

# Follow *the* Child

THE MSGH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



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### ÚNA'S CHAT

"The past beats inside me like a second heart."  
John Banville

Many years ago, when I was a new teacher, I gave a lesson using the material called the "Phonetic Object Box." The Phonetic Object Box is one of my favorite presentations in the Primary environment. It is simple and brilliant. The material consists of a beautiful box containing 8 to 10 miniature duplications of common objects whose names are all 3-letter words, *e.g.* hat, pig, cup and fox. The material also includes paper, a pencil, a pair of scissors, and labels with the name of each object. This lesson is presented to a child who has been exposed to and has absorbed all the skills required to read but doesn't yet know he can read. It is designed to have the child come to this awareness on his own. It opens the child to an entire new world, and it never failed to give me goose bumps when a child made this amazing discovery. In my time in the classroom, I gave this presentation hundreds of times; however, this particular time stands out in my mind: Let me tell you the story.

I was giving this lesson to Dan, a 4-year-old boy. I put the objects on the table, one at a time, naming each one. Then, with great drama, I whispered that I was going to write a secret. I cut a small piece of paper and, wrapping my arm around my work, effectively hiding what I was doing (it was a secret after all), I wrote the name of one of the objects on the paper. I folded it up very carefully and handed it to Dan without saying anything.



Dan took the tiny piece of paper, unfolded it and began to sound out the word I had written. He sounded it out slowly, then faster, repeating it several times until he shouted out "Hey! It's hat! It's hat!" I said, "Yes it is. You read a word!" His eyes were as big as saucers and the excitement on his face made me wish I had a camera to immortalize the moment. This was the goose-bump moment that I typically experienced when





*"The child who concentrates is  
immensely happy."*

*-Dr. Maria Montessori*



giving this presentation, but let me keep going and explain why this time was a little different. I invited Dan to find the object that matched his word and label it. We continued in this way, me writing the secret note, and Dan reading and labelling the appropriate object. When he had labelled all the objects, I gathered all the pieces of paper together and stapled them. I said to him, "Now, you have a book of words that you can read whenever you want. Also, when you want to do this work again on your own, there is a set of words for you to read and match with the objects." I asked him if he would like to do the work again now, but he shook his head, took his little book of words, clutched them to his chest and walked away from me. That was around 10 o'clock in the morning. For the rest of the morning, Dan didn't attempt to do any other work. Instead he moved around the classroom with his precious 'book' still clutched to his chest. Every now and then he would stop, look at his book with an expression of awe and joy, bring it back to his chest and continue on. I did not even think about interfering and guiding him to work. He was obviously basking in the sheer joy of his discovery and accomplishment and I was not going to mess with it. Dan of course worked independently with the Phonetic Object Box many times after that -- (I regularly changed the objects) -- and he became an avid reader, moving through the subsequent reading materials with joy and enthusiasm.

You can tell, I'm big on memories and the retelling of them, particularly the good ones. I come by it honestly. I am Irish, and storytelling is deeply entrenched in our culture. I also come from a family that has a long tradition of storytelling. Whenever we gather we -- from the youngest to the oldest -- can spend hours telling and retelling stories of old and loved memories. These times are often loud and full of laughter and joy as some listen and some talk. They always leave me with a fortifying sense of warmth, joy and belonging.

The story I just told is one of my favorites from my time in the classroom, but I have many and I love to retell them. None of these moments are earth shattering; most are





quiet and subtle but still no less life-changing, powerful and influential (ask Dan). Each one is precious to me because I lived them and remember them as crystallized moments in my past. The thing is, we make memories all the time if we take the time to be in the moment. I continue to make memories, moment to moment. Just yesterday, while having lunch with the teachers, we reminisced about very recent experiences with children that made us laugh and comment on how awesome these little people are every day.

Storytelling is so essentially human. It passes on culture, preserves history and creates a sense of human continuity and connectedness through time. So, why am I sharing this with you now? Well, I have a purely selfish motive: I want to hear from you. I want to hear your stories about MSGH. I want to hear what made you smile, or laugh, what made you feel comforted, supported, joyful, excited.... Please tell me, I want to hear them all, recent, long past and everything in-between. You can write down your stories, record them, come in and tell us in person or share them in any other mode you can think of. Let's connect through our memories and our stories and recreate an intimate history of MSGH and its people through time.

*Mma*

We hope to create a collection of MSGH stories to feature on our website and future publications.

