they truly learn the rules of social engagement and how to manage themselves and others. When other children are not available, your child can divide his time between his own activities and join in with household

## Make “Stuff” Available

Make sure that your child has access to a supply of disparate “stuff” such as paper, yarn, beans, wood, cardboard, glue, etc. that can be put to a multitude of uses. Provide manipulatives that are as open ended as possible; I have yet to meet a child who can resist Legos. Your older child will likely be able to work on the same construction project for weeks. Be flexible and open to the creation of forts, tunnels and other creative structures with your furniture and in your home. Be prepared to allow your child into the yard, appropriately dressed for the weather, to get wet and messy and any other state of dishevelment he may conjure up. Be prepared to make baths an any-time event complete with toys and tupperware. Tolerate a minor flood in the kitchen with a full sink and the previously mentioned, wonderfully adaptable tupperware and make funnels, pitchers and sieves available.

Most importantly, allow your child to understand that there are times when he may work or play with you and times when he is expected to do so alone. Your younger child will most likely check in with you regularly and that's completely appropriate; give the needed hug or reassuring word and send him off again.

As with everything else, your child will do what you do. So, as usual, the ball is in your court. It behooves you to lead a life that allows your child to witness balance, interest, creativity and joy.

Have fun!

Una



to work on developing skills at their own pace; what skills they want to develop and what's important to them. They learn to be themselves away from the expectations, rules, judgment and criticism of adults. It is during those times that the richness of the child's inner life is nurtured. To know your child as much as any one person can know another, observe him or her in these moments. Children can, of course, gather some of the same information from scheduled activities, but never on their own terms, for children are highly attuned to the expectations and judgments

activities such as cooking, laundry and vacuuming. This is excellent together time that provides purpose and a common goal. (Be careful not to use household activities as a threat in response to a claim of boredom.)

When you do hear the “I'm bored” moan, explain to your child that boredom is a wonderful thing; it means that the brain is ready to find something exciting to do. It may help the child who has trouble deciding what to do to make a list of all the possibilities. The list can be created at a time when he is feeling enthusiastic and can be posted and grow as new and wonderful things are discovered.

# Structured Activity: Zoomerangs



As you think about activities for your young child, here is one idea for something local that offers flexible attendance, and also allows the entire family to spend time together while outside in the fresh air. Zoomerangs is a non-competitive “open track” program designed for kids ages 4-13, managed by West Hartford’s favorite running shop: Fleet Feet. Zoomerangs gives kids an opportunity to experience running in a fun, friendly atmosphere, focusing on running safely using good form. Adults are welcome to participate.

Practices take place at the St. Joseph College Track and last about 45 minutes. Session begins April 22, 2012. Visit [www.fleetfeethartford.com/training/zoomerangs](http://www.fleetfeethartford.com/training/zoomerangs) for more information. Our appreciation goes out to Fleet Feet Sports for donating an item to this year’s auction and for creating this fun, yet relaxed children’s programming.



# Unstructured Activity: Fort Building



Fort building can yield hours of fun for kids and even reveal budding architects. Have fun, and remember that simple fun is often what kids love the most.



# Art of Learning Annual Gala

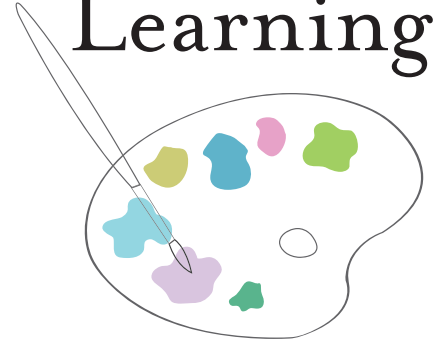
## May 11, 2012 The Riverview, Simsbury

*The school year has been flying by, and MSGH's Art of Learning Annual Gala is just around the corner. Co-chairs for this year's event are Jody and Ed Lewis and Jessica and Darren Standish.*

This special evening is a wonderful opportunity to connect with friends, support our school and have a great time! Funds raised support important financial assistance and cultural programming initiatives at MSGH and help maintain our diverse and enriching environment. As you read about the MSGH Primary Music program and Circus Week in this issue of *Follow the Child*, note that both initiatives are part of our cultural programming, which is supported by Gala Auction funding.

In order for this evening to be a success, we need every family to participate – even if you cannot attend. Consider volunteering on the Auction Committee to contribute your time and talent before the event or on the day of; solicit or contribute a sponsorship; solicit or donate items for the auctions; approach a business or family member to place an ad in the program book; or make a contribution. However you choose to be supportive, start by checking out the marvelous work of the Gala Committee and think about ways to get involved. We would appreciate your support.

