

Follow the Child

THE MSGH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Dear Families,



UNA'S CHAT

Over the years I have spent a great deal of time with parents discussing the challenges they experience while managing their children's behavior. During our talks, I strive to arm parents with a process that can help them evaluate and manage the array of situations that arise.

The process starts with an analysis by you as the parent of what happens during a recurring struggle. Look at the factors that initially lead to the struggle and consider the following questions:

Is the routine you are following creating part of the problem? For example, if you struggle getting your child to dress *after* breakfast, try dressing *before* breakfast when food and company can entice him or her to the next part of the morning.

Does your child have the skills to do what you are asking?

Have you provided enough time and given clear directions?

Are you asking when your child is tired or hungry?

Have you given a fair "head's up" to finish what he or she is doing before you expect your direction to be followed?

Is he or she completely absorbed by electronics and/or TV and can't bear to disconnect?

Are you giving a lot of attention for undesirable behavior (which actually encourages it)?

Is your child getting enough down-time to balance accommodating your agenda when required?

What do you know about your child's personality that contributes to the struggle you are experiencing?

Once you have answered those questions and others, pay attention to the role you are playing. Analyze your own behavior. What body language and tone of voice do you use when you interact with your son or daughter? What are your requests or demands, and how are you stating them? How is your child responding to your interactions? Is there a pattern in these recurring events? Are you managing the situation the same

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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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FOLLOW THE CHILD

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Montessori School of Greater Hartford

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way each time and getting the same unwanted result? Not to make light of these situations, but there is an old adage that says that the definition of insanity is “doing the same thing each time and expecting a different result.”

By taking time to analyze and identify patterns, you can determine exactly which behaviors and responses you want to elicit from your child. Then, you can see if you need to alter how you manage the situation to affect the desired result. Consider the following strategies as you evaluate your management style:

Send positive unspoken messages:

Be firm and respectful when interacting with your child and always strive for kindness in both body and spoken language. In this way, you model how one can remain respectful even when frustrated. (Your child will also understand that voicing anger or annoyance does not damage your relationship.) After the interaction with your child is over, continue with the day warmly and positively. This sends an encouraging message that you can deal with something difficult together and then move on from it.

Assume success: If both the situation and what you are asking of your child are reasonable, assume that he or she will honor your request or direction. Do not hang around and wait for the result, ask ten times, or coax, cajole or nag.

Use natural/logical consequences:

If your child does not follow through with what you have asked, allow the natural/logical consequence to prevail. For example, if your child will not get dressed in the morning, leave when you say you will and bring your child to school in PJs with clothes under an arm.

Stop and think before you react:

Only if what you are witnessing is

unsafe or unkind should you march in and take over. Listen out of sight. Are your children talking to each other, even if voices are louder than you'd like? If intervention is necessary, stop and think, “How am I going to enter this situation?” Then go in calmly, with body language to match, and start with a casual, “Hey guys, what’s going on?” This establishes the tone for your interaction.

Be consistent: In your daily routine, model/integrate kindness, independence, responsibility, self-discipline, etc. Set up reasonable, age-appropriate, respectful expectations and use YES and NO consistently. Aim for more YESs, but ensure NO means NO. Do not be swayed by persuading, whining or tantrum-throwing.

Provide autonomy: Tightly controlling children is counter-productive in the long run. Allow your child as much opportunity for choice as is appropriate for the situation. (Sometimes there is no choice; therefore, do not lead your child to believe there is.) Examine and change your own behavior as you recognize and adjust what you can do to help a situation flow more easily. Your child’s behavior will change in response and simultaneously, he or she will also be learning positive strategies that can then be used with family, friends and others.

As you know, you are the daily, moment-to-moment model for your child, and during his or her early years no other influence is as strong as yours. Though it can be hard to keep calm throughout every storm, what your child experiences with you in these early years will be what sticks. Make those experiences good, and make them work toward your child’s success.

Good luck!

Una

Dear Maya,



*It's hard to know just what to say
to help you through this fight,
but when you're lying still
during a seemingly endless night,
know this:
we stand in awe of you.*

*For months, we've watched you endure
more than a little girl should,
yet we've also watched you rise
and do more than many girls could.*

*So the next time you feel sick,
and your tummy is upside down,
think of your family here
and all who care for you in town,
and know this:
we are here for you.*

*You are our precious Maya,
a teacher to your core,
and by watching you with your grace and grit,
we see how one can soar.*

*Soon this time will be over
and you'll have your healthy days back,
and we'll stand in line to hug you
or camp with you in a sack!
But until then,
know this:
we believe in you; you can do this;
and so can your family, too.*

*Many good days await you.
You have many a laugh in store.
And when you think how much you love us,
know this:
We love you more.*

Keep on fighting, Maya.