To share your MSGH stories or memories with us, please e-mail them to [unab@msgh.org](mailto:unab@msgh.org)





# MSGH HAPPENINGS









# Montessori IOI

## The Importance of Order and Routine for Young Children

By Toko Odorczuk



The alarm sounds. Your little one wakes up joyfully and hops out of bed. She chooses clothes appropriate for the weather and dresses herself. She scampers downstairs in a timely fashion, sitting properly at the table while eating the beautifully prepared breakfast before she's off to brush her teeth. Within moments, she has her coat on and is ready to head out the door. She was even five minutes ahead of schedule. Your alarm clock goes off, and you realize it was all a dream!

For most families, morning routines never go as smoothly as desired; often leaving everyone in a frenzy and not in the best mood to begin a fresh day. It can be a struggle to get our little one out of bed, dressed, fed, and set to go, all the while keeping the home a calm, friendly environment. The entire morning routine is not set for a child's pace. Children thrive with order and routine, and tend to have outbursts

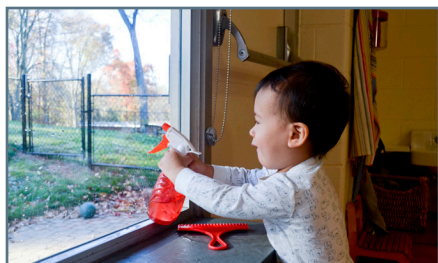
during times of transition. The morning routine consists of several transitions in a row. When put into the child's perspective, it's no wonder mornings can seem overwhelming for small toddlers who feel a lack of control and time.

While the sensitive period for order is strongest between 6 months and 2 years, it can last 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 a point of reference and feel secure in it.

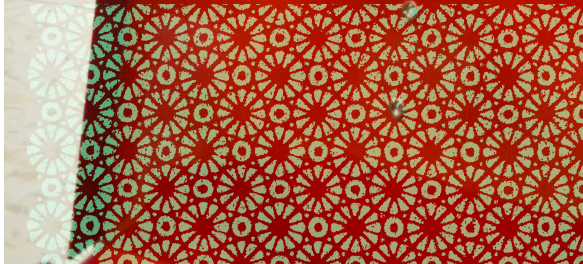
The home environment, therefore, needs to be kept consistent, helping to preserve stability in the child's most comfortable setting. Keeping a consistent rhythm to your day allows the child to feel secure, knowing he/she can adequately predict the next step.

Creating physical order within your home will also help ease any anxiety and tension your child may be experiencing. The very young child depends on external order to aid him/her 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) consistent is helpful. If the majority of young children's day are structured and consistent, they will be more understanding and less stressed when the occasional "hiccup" occurs.

"Order is one of the needs of life which, when it is satisfied, produces a real happiness."  
- Dr. Maria Montessori







*"Development is a series of rebirths."*

**Dr. Maria Montessori**



# Parent Education Events

## Adolescent Program

Thursday, January 26th 5:30 to 7:30p.m.

Parents, one and all, are invited to attend this presentation on MSGH's Adolescent Program. Learn how MSGH's authentic, land-based Montessori Adolescent Program provides a broad range of experiences to meet a young person's need for intellectual stimulation, creative expression, independence, responsibility, social development and personal growth.



## Primary: Math

Thursday, February 16th 5:30 to 7:30p.m.

The child's mind has a natural capacity for counting, comparing and calculating. There is a human tendency for order, exactness and precision. The math curriculum at the primary level is comprised of 4 key areas;

### *Introduction of Numbers from 1 through 10*

- Parents will have the opportunity for plenty of hands-on experience with those materials that focus on the concept of quantity and symbols 1-10.
- Come and get your hands on the number rods and appreciate the child's first concrete introduction to math. Learn about the importance of one-to-one correspondence and how the concept of odd and even numbers is introduced.

### *Continuation of Counting*

- These activities will demonstrate how, with the help of the material, children can readily grasp the concepts of teens and tens. Come and experience those activities which reinforce linear counting through extensive work with the chains. You will gain a greater appreciation of the importance of these early math activities and how they prepare the child by providing a strong foundation for later math work.



### *The Decimal System*

- The decimal base system is the most common number system used today. What made and makes this system so significant to mathematics is that it is a positional/place value system. Practice the four mathematical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division using a variety of key didactic materials.