# The Art of Learning



## MSGH Annual Gala Auction



### Help Fill A Classroom Basket!

**Rebecca London, Bette Botticello, Jessica Gorski and Carolyn McCutchan** are coordinating 4 amazing Classroom Baskets. This year's themes are Outdoor Fun, A Night In, Cooking Fun and Fun in the Garden. These themed baskets give everyone an opportunity to participate through smaller donations. Please check the Weekly Bulletin for further information regarding the items needed for your child's classroom basket.

### Donate!

**Jessica and Darren Standish, Jody and Ed Lewis, Nicole Blades, Deepti Talra** and many others are hard at work soliciting the donation of fantastic vacations, experiences, lessons, fine food and wine, sporting and theater tickets, works of art, etc. Any and all donations are welcome! If you are interested in soliciting or making donations, please check the Gala page on the MSGH website to see an updated list of current donors and to print out donor forms. Forms may also be found at school outside the Main Office.



## Bid on a Classroom Project!

Early Shirane and Ann Osoba are working with the teachers to help coordinate amazing Classroom Projects. As you read this, teachers and students are hard at work creating their masterpieces.



## Help with Décor and Set-Up!

Marina Luri-Clark, Suzanne Levy, Ed Lewis and Leon Pierce will ensure a dazzling and organized look for the Gala Auction this year. Please contact Susan Rich-Bye if you are interested in helping to create centerpieces or setting up on event day.



*The message for this year's Gala is participate, support and enjoy. See you there!*



**Gala Auction committee members pictured here:** Ann Osoba, Rebecca London, Co-Chairs Ed and Jody Lewis, Suzanne Levy, and Co-Chairs Darren and Jessica Standish.

**Committee members not pictured:** Marina Luri-Clark, Leon Pierce, Early Shirane, Nicole Blades, Bette Botticello, Jessica Gorski, Carolyn McCutchan and Deepti Talra

## Daily Rhythms







# Highlights From The Primary Music Program

By Amanda Aronson

*Music has always had a significant presence in MSGH classrooms, but over the last two years a strategic plan to bring a formal program to the Primary level has been unfolding.*

*In 2011, Yummie Oberstein—Ms. Yummie to the children—began working as the Music Director for the Primary classes. Tailoring her instruction to each class, Yummie approaches her work with Montessori principles in mind. She is teaching basics such as listening skills, music vocabulary, dynamics, pitch, and rhythm, but she is also stretching the curriculum beyond the basics and exploring areas such as music composition, arrangement and notation. Layered in and among all lessons are theatre skills to incorporate movement and aid absorption.*

*Knowing that we couldn't possibly convey the full curriculum to you in this space, we thought it better to present some highlights. After reading, share this article with your child and ask what he or she is doing with Ms. Yummie. You may be surprised by the sophistication of the answers you hear, for it is rare for children to experience programming with this depth at the pre-school level.*

## “The Orchestra Song”



A great deal of time is spent on the exploration of “The Orchestra Song,” because it lays a critical foundation for how to listen carefully. The original song introduces common instruments found in an orchestra, but Ms. Yummie deepens it by writing in new stanzas to showcase a broader range of instruments. As a bonus, she brings each of the instruments to class! Seeing and touching each one makes it easier for the children later on when they listen to other musical selections to try and isolate and identify individual sounds.

As lessons progress, classes listen to a variety of instrumental music pieces and discuss the musical forms of each. Through this, they discover that music can be organized many different ways.



## The Accordion

Children love to examine how an instrument's design makes it work. Recent lessons on the accordion, for example, ignited conversations about science and human anatomy when Ms. Yummie explained that the accordion relies on air to create its sound. To make this concept more concrete, she created a few experiments. Some classes blew cotton balls with a straw to see how the force of air used could change how far the cotton ball could travel; others sang a note and made the volume grow louder or softer by using more or less air. Conversations on the human body then followed naturally, as Ms. Yummie pointed out that we each have a diaphragm inside our bodies. When we sing, it expands and contracts depending on how much air we fill it with.

Connecting a lesson on the accordion to science and human anatomy not only creates relationships among content and makes the lesson more interesting, it allows children to understand how the bellows inside the accordion work like the human diaphragm to help create its sound.