*With lots of love,
Your MSGH Family*



Moving-On Ceremony

“The child must know that he is a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn’t been, and until the end of the world there will not be, another child like him.” ~Dr. Montessori

Congratulations, Jordan, Beres, David, Afif and Joel! Each in your own way, you have grown, found your voices, and discovered your gifts. Now, as you prepare to continue your respective journeys, remember: you are talented, kind, and important citizens of our world. You will surely enrich all of the many communities of which you will become a part, and we wish you every happiness in your lives. We are so proud of you.

Congratulations also to all of our children moving on to Lower and Upper Elementary! And to those moving on from our community, remember that while you may be gone, you will never be forgotten.





Attendance Grows At The 2012 Art of Learning Annual Gala

On May 11, the MSGH community came together to celebrate what makes our school such an enriching learning environment. Gala supporters helped raise over \$60,000 to foster our Cultural and Financial Assistance Programs and had a fantastic time doing it. Proceeds from the Gala help provide support for our music program, our visiting artist program, monthly field trips, and for innovative learning experiences such as Circus Week. (All that, in addition to its ongoing support of our diverse MSGH classroom environment!) Classroom projects were the highlight of the evening — along with new classroom photo books, special trips, overflowing themed Classroom Baskets, and opportunities for family activities, sports, dining and more. Families also showed their support by raising their paddles for children to participate in the ever-popular Teacher Outings. We offer our profound thanks to all who supported this important event. Let's keep it growing!



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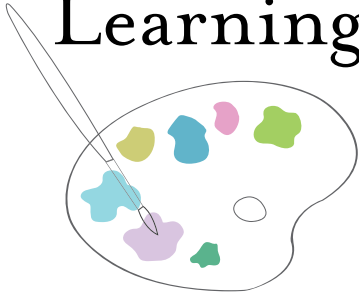
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The Art of Learning



MSGH Annual Gala Auction



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Daily Rhythms





Elementary Performance

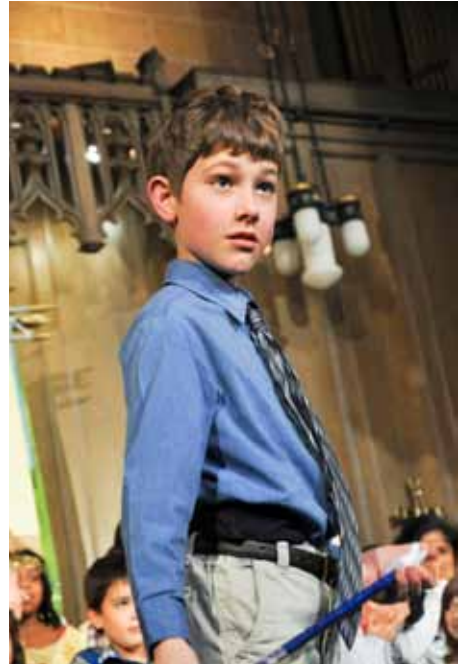


Friday, May 4 the Elementary students presented *Time Warp — an MSGH Excellent Adventure*. This year, they were joined for the first time by our third and fourth-year Primary children, who supported the Antarctica scene by donning penguin suits and doing the penguin shuffle. Written by Ms. Yummie and Mr. Jonathan, each scene reflected a period in history and was brought to life by characters created with each student in mind. The result was a highly-personalized musical extravaganza with rich layers of historical detail.

Though the performance was an incredible success, the process is what we are most proud of. For months prior to performance night, students used specially made cds to learn songs and character lines. This home preparation allowed the in-class work period to remain uninterrupted, save for Monday music class, until two weeks before the show. At the two-week mark, intense preparations began and the classroom was bursting with intensive creative energy as students worked on costume design and prepared sets and props along with parent volunteers. There was an incredible investment by the children in all aspects of the process, and as you can see, the joy of the evening will be long felt. Our deepest appreciation goes out to Ms. Yummie, Mr. Jonathan, and all the parent volunteers who made the entire experience possible.

By now, all Elementary families should have received their complimentary copy of the *Time Warp* DVD. For anyone interested in an extra copy, they are available in the Main Office for \$5.00.





Salmon Release



On May 17, Elementary students completed the final phase of their Salmon Restoration project by releasing small fry into the Salmon River in East Haddam, CT.