### *Memorization and the Passage to Abstraction*

- Dr. Montessori believed that teaching math should involve more than memorization; it should involve clear understanding of the concepts. Lessons presented from the previous 3 key areas serve to pave the way for memorization and abstraction of the concepts for the children. Come and experience those key materials that serve to aid the child in the memorization of math facts. It is repetition of activities with these materials that provides the key to memorization.



## Elementary: How Montessori elementary environments stimulate true motivation

Thursday, February 16th 5:30 to 7:30p.m.

Motivation is a key component of success in any educational environment. It is the force that gets us into an activity and keeps us going. There are many theories about the sources of motivation, as well as about the relative benefits of the two kinds of motivation, intrinsic (engendered by the sheer pleasure of the activity) and extrinsic (engendered by external rewards or punishments). Can a school setting increase or decrease a child's motivation? We believe it can and does! During this parent event we will explore the ways in which the Montessori elementary environments foster motivation. We will also take a look at recent research on motivation and discuss correlations with Montessori theory and practice. Come with your questions and join the discussion!



## Upcoming Event



### Green and Gold Gala

The Montessori School of Greater Hartford's Green and Gold Gala will celebrate Úna and her incredible commitment to our mission and the children of our community.

Save the Date: Friday, May 5th  
Farmington Gardens  
Farmington, CT

To join the Gala steering committee, please contact the Director of Advancement, Kara Fenn at [karaf@msggh.org](mailto:karaf@msggh.org).



# Nothing better than...

By Renee Lockhart

A long time ago, I realized that there could not be a job more significant than that of being a parent. Nothing has been, is, or ever will be comparable to the blessing of parenting my four amazing individuals. For this reason, I recognize that parenting is not a game. The towel cannot just simply be thrown in when there are moments when I feel down for the count. I cannot pick and choose when I want to be available; hence, my presence is inevitable.



*Enjoying the holiday with her four children (Xarea, Brielle, Xavier, and Leonard), Renee Lockhart (MSGH Primary Guide) celebrates Thanksgiving.*

Being a parent consists of working literally from dawn until dusk. There are days when I am tired -- exhausted, to be quite frank. I have been kissed, hugged, vomited on, defied and at times dismissed. Nonetheless, I would not trade my role for any other in existence. Every day my children Leonard, Xarea, Xavier and Brielle (ages 20, 19, 13 and 7, respectively) can have a powerful effect on the life of another person, originating from the influence of my parenting.

When my daughter Brielle plays at recess, will she decide to include or exclude someone from the game? When my son Xavier walks through the hallways of middle school, will he stand up for someone he sees being intimidated or mistreated? Will my daughter Xarea, away at school in New York, assist and advise the friend who is committing acts against his/ her own best interest? When my oldest, Leonard, walks across campus at University of New Haven, will he encourage his peers to be accepting of the differing perspectives and beliefs of others?

I love my children, more than I ever imagined I could love another human being. Nevertheless, parenting goes beyond the feel-good moments of hugs, kisses and cuddles. Guidance and support are what I am depended on to provide as they move toward all they were called and destined to be. While the learning continues, here are some helpful tips that have been imparted to me on this journey of being a mom.

1. Take the time during the first several years to build a foundation. Lay the bricks of love and discipline.
2. It is perfectly fine to say no.
3. Every decision does not need a reason nor does it need to be explained to your child.
4. You and your child are not friends. This is your time to parent. Friendship will come when your child is old enough to handle the terms of that kind of relationship.
5. It is important to prepare your child for the world and not the world for your child.
6. Read, read, read.
7. Relax, proceed with caution and remember most of the time it is just a phase. If this is an issue that you will not be dealing with in five years, take it all in stride.
8. Sing, dance and rock out with your child.
9. Lastly, and most importantly, remember childhood happens in the blink of an eye. Enjoy the good and challenging times. Look at their tears and smiles. Listen to their laughter. Feel their hands inside yours. There is no greater gift that parents can give to their children than being mindful to be present and in the moment.





*“We must help the child to act for himself, will for himself, think for himself; this is the art of those who aspire to serve the spirit.”*

*– Dr. Maria Montessori*



# Canoeing Adventures on the Farmington River



As part of their orientation week to Millstream, our adolescent students (7th-9th graders) spent a beautiful fall day paddling down the Farmington River with their teachers and Ken Feder, Professor of Archaeology at Central Connecticut State University. This day helped strengthen the bonds of their Millstream class, as well as broadened the students' perspective of their local history and geography.