## Becoming Notes

Learning about note value is always a favorite lesson, because Ms. Yummie turns the children into notes! After a quick review of what notes look like when they are on the staff, the focus shifts to how they function. Movement at this point is key, for children are not just learning about the notes, they are learning to internalize the rhythms created when they are put together. This may start by pretending to jump from one note to the next on the chromatic scale, or by skipping notes to create intervals. Things get very funny when to demonstrate *why* notes have different values (eighth, quarter, half, whole, etc.), Ms. Yummie becomes a note herself. The children sit captivated while she holds her voice on one note and runs out of the room. Breathless, she comes back in and exclaims, “I didn’t know when to stop! How do notes know when to stop?” Emphatic answers abound as the children giggle and explain to her that she needs to pick a type of note and then stop at the right time! When she pretends to be confused, the children leap up and begin demonstrating the values of different kinds of notes to help Ms. Yummie understand. They may pretend to be whole notes and hop or clap in 4:4 time, or stretch their arms out to represent when a rest occurs. However they demonstrate their newfound knowledge, the movements that the children use help them internalize rhythm and aid in their absorption of general music theory, since it then becomes easier to understand how musicians use notes to create and arrange songs.



## Pantomime

Pantomime is a significant component of the Primary music program. It not only strengthens basic presentation and performance skills, it supports a child’s social and emotional learning. Consider this, in order for children to develop strong social skills, they must understand how their bodies subtly communicate their thoughts and feelings. As adults, we know that our posture or facial expressions can convey messages without the use of words. If we are angry, our arms may cross, our stance may get rigid, our lips may purse, or our eyes may peer at someone in a threatening fashion. Children on the other hand, may not be able to interpret these kinds of social cues, so it is helpful to teach them how. Using pantomime in a playful way to attempt to convey the approach of an angry lion, for example, not only allows a child to explore what his body might look when he gets angry, it reminds him that we all feel anger at one time or another. As he watches his peers convey the same thing in a different way, it becomes easier to understand that we don’t all communicate our emotions similarly.



As children age, and the number of relationships they need to manage grows, instruction in pantomime supports their understanding of how to interpret cues from others. This is an often overlooked, but incredibly valuable area on which to focus to encourage perspective and the refinement of social skills.



## “Carnival of Animals”



“The Carnival of Animals” by the French Late-Romantic composer, Charles-Camille Saint-Saëns, offers children a way to apply a great deal of what they have learned about listening, rhythm and pantomime. Written to express a zoological fantasy, instruments in the selection create witty and charming depictions of animals with their sounds. Ms. Yummie harnesses the children’s zeal for discovery by turning them into musical detectives who must attempt to figure out why Saint-Saëns arranged this piece the way he did.

Before delving into the song, Ms. Yummie uses complementary material to create a fuller

experience. She acts out Aesop’s fable, *The Tortoise and The Hare* and teaches the children the Offenbach “Can Can” dance. With both the story and the dance’s rhythm in mind, Ms. Yummie challenges the children to begin their detective work. They listen to the song, identify the instruments they hear, match the instruments to the animals they are depicting and try to figure out the storyline. This seems easy enough when they start, but as they process the part about the tortoise, confusion sets in. Why is the quick, rhythmic tune of the “Can Can” playing during the part about the tortoise? The tortoise in Aesop’s fable moves slowly! Why then *did* Saint-Saëns make the tortoise sound like he was doing the “Can Can?” Was he writing a musical joke perhaps?



*MSGH children are fortunate. At a time when many schools are cutting music education, our children are not only receiving a rich and vibrant one, they are receiving it in ways that support their academic, social and emotional development. And at only three, four and five-years of age, they are finding the strength in their voices and discovering music’s innate power to communicate.*



# Tips From the Toddler Teachers

## Create Order and Routine

By Toko Blais Odorczyk



For most families, morning rituals rarely go as smoothly as desired, often leaving everyone in a frenzy and not in the best mood to begin the day. It can be a struggle to get your little one out of bed, dressed, fed, and set to go, all the while keeping the home a calm, friendly environment. Just remember that morning transitions are not set for a child's pace. Children thrive with order and routine, and outbursts are more likely during times of transition. Considering that the morning routine consists of several "transitions" in a row, it's no wonder they can seem overwhelming for small children who feel a lack of control.

While the Sensitive Period for Order is strongest for children between 6 months and 2 years of age, it can be prolonged until the age of 5. This Sensitive Period involves aspects of sequence (beginning/middle/end). It is very important for the young child to dwell in an environment of consistent order. This allows the little one to find points of reference, anticipate what happens next and feel secure.