Working with the Connecticut River Salmon Association (CRSA), our Lower and Upper Elementary students have been helping to restore Atlantic salmon in the Connecticut River basin. Their efforts began in early January, when Atlantic salmon eggs began incubating in a chilled aquarium tank kept within the classroom. Students then lovingly stood guard over the eggs for months to ensure that temperatures within the tank remained steady. In February, the eggs hatched into alevin and were ready for release when they reached the “fry” stage.

The release location, a quiet bank along the Salmon River in East Haddam, was chosen with guidance from CRSA to ensure that the fry could get as close to the Connecticut River as possible, while still withstanding the temperature and oxygen risks of the time and distance to get to the Salmon River from MSGH.

As far as we could tell, it was a successful release, and the children enjoyed yet another hands-on learning experience in science while contributing to an important restoration effort in our region.

Enjoy some photos from the day!





Alumna Feature



This past March we had the pleasure of receiving a call from Theresa Hopkins-Staten, mom of alumna Lyndsi Allsop. Theresa called simply to thank Orla for being her child's teacher and to give us an update on how Lyndsi's life has been evolving. Needless to say, Orla was thrilled to reconnect, and we had the good fortune to speak with her on behalf of *Follow the Child*. Enjoy!

FTC: What motivated you to call Orla after all of these years?

TH: I live close to the school, and every time I pass the sign I think of how MSGH helped catapult Lyndsi to where she is today. Orla Black, who was Orla Green back then, was such a huge force in Lyndsi's development. And since I talk about her all of the time, I thought I would call to share my thoughts with her directly.

FTC: When did Lyndsi attend MSGH?

TH: She started at MSGH in 1994.

FTC: Were you seeking a Montessori education for her?

TH: No, not at all. Actually, the Montessori method was unfamiliar to me; however, the more I learned about the philosophy and observed Lyndsi's growth and development, the more I realized it was a great match for her.

FTC: What comes to mind when you think about which aspects of the program worked well for her?

TH: I remember Orla! She worked tirelessly not just to discover Lyndsi's strengths, but to elevate and celebrate them. Yet, as she was doing that, she would also look for areas where her development could be strengthened and would develop a plan to make it happen. There were many days when Orla would talk to me about her approach with Lyndsi, particularly when she'd observed Lyndsi being intrigued by something new. She's say, "Let's watch it for a few days, and if she still seems excited and interested, we'll introduce more; I don't want to overwhelm her." It was that kind of focus that helped elevate Lyndsi's excitement about learning. I trusted Orla to discover Lyndsi's gifts, and I truly valued and appreciated that her learning was free to be ability-focused, not age-limiting. By that I mean Lyndsi didn't need to wait until she was a certain age to learn certain content. She learned it when she was ready for it.

Another thing that was good for her was the campus. Lyndsi would see the children signing every day and that interested her. One day I came home and asked what she was doing and she told me she was signing. When I asked her where she learned that, she told me she learned how to sign at school.

It was that sort of thing that kept her engaged and interested in her learning; her entire environment was stimulating and organized, so she could follow her interests if something caught her attention.





FTC: Was there anything about her experience that ever shocked you?

TH: Yes, when she began reading. She was so young, and I remember this one particular evening when we were in a rocking chair and I was reading to her. She blurted out that she could read. I kind of giggled and told her she wasn't able to read yet, but she was adamant that she could. You know what? She was right. She could read at the age of four. I couldn't believe it.

I recall Orla telling me at our parent/teacher conferences not to be alarmed if I asked Lyndsi what she learned that day in school and she responded "nothing". Orla assured me that while Lyndsi may not be able to articulate what she was learning, she was learning. Orla was right.

FTC: After Lyndsi left MSGH and moved on to other communities, do you think her MSGH years made a difference in her life?

TH: Absolutely. As she got older and matured in her development, it was easy for me to see how her MSGH years helped her. They were such a beautiful foundation for her future learning, and I always praise it for being a big developmental support. When children come from that environment with that kind of confidence, it's easy to see why they approach their lives with such enthusiasm and interest. I'm a big advocate for Montessori education. It saddens me that not all children have the opportunity to have the kind of education Lyndsi had early on, or in some instances to have a teacher like Orla, who took the time and interest to help discover her gifts. All children have gifts, and I wish they all had the same beginning that Lyndsi had to have those gifts nurtured. I am a firm believer that what Lyndsi experienced at MSGH helped her grow into the person she is today.

FTC: Can we hear a bit about how her life evolved after she left MSGH?