*"But, above all it is the education of adolescents that is important, because adolescence is the time when the child enters on the state of manhood and becomes a member of society."*

*Dr. Maria Montessori*



# 2015-2016 Annual Report

The Annual Fund giving levels recognize those donors who contributed gifts to the MSGH Annual Fund between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. Your generosity raised over \$108,000! This is our highest grossing Annual Fund to date! Thank you to our volunteers and staff for making this possible!

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*Thank you for supporting our classrooms and students' love of discovery.*





## ANNUAL GALA AUCTION

### *Deep Roots*

### *New Growth*



It was a night of celebration, levity, purpose, and fun; last May's Annual Auction Gala, *Deep Roots New Growth*, grossed over \$54,000 towards our school's programming. Thank you to our volunteers and staff for making this possible!

We would like to express our upmost gratitude to Julia Erlikh and Rosi Naut for co-chairing this incredible evening. Additionally, we would like to thank MSGH parents, Brian Amaker, John Barresi, Luke Bronin, and Mike Christopher, for lending their talents to our Live Auction. John Barresi stepped in brilliantly as the evening's Master of Ceremonies and did an incredible job keeping the evening fun and focused on our true purpose, the MSGH mission and MSGH students.

In addition to supporting our programming, this evening honored Teresa Reynolds and her 30-year commitment to our school. Teresa's dedication over the past 30 years to her students, their families, and to our entire community is the gold standard to which we all strive. Thank you, Teresa



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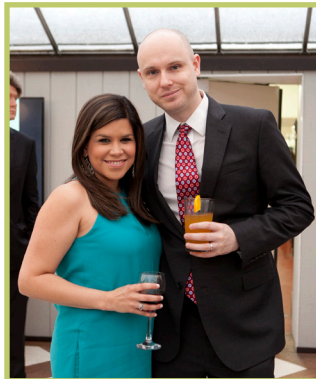
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# GARDEN PARTY









# MYSTERY HISTORY



The founder of the American Red Cross, the creator of the Montessori educational philosophy, ancient leaders, modern-day actors, scientists, engineers, athletes, authors, and innovators: Mystery History Day had a cornucopia of characters! The elementary students researched and proudly presented their historical figures to their families and peers. This annual project is a beloved tradition in our school. Who knows what characters we have to look forward to next year?









*“Within the child lies the fate of  
the future.”  
Dr. Maria Montessori*



# The Colored Globe

By Kara Fenn

From time to time, I have the opportunity to observe our classrooms. It's such a luxury to have access to our classrooms and witness small moments of wonder at every level of programming. It's a real treat. The morning of our fall Grandparents' Tea was such an instance; Una was to present the Pink Tower lesson to our gathered grandparents and I popped into Primary Three to ask if we could borrow the classroom's Pink Tower material. Wide eyed faces were locked on me as I began to deconstruct the Pink Tower. After several reassurances to these students that I would return their Pink Tower and several promises that I would take very good care of it while out on loan, I made my way towards the classroom door. As I left, a child was carefully and joyfully exploring the Colored Globe. She turned the Globe on its stand, discovering the vibrant continents and oceans through her small hands. She met my eye and with tremendous conviction declared: "I have the globe."

The Colored Globe is maybe only second to the Pink Tower as the most "recognized" Montessori material. It's iconic to Montessori and is a favorite of Montessori alumni. Perhaps this popularity stems from its prominent position in Primary birthday celebrations; former Montessori children can remember proudly carrying the Colored Globe around the "sun," symbolizing their years on planet earth. The popularity and respect this material commands is obvious when you observe our classrooms. The young child will carefully carry this material through the busy hum of the Primary work cycle to his or her chosen work space. And, with a delicate and purposeful hand, turn the globe to explore its intricacies.

*"...she met my eye and  
with tremendous conviction  
declared: 'I have the globe.'"*

The Colored Globe, like the Pink Tower, is a material from the Sensorial Area of the Primary curriculum, which serves as the foundation for mathematics. The concrete purpose of the Colored Globe material is to represent the spherical quality of the earth and how its surface can be categorized into land and water, and how the land is further divided into landmasses called continents, while the water can be further divided into oceans. With this material, the classroom guide (teacher) introduces the names of the continents linking each continent with something to which the child can relate. For example, "This is North America, where we live. This is Europe, where Ms. Barry grew up." The material is beautiful and appealing to the senses. As the child completes the Primary Cycle and transitions to the Elementary community, the foundation is set for her to grow from the concrete to the conceptually abstract. The spiral curriculum of the Elementary classroom will reinforce the interconnectedness between all academics areas. As you know, the goal of Montessori education is not only to educate, but to inspire an insatiable appetite for learning and discovery. The purpose is not to fill up a child with information, but to shape the way he or she thinks, for life. The curriculum is designed to encourage children to become self-starting innovators who can make new discoveries, develop critical thinking, be excited by challenge and grow into adults who can navigate an increasingly global community.