The home environment, therefore, needs to be kept consistent, helping to preserve stability in your child's most comfortable setting. Keeping a consistent rhythm to the day allows your child to feel secure, knowing he or she can adequately predict the next step. Creating physical order within your home will also help ease any anxiety or tension that your child may be experiencing. **It might be interesting to know that the very young child depends on external order to aid in the development of mental order.**

Of course you cannot operate on a strict schedule at all times, but keeping basic activities (lunch, nap, dinner, bath, bedtime routine, etc.) consistent is helpful. If the majority of the day is structured and consistent, a child will be less stressed and more capable of withstanding the occasional "hiccup."

### Morning Tips

- Have your child help pick out clothes the night before;
- Create a "nook" where all bags, coats, and shoes are placed to avoid a scavenger hunt each morning;
- Sing while you get ready! Your child is more apt to listen, and you'll feel uplifted;
- Give plenty of warning when it's time to leave for school. "After your brush your teeth, it's time to put on your coat and go to the car;"
- Keep language concise and simple. Try to speak in a soft, calm voice;
- Offer choices with plenty of time to accomplish the chosen task;
- Offer words of understanding when your child is visibly upset;
- If it's a daily struggle to have your child dressed and fed in time to leave, feel free to send him or her to school occasionally in PJs with breakfast in hand;
- Keep in mind: Children live in the moment. It's hard for them to understand why they *need* to be anywhere except where they are right then.



“Order is one of the needs of life which, when it is satisfied, produces a real happiness.”

- Maria Montessori

# Observation and Collaboration Support Independence

*By Catherine Carrabba*

Here at MSGH we talk a lot about supporting a child's journey to independence, but it truly is a journey. Young toddlers, especially, need support as they learn the skills needed to be independent.

Take for example the child who is eagerly trying to learn how to put on his own socks and shoes. First, an attempt is made; this may be followed by more attempts. If each attempt fails, frustration grows. By observing your child, you as the parent may be able to see which part of the process is proving the most difficult. In the classroom, we'll often collaborate and say things such as "Why don't I help you put your toes in, then you pull the socks the rest of the way up?" This way, we get the process started together calmly, but the child feels the success of finishing it. If shoes are arranged neatly, are easy to find in a predictable place, and are the right size with child-friendly features (slip on or Velcro), the shoes then go on easily.

(Remember that if you are collaborating on something, or your child is trying something independently, one of the most important components of success is to provide ample time for the process. And make sure the situation your child is in is reasonable.)

It's also good to keep in mind that for a young toddler in a full day or all-day program, he or she has been asked to be independent for much of the day already. When home with family, the process may need to be a little different. More collaboration might be needed and wanted, since your child will likely want to do most evening activities right alongside you. Weekend days, when more time can be given, might be a better opportunity to practice giving your child ways to be independent until certain things can be mastered.





# The Importance of Modeling

By Teresa Reynolds

Sometimes parents will comment “now that my child is beginning to talk, I really need to watch what I say and do.” We then have a laugh when I remind them that by the time children can talk, they have taken in more than we can imagine. Since birth, they have been studying the adults in their lives, capturing like little photographers everything adults say and do. And since they can’t make choices about what to hang on to, they take in everything: the good and the bad, and then it becomes theirs.

That is why modeling is so amazing. Children will talk the way they hear others talk. They will act the way they see others act, and just as important to note, they will react the way others react to them. Children help make adults better people. They make us aware of how we need to behave around them in order to teach them properly.

Many of us can think about how we wish to speak and act around children when things are going well, but during times of stress, focusing on how we react can be a little harder.



## Tips for Reacting During Stressful Situations

- If a situation requires more attention or discussion (i.e., your child can’t get something to work properly or something broke), suggest that you both sit down and enjoy a cup of water; this can do wonders to calm a child down and will allow you a few moments to assess the situation and figure out what your child needs next. Humming your child’s favorite song during this time can also be calming.
- When you see that your child is in distress about something, take a deep breath. Observe the situation, and give yourself a moment to think about how you want to respond. If your child is injured, calmly acknowledge that you understand that he or she is hurt, and then let your child react to you instead of you reacting to him or her. You don’t want to elevate the level of stress the child is experiencing. The incident has already happened, so the focus needs to be how not to make it worse.



- Try not to overreact or lose control so your child can learn how to manage intense emotions. This can be difficult when life throws a curve ball, but remember that if you yell or use mean, sarcastic language when you are upset, that is how your child will manage situations with friends at school. When dealing with people in the community, remember to model respect for others, even when others have done something wrong. Show your child that you can “work out the problem” without resorting to yelling, slamming doors, stomping around, honking the horn, swearing, or saying disrespectful things about others. That kind of behavior adds to the stress of things and tends to create more problems.
- Take a breather if you need it. If you are not sure if you can handle your own emotions in a situation, take a break and tell your child, “Mommy needs to go in the other room to take a deep breath to calm down. I will be back in a moment to talk to you calmly.” This way, your child gets a calmer version of you, while also learning strategies for how to calm him or herself down.