TH: Sure. Lyndsi went on to Renbrook School, where she continued her interest in learning and consistently earned high honors. She also pursued a broad range of athletic and volunteer interests. Then she moved on to Miss Porter's School, where she continued doing well academically, taking AP classes, receiving high honors and being inducted into the Cum Laude Society. In 2007, she participated in the People to People Student Ambassador Program in Australia, as well as the People to People Johns Hopkins University Leadership Summit at Johns Hopkins University for students interested in medicine. In 2008, she was involved with the National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine at Villanova. Now she is at the University of Pennsylvania, where she is majoring in English Literature, with two minors: Chinese and African American Studies.

FTC: Thank you for taking the time to be in touch with our school community. Please keep us posted on Lyndsi's many adventures!

TH: I sure will, and I'd like to add that it's been wonderful to hear that MSGH continues to expand.





Bushnell Park
Carousel Picnic





Sixth-Year White Water Rafting Trip



Thank You, Jenn!



*Sometimes you get lucky
to find someone
who,
in every ounce of her being,
is a giver, a talent, a guide.*

*Sometimes you get lucky
to find someone
who,
will stick with you
through a long, arduous, ride.*

*Sometimes you get lucky
to find someone
whom
without
you simply wouldn't be.*

*And sometimes you get lucky
to find someone
whom
you want
who is also whom you need.*

Jenn, your service as Board President and Chair of our Site Planning Committee for the last four years has left an invaluable mark on our community. While we may not be able to convey the depths of our appreciation, there is one thing we can do: we can make you proud. We will continue the good work you started, in the spirit in which you started it, and push forward to bring to life the vision we all have for the Montessori School of Greater Hartford. Onward!

Congratulations

It may be fun to know that on April 13, Jenn was awarded the **Presidential Volunteer Service Award** from President Barack Obama for her dedication and time committed to community service in 2011. Delivered to her through Team Hart, The Hartford's Community Service Program, the award recognizes individuals, families and groups that have achieved a certain standard – measured by the number of hours of service over a 12-month period. Enjoy this excerpt from a recent press release recognizing her award.



“Jenn has been an outstanding leader for our community during one of the most intense periods of our school history,” says Head of School, Una Barry. “In the four years she has served as board president, she has not only been 110% percent involved in our complex search for a new location, she has ensured that we were prepared for it — never losing track of the long-term vision for the school. She is mission-driven and has used her deep sense of commitment to sophisticate our board practices, in addition to all the weekly work that proper board leadership requires. Jenn’s tireless work on our behalf will have effects that will be long felt by our school. We are thrilled that since she never seeks personal recognition for her work, that she had this opportunity to be honored with such a prestigious award.”

Clearly, we aren't the only ones who noticed our committed, hard-working leader! Thank you, Jenn.

And while her term is ending shortly, Jenn promised to leave us in good hands. Pictured with her above is Dave Tyson, a former parent, investment professional, and another of our deeply committed board members. He will take the reins as Board President in September to continue the work he has quietly been doing behind the scenes.

Thank You, Ms. Catherine!

For seven years you have given your heart to this community. You started our Toddler Program, and together with your colleagues, have joyfully launched our children into the world with a strong foundation. Now, though you will be deeply missed, it is our pleasure to watch you turn your loving energy to your own child's foundation. Enjoy the bliss of this next stage of your life; we look forward to sharing it with you!



“All our handling of the child will bear fruit, not only at the moment, but in the adult he or she is destined to become.”

~ Maria Montessori

Family Association News

Dear MSGH Family and Friends,

The FA's main goal is to support community development at MSGH, and with all of your support we can certainly say that this year was a resounding success!

Thank you for all of your help and energy; thank you for your involvement and time; and most importantly, thank you for making this such a wonderful year. It was inspiring to see so many of you both helping with and attending so many of our FA-sponsored events.

We are busy planning for next year, which we hope will be just as fun and successful. We are continuing some of our new, well-received traditions such as the skating social, and expanding events from this year such as Tea with Una. In addition, we will continue our core community activities such as Coffee Talks and Play Dates. Next year will also bring an additional spring classroom social and more displays of appreciation for our teachers and staff.

We are very excited for the upcoming year, so if you would like to be a part of this team effort in any way, please don't hesitate to jump in. We always have volunteer opportunities available to fit any time commitment and skill set. And of course, the door is always open for new ideas and energy!

We hope everyone has a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing you in the fall for another great school year. Again, thank you to our whole community for such a successful and fun year.