Who will our young student with the Colored Globe become when she reaches adulthood? How she will take on the challenges ahead of her? As parents, you may find yourself thinking, "What type of life will my child make for herself?" "Who will she grow up to be?" "Will she be okay?" "Will she be successful?" As mentioned, the purpose of a Montessori education is not to fill children up with information, but to fill their lives with experiences. Experiences that will challenge them, offer them opportunities to explore and perhaps to fail, and then to navigate and work resiliently from that failure. This type of education offers them daily work to practice tenacity, as well as compassion and stewardship in conjunction with innovation. Our students are preparing every day for their future lives and future adulthood.

When I returned the Pink Tower to the Primary Three community, two enthusiastic three-year-old children assisted me in reconstructing it in its proper home. The child who had been working with the Colored Globe had chosen a new work. I don't know what she'll be when she grows up, but I imagine that she will take on this world with the same honest self-assurance of her, "I have the globe" statement.





*“Imagination does not become great until human beings, given the courage and the strength, use it to create.”*

*– Dr. Maria Montessori*



## Outreach and Afternoon Programs

Collaboration, innovation, teamwork and joyful work are a cornerstone to an authentic Montessori environment. These are the core principles at the heart of our newly launched Afternoon Club Programs. Under the guidance of Toko Odorczyk, MSGH Outreach Coordinator, these fun and engaging clubs offer elementary students enriching opportunities to work on material that may be outside the scope of the morning and afternoon work cycles. Additionally, these programs offer parents and faculty an additional way to offer their unique skill sets in working with our students. This year, we kicked off with a Robotics Club and then a Spanish Club. Due to popular demand, both programs exceeded enrollment and additional days were added.



Next on the Afternoon Club Program menu is:  
Cooking Around the World

Tuesdays, 1/17-2/14 or Wednesdays, 1/18- 2/15 or  
Thursdays, 1/19-2/16, all classes are from 3:30 to  
4:30p.m.

*Note: Registration and payment deadline for this session is January 11, 2017.*



## Enriching Childhood and Strengthening Families

### Family Workshops

Wednesdays: 9:00 to 10:00a.m.

January 18th, 25th, February 1st, 8th, & 25th

The Parent/ Infant 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 his/her 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.

Fee: \$100.00 for 5 week course

Upcoming  
Program Spring  
2017:

**MUSIC AND  
MOVEMENT**

Saturdays:  
9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

March 18th, April 1st,  
8th, 15th & 22nd.

Registration is now open for this  
program!



# Help us discover.



Contributions made to our Annual Fund benefit each and every student, family, and teacher at MSGH.

Your gifts will underwrite classroom materials, provide cultural enrichment programming, fund professional development opportunities for faculty and sustain MSGH's financial assistance program.

Each member of the MSGH community--parents, board members, staff, alumni and alumni parents, grandparents and friends--is asked to participate in supporting the Annual Fund: We seek to attain the highest participation rates possible, and we encourage every family to give at the level that best suits them.

We hope you will take a moment to reflect on how a Montessori education benefits generations of children and families, as we invite you to join our staff and Board of Trustees in making a contribution to our Annual Fund.

**The Annual Fund runs annually from July 1st through June 30th. Many local businesses will match contributions made to our school. To see if your company has a matching gift program, check with your company's HR department or ask Kara at [karaf@msgh.org](mailto:karaf@msgh.org).**

**Thank you for supporting our Mission.**





# Montessori School of Greater Hartford 2016-2017 Annual Fund Campaign

## Categories of Giving

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

I/We gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
(as you wish to appear in the Annual Report)

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

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

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

## To give online, visit:

[www.msgh.org](http://www.msgh.org) ➔ Support MSGH ➔ Make a Donation

For questions, please contact Kara Fenn, Director of Advancement at 860.236.4565 ext.27.



# Thank you for supporting the Montessori School of Greater Hartford!

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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

*"Free the child's potential, and you will transform him into the world."*



*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 ADVANCEMENT**

Kara Fenn

#### **LAYOUT / PHOTOGRAPHERS**

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For copies of FTC photos or articles, please contact Kara Fenn

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