Come See  
My School





## We Love Parent Visits!

Grazie to Isabella's parents, who visited P3 to read *Strega Nona* and make homemade pasta and sauce with the children.



# Circus Week!

The week of March 5-8 will always be fondly remembered as Circus Week, when Troy Wunderle of Wunderle's Big Top Adventures visited MSGH as part of our 2011-12 Visiting Artist Program. Troy wears many hats, so to speak, and is not only the owner of his own company, he is the Director of Clowning for Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus and the Artistic Tour Director for Circus Smirkus.

During his visit, Troy spent time working with our Primary children to focus on skills that support hand/eye coordination. They practiced juggling scarves and balls and tried their hands at devil sticks and plate spinning, just to name a few. Mostly, they just thought they were having fun, but all the while they were learning how to focus their concentration to balance and control their bodies.

The Lower and Upper Elementary students had extended time with Troy to do the first phase of hand/eye coordination work, but also progressed to a second phase of balance work involving the use of stilts, unicycles, pogo sticks, etc. before being introduced to the basics of clowning. That third phase of clowning asked students to consider performance and stage presence. Performers need to use their bodies to convey a storyline, and emotions need to ebb and flow to create either comedy or drama. Lessons included practice in situational comedy, clumping (where groups of students got together and demonstrated what happiness looks like, for instance), and emotional sculpture (students froze themselves in position as others guessed what they were doing before being frozen.)

It was a fun-filled week for all as we learned the secrets of the circus and...laughed!





# Cirque du Montessori

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2nd Annual Heart of Montessori on March 10. This year's theme, Cirque du Montessori, was inspired by our visit from Troy Wunderle. Children and adults alike spent the morning immersed in the French-Circus tradition, and as you can see, were delighted by everything from harlequin hats and face painting to tumbling and pantomime. Our gratitude goes out to the **Watkinson School** community for allowing us to use their campus again this year, and to the many volunteers who came together to make this event possible.





### MERCI BEAUCOUP, VOLUNTEERS!

**Current Parents:** Rebecca London, Kris Singh, Bonnie Huang, Kerstin Konrad, Voula and Jonathan Coss, Laura and Mark Miele, Carolyn Brown, Lynne Lofberg, Ann and Brian Osoba, Jessica Standish, Jennifer and Leon Pierce, Michelle Thomas, Hyacinth Ellis, Christy D'Aquila, Paige Bray, Jennifer and Stefan Augsburg, Michele Tabora, Yubo Song, Meg Keough, Julia Erlich, Luciana Corrêa Santos and Scott Aronson

**Grandparents:** Early and Tutch Shirane, Mary Davis and Shelly Aronson

**Alumni Parents:** Claudia Phelan and Tracey Harris-Dowdell

**Friends:** Lisa Pontbriand

**Staff:** Katie Kennedy, Michelle Thomas, Teresa Reynolds, Catherine Carrabba, Jessica Gorski, Nancy White, Toko Blais Odorczuk, Melanie Cilfone, Susan Rich-Bye, Una Barry and Amanda Aronson

**Board Members:** Dahlia Saad Pendergrass, Jenn Van Scoter and Kanwar Singh

**Performers:** The AcroFitness Tumbling Group; Eliana Tsukroff; the MSGH Elementary Chorus; the MSGH Suzuki Cello Ensemble and guest musicians; Ms. Yummie and Mr. Jonathan.

A HUGE THANK YOU to the Shirane family for their donation of food and beverages and to the Reuning-Scherer family for donating A/V equipment.



# Family Association News

Dear MSGH Families,

The Family Association (FA) had a wonderfully active and successful winter, and we are happy to share some of those successes with you. In February, we held our first Tea with Una. This was a chance for members of our community to sit down with Una in an informal setting and converse with her about child-rearing topics important to all of us. We had terrific attendance (25) and hope to find ways to expand this event next year. We also continued our Coffee Talk series, which gave people a chance to keep in touch during the winter months. Another fun event was the Ice Skating Social held at Simsbury Farms. This was a time both for community bonding and to allow our Elementary students a chance to practice skills learned in their skating gym rotation.