Rebecca London
Family Association Co-Chair



Thank You, MSGH families! You bring so much joy to our community, and we deeply appreciate all the many ways that you go above and beyond. And to Rebecca and all our dedicated Class Reps: Wow! What you did this year to re-structure the FA will have long-lasting impacts on the MSGH community.



Thank you for your energy!

With much appreciation,
The MSGH Staff



P4 Garden Party

Photos by Meg Keough



Upcoming Dates

Sunday, August 26

FA New Family Picnic
Elizabeth Park Rose Garden, West Hartford

Wednesday, August 29

Parent Orientations
First Day of School (Returning Toddlers,
3rd and 4th Year Primary, and
all Upper Elementary students)

Friday, August 31

First Day of School (2nd Year Primary and 2nd
and 3rd year Lower Elementary)

MSGH Supporters Build Community With The 2011-2012 Annual Fund

MSGH supporters build community through the Annual Fund one donation at a time. Annual Fund contributions support important aspects of the MSGH experience: from classroom materials and programming, to faculty professional development and financial assistance, in addition to helping grow our endowment for future generations. Support from all segments of our community — parents, grandparents, board, staff, alumni parents, alumni, and friends of MSGH — helps to provide the children of today and tomorrow with a brighter future. We are deeply grateful to all who contributed to this year's Annual Fund Campaign!



2011-2012 Annual Fund

The MSGH 2011-2012 Annual Fund campaign ends June 30, 2012. At the time of this printing on June 27, we had already received \$51,153* in gifts and pledges, which helped us exceed our goal of \$50,611. **To all of our generous sponsors listed below, THANK YOU!** Fundraising goals are part of our budget and earmarked to meet this year's needs.

100%
\$51,153

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 Shelly and Don Aronson
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 Milo and Mary Scherer
 Early and Tutch Shirane*

Faculty/Staff

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 Kathy Aldridge
 Angela Alexander
 Amanda Aronson*
 Una Barry*
 Maria Bautista
 Orla Black
 Jessica Bona
 Risa Brophy
 Maria Boulanger



Catherine Carrabba
 Sheila Caselas
 Melanie Cilfone
 Jessica Gorski
 Lisbeth Harrison
 Michelle Hebert
 Petrina Lewis
 Renee Lockhart
 Liza Martin
 Carolyn and Kevin McCutchan
 Mary McHale *
 Tomiko Blais Odorczyk and
 Steven Odorczyk
 Angelica Prado
 Raziya Rahman
 Kim Randalot
 Teresa Reynolds*
 Susan Rich-Bye
 Nancy Rivera
 Melinda Smith
 Alex Tyson
 Leslie Wetmore
 Nancy White

Trustees

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 Jennifer Apgar*
 Jacqueline Copp-Moffett*
 Clare Dowd*
 Lenworth Ellis*
 Neil Fox
 Rahul Magavi*
 Catherine Flavin-McDonald *
 Nathaniel Mays
 Brenda McVerry
 Yummie Oberstein*
 Dahlia Saad Pendergrass*
 Susan Roberts
 Patrick Scully*
 Kanwar Singh*
 David Tyson*
 Jenn Van Scoter *

Friends

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 Nellie Artymiak
 Ellen Basch Zenke
 Yolanda Canzanella
 One Cause
 Paul Cryan Photography
 Marianne Moore
 Layal Saad*
 Patrick Scully and Martha L. McCoy*
 Talia Stigliano
 Stop and Shop

In Honor of

Carlino Acosta
 Madeline Ahearn
 Nathaniel and Maia Aronson
 Una Barry
 Ellen Basch Zenke
 Orla Black
 Jack and Rose Bourdeaux
 Catherine Carrabba
 Riley and Piper Christopher
 Alexander and William Ellis
 Lennox Kim
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 Lilian Margolis
 Jarrett Moster
 Chloe and Adam Pendergrass
 Joel and Stephanie Reuning-Scherer
 Teresa Reynolds
 Teresa Reynolds and Maria Bautista
 Nupur Sondhi
 Alexandra and Trent Tabora

In Memory of

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

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*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

The Maria Montessori Circle	\$5,000 +	Sustainer	\$500-\$999
The Pink Tower Circle	\$2,500-\$4,999	<i>(Leadership Level begins)</i>	
The Director's Circle	\$1,500-\$2,499	Patron	\$250-\$499
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Name(s): _____

(as you wish to appear in the Annual Report)

Maiden Name, if Alumna _____

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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
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- 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: _____
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- Current Parent
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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!