In addition to these fun events, the FA also hosted the annual Staff Appreciation Luncheon on March 9. The lunch provided a much-deserved chance for the MSGH staff to take a break and enjoy each other's company. This year our efforts were led by **Lorraine Tobrocke** and included not only a scrumptious Indian lunch, but also massage provided by **Kyoko Simpson** from Apricot Blossom Massage and acupuncture sessions provided by **Marina Franzoni** from Connecticut Natural Medical Center. Julie Reuning-Scherer volunteered to be our parent speaker, and we also had much appreciated food, beverage and flower contributions from members of our community. The event was a huge success, and the FA is very happy to have been able to give a little bit back to the people who give our children so much every day. A big "thank you" to everyone who helped make the day possible!

The FA is looking forward to spring as we continue our Coffee Talk series and renew our all-school Playground Playdates. These are opportunities for adults and children to come together after school to socialize with their existing friends while making new ones. Please see the calendar for upcoming dates. Finally, we are beginning to look forward to the next school year. If you have feedback, ideas or would like to become more involved in the FA, please get in touch with Rebecca London at [remonroe@yahoo.com](mailto:remonroe@yahoo.com). We would love to hear from you. And mark your calendars for the final FA meeting of the year on May 16; attending is a great way to get involved, and your participation is always welcome.

Warmest regards, Rebecca London and Yummie Oberstein, FA Co-Chairs







## Upcoming Dates

**Friday, April 6**  
No School, Good Friday

**Thursday, April 12**  
Parent Info Night w/ Kim Randalot

**Monday, April 16-Friday, April 20**  
No School, Spring Break  
Spring Programming Offered

**Friday, May 4**  
Elementary Performance

## Upcoming Dates (cont.)

**Friday, May 11**  
Annual Gala Auction

**Thursday, June 7**  
Bushnell Park Carousel Picnic

**Friday, June 8**  
Last Day of School/Moving-On Ceremony

**Monday, June 18**  
Summer Programming Begins

# Enjoy Our Spring Traditions



## Elementary Performance

Toddler and Primary parents, your children long to see their Elementary friends on stage. Come enjoy a night of theatre with your family and see for yourselves why the kids love this performance so much. Afternoon dress rehearsal is also open for viewing.



## Bushnell Park Carousel Party

Since MSGH first opened nearly 50 years ago, current families, staff and alumni have always gathered in Bushnell Park for a casual picnic before we all head off for summer. As you can imagine, this is another favorite for the children.



## Moving-On Ceremony

Join us as we celebrate the year, recognize and honor our children who are moving from Primary to Elementary and those who are graduating from MSGH. Get the tissues ready, as this is a touching morning for all of us. Reception to follow with light fare.



### Wedding and Baby News

Congratulations to Toko and Steve on their February 17 wedding, and to Maria and Ben on the birth of Daniel Landon on January 14.



# 2011/2012 Annual Fund

## Please Participate in the Annual Fund!

Families find their way to MSGH in a variety of ways: they may have been referred by a friend, attended an open house, or desired a Montessori education for their child. Regardless of how they found their way here, virtually all of our families cite an instant connection to the MSGH teachers and Una Barry, our Head of School. Families feel comfortable entrusting their children to MSGH, because they know their children will be given an incredible experience, both academically and developmentally. And an important part of the relationship between MSGH and its families is our support of each other. MSGH supports all of our students and their families, and in turn, MSGH relies on its families to be active and involved in our school community. This is shown through participation in our Parent Information Series, conferences with teachers, attendance at school events, and by supporting our fundraising efforts. Participating in the Annual Fund is an extremely meaningful way to demonstrate your support of our school.



Every donation to the Annual Fund, regardless of the amount, makes a big difference in the lives of students. **What matters most is that everyone participates in supporting the Annual Fund.** Contributions support important components of the MSGH program — providing scholarships to make our unique educational experience accessible to all children; ensuring that all classrooms have the materials and programming needed to create stimulating learning environments; offering a wide variety of experiential learning opportunities through field trips and other programming; and, keeping the quality of our teaching strong through professional development.

We hope you will make a meaningful contribution to the Annual Fund, at whatever level is comfortable for you. **A donation of even \$5, \$10, or \$25 makes a big difference in our ability to provide the nurturing and unique Montessori experience you have chosen for your family. Whatever the amount, the most important thing to remember is that we all need to participate!**

# 2011-2012 Annual Fund

As of March 18, 2012

The MSGH 2011-2012 Annual Fund is underway and we are off to a great start. We have received over \$40,933 to date in gifts and pledges thanks to the generosity of those listed below. Our goal for this year's campaign is \$50,611, so we are 81% of the way toward our goal.

Please remember that fundraising goals are part of our budget and are earmarked to meet this year's needs.

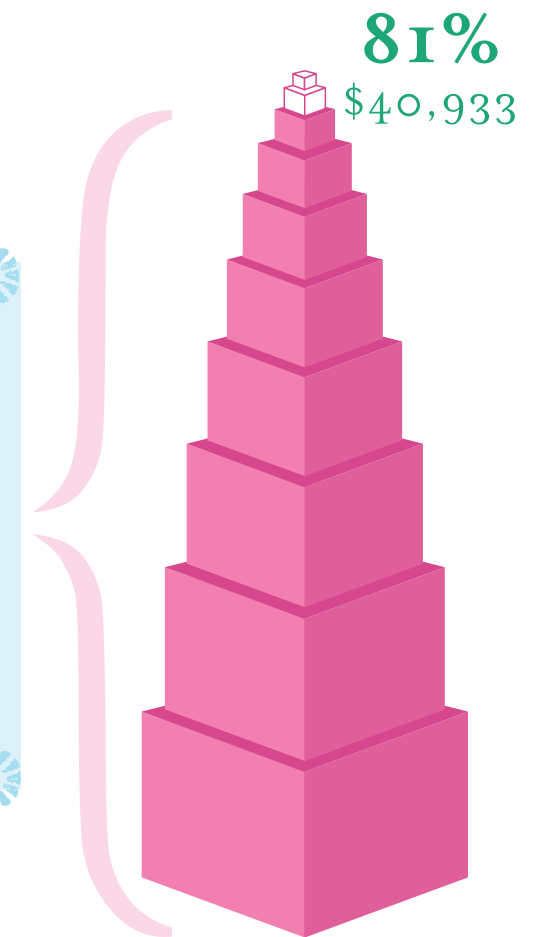
## Current Parents

Anonymous  
Jennifer Apgar and  
Michael Christopher\*  
Amanda and Scott Aronson\*  
Kathleen and Jason Askintowicz  
Barresi Family  
Orla and Ken Black  
Suzanne and John Bourdeaux\*  
Sheila and Ronald Caselas  
Anna and Darren Ciccolini  
Voula and John Coss  
Christy D'Aquila and David Pipins  
The Ellis Family\*  
The Flavin-McDonald Family\*  
The Franzoni Family  
Michelle Hebert  
Robin and Keith Jaffee  
Soontae Jeong and Eunjung Park  
Yung Kim and Joo Lee  
Brooke Kokus and  
Brendon Thompson  
Jenny and Allan Kwon\*  
Tim Lawrence and Paige Bray  
Jody and Ed Lewis\*  
Robert and Lynne Lofberg  
Shawn and Rebecca London\*  
Marina Luri-Clark and Patrick Clark  
Rahul and Lakshmi Magavi\*  
Laurie and Matthew Mailhot  
Dhurata and Ron Margolis  
Liza Martin  
Mary McHale and William Stempfer\*  
Kimberly and Peter Moster  
Edgar and Rosangela Naut  
Yummie and Robert Oberstein\*  
Ann and Brian Osoba  
Hilary Parker and Mario Gaztambide  
Mark Preston and Bonnie Huang  
Raziya Rahman and Mujib Mohammed  
Lawrence and Valerie Santilli\*  
Kanwar and Kristen Singh\*  
Anders Smith and Jenny Chen\*  
Jolene and Matthew Strong  
Arvind Suri and Monila Khullar\*  
Sally Tittmann and Joshua Cohen  
Jennifer Van Scoter\*



## Alumni Parents

Anayancy and Ray Aguilar  
Kathy and Peter Aldridge  
Scott and Mary Ayre Boden  
The Ellen M. Brown Fund\*  
John and Lorri Chapman\*  
Jacqueline Copp Moffett and  
Peter Moffett\*  
Clare and Chris Dowd\*  
Ellen Erway\*  
Kirsten Fuchs and Lawrence Zeidner  
Eileen and Pat Flaherty  
Neil Fox and Danielle Grieco  
Lisbeth and Todd Harrison  
Brenda McVerry  
Katherine Pharibe Wise  
Maryanna and Konstantin Polukhin  
Lucy Potter and Timothy Everett  
Meg Richardson  
Nancy and Jorge Rivera  
Ken and Lynn Robinson  
Douglas and Melinda Smith  
Lib and Ed Spinella  
Julianne Splain  
Peter and Sarah Stevens  
Adriana and Peter Tippner  
Karen and David Tyson\*  
Joanne and Ralph G. White



## Students

Ethan Kwon  
Lilian Ava Margolis  
Max and Mila Preston-Huang  
Chase and Saige Rovero

## Alumni

Phoebe Evans

## Grandparents

Jeannine Amato  
Teresa and Robert Apgar  
Elaine Bourdeaux\*  
Janet and John Burton  
John and Rita B. Chakalos\*  
Susan Collier  
Martha D'Aquila  
Mr. and Mrs. John F. Flavin, Jr.  
Carlo and Lucia Franzoni  
Horst and Lilo Kordisch  
Marge and Robert Mattson  
Dick and Judith Reuning  
Milo and Mary Scherer  
Early and Tutch Shirane\*

## Faculty/Staff

Anayancy Aguilar  
Kathy Aldridge  
Angela Alexander  
Amanda Aronson\*  
Una Barry\*  
Maria Bautista  
Orla Black  
Risa Brophy  
Maria Boulanger  
Catherine Carrabba  
Sheila Caselas  
Melanie Cilfone  
Jessica Gorski  
Lisbeth Harrison  
Michelle Hebert  
Petrina Lewis  
Renee Lewis-Lockhart  
Liza Martin  
Carolyn McCutchan  
Mary McHale \*  
Tomiko Blais Odoreczuk  
Angelica Prado  
Raziya Rahman  
Kim Randalot  
Teresa Reynolds\*  
Susan Rich-Bye  
Nancy Rivera  
Melinda Smith  
Leslie Wetmore  
Nancy White

## Trustees

Adam Anderson  
Jennifer Apgar\*  
Jacqueline Copp Moffett\*  
Clare Dowd\*  
Lenworth Ellis\*  
Neil Fox  
Rahul Magavi\*  
Catherine Flavin-McDonald \*  
Brenda McVerry  
Yummie Oberstein\*  
Patrick Scully\*  
Kanwar Singh\*  
David Tyson\*  
Jennifer Van Scoter \*

## Friends

Anonymous\*  
Nellie Artymiak  
One Cause  
Paul Cryan Photography  
Marianne Craig Moore  
Stop and Shop  
Ellen Basch Zenke

## In Honor of

Carlino Acosta  
Una Barry  
Orla Black  
Catherine Carrabba  
Riley and Piper Christopher

Alexander and William Ellis  
Renee Lewis-Lockhart  
Jarrett Moster  
Joel and Stephanie Reuning-Scherer  
Teresa Reynolds

## In Memory of

Mae Boland Flaherty  
Ruth Lowe  
Eumelia and Charles Pennington  
H. Donald Sestina

## Matching Gifts

Aetna Foundation  
Arch Re Facultative Underwriters, Inc.  
Allied World Assurance Company  
American Express  
Babson Capital Management LLC  
Travelers  
United Health Group  
United Technologies Corporation

\*Indicates a Leadership Gift

Giving levels will be published in the Annual Report.





# Montessori School of Greater Hartford Annual Fund Campaign 2011/2012

## Categories of Giving

<b>The Maria Montessori Circle</b>	\$5,000 +	<b>Sustainer</b> <i>(Leadership Level begins)</i>	\$500-\$999
<b>The Pink Tower Circle</b>	\$2,500-\$4,999		
<b>The Director's Circle</b>	\$1,500-\$2,499	<b>Patron</b>	\$250-\$499
<b>Benefactor</b>	\$1,000-\$1,499	<b>Supporter</b>	up to \$249

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

(as you wish to appear in the Annual Report)

Maiden Name, if Alumna \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Please initial here if you wish to remain an anonymous donor*

## Please accept my/our gift to MSGH's Annual Fund:

I/We pledge a total gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate method of payment:

- Check enclosed for full amount     Check enclosed for partial amount, \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid on \_\_\_\_\_
- Pledge to be fulfilled by June 30, 2012
- Charge my gift
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month through June 30, 2012
- \_\_\_\_\_ installments on \_\_\_\_\_ dates
- in one payment

*Payments must be completed by June 30, 2012*

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- My employer, \_\_\_\_\_, will match my gift.

*(Please enclose your employer's gift form)*

- Gift of Stock (Development Office will send information)

Please designate my gift to the following fund:

- Classroom Materials and Programming
- Faculty Professional Development
- Financial Assistance
- Where MSGH needs it most

Please apply \$ \_\_\_\_\_ of my gift to the Endowment.

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

My gift is:

- In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_
- In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation:

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



To give online visit:  
[www.msgh.org](http://www.msgh.org) ➡ Support MSGH ➡ Make a Donation

For questions, please  
call Susan Rich-Bye,  
Director of Advancement  
860.236.4565 ext.28

Thank you for supporting the Montessori School of Greater Hartford!