



# Follow the Child

THE MSGH COMMUNITY PUBLICATION



## MONTESSORI *PREPARATION FOR LIFE*

### Teacher Student Partnership

We are a team working towards the same goal. pg. 14

### The Crowning Year

The 6th year, the crowning year, the year of abstraction, the crystallization of all that has been absorbed. pg. 17

### Moving On-Ceremony

Congratulations to our graduates! Read their speeches on pg. 24.

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Welcome to this summer edition of Follow the Child!

MSGH is a good place to be in summer or in any season. Whether you are in one of our well-equipped classrooms, on our natural playground, or on our Adolescent Program farm campus, it is clear that thoughtful preparation is involved.

*Preparation* is the key word.

The Montessori approach is one of careful preparation. We make ready a learning environment that optimizes children's natural development and fosters their independence. The prepared environments of our school are characterized by their order and beauty. Classrooms are assembled using a blend of simplicity and complexity that serves children's developmental needs.

The preparation of the adult in the Montessori pedagogy is achieved through a cycle of intense training, required observation, and reflection on these observations. The teacher is trained intellectually, emotionally, and physically to meet the needs of the age group.

Essentially, the preparation of the environment and of the adult is only a means to an end in Montessori. The true goal is the preparation of the child. It is preparation for life.

A Montessori teacher uses the technique of indirect preparation, where activities are presented that prepare children for future learning. This is particularly evident in the approach used to teach the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic as well as advanced mathematical concepts. Activities are presented that steadily traverse the bridge from concrete to abstract, sometimes bringing children to a dawning understanding and sometimes to "aha" moments. The absorbent mind of the younger child thrives on the organized and linear curriculum offered in the Toddler and Primary environments, while the logical more reasoning mind of the older child is ready for the expansive, spiral curriculum of the Elementary and Adolescent Programs. Concepts are presented in an integrated manner and with ever increasing

complexity as children advance and gain a deeper understanding of their world and their place within it.

Academic preparation has high value, but of equal importance are those self-management skills that allow children to practice forming and refining healthy relationships with others and with their work. The preparation for leadership is woven throughout, as is the basis for making a meaningful contribution to one's ever broadening community.

Please keep in mind this idea of *preparation*, as you read the succinct description of the relationship between the teacher and children in their final year of the Primary cycle written by Amanda Rouleau, and when you read the eloquent description of The Crowning Year penned by Sarah McCabe. And certainly, think about this notion of preparation as you read the speeches of our Adolescent Program graduates. Their words delivered to an audience of fellow students, teachers, and families offers a window into their preparation for life's next step.

There's lots more to take in, in this edition. Caren Ross writes about that expansive curriculum I mentioned in her piece on community partnerships. Renee Lockhart explains how to support independence, while Melissa Pavick and Monika Czajkowski write about the joy of food preparation at the Adolescent and Toddler levels respectively. I am deeply grateful to all our contributing writers. These busy teachers eagerly respond to the call to share their knowledge.

Join us in celebrating important staff anniversaries and the upcoming 10th birthday of our Adolescent Program. Thank you to alumni who have shared their updates and pictures. We're looking forward to a steady stream of news from you.

Next year is a big anniversary year for us. We are excitedly planning for a series of events that will take place throughout the year that will celebrate 60 years in operation. Maria Montessori opened her first classroom in Rome, Italy almost 120 ago. It is rather remarkable to think that MSGH has been around for half that time. Our roots go deep. Our foundation is strong. MSGH is an institution well prepared for the future.

Warmly,  
Mary



# MSGH Happenings



Top: Elementary Community Celebrating Holi  
Middle Left: Grandparent's Day  
Right: Multicultural Potluck



Left: Primary Special Person's Day  
Right: Come See My School for Elementary  
Bottom: Elementary Chinese New Year's Parade



# MSGH Adolescents and Their Partnerships for Learning

BY CAREN ROSS, *Adolescent Guide*



The MSGH Adolescent Community at Millstream Farm is a dynamic environment that forges partnerships for learning with all sorts of people and organizations beyond the boundaries of our classroom and farm. Our wide connections this year alone have included

birding with an Audubon expert, designing a riverside nature trail with the Farmington River Watershed Association, determining metes and bounds with a surveyor, studying soil science with the Northwest Conservation District, making Native American “points” with Friends of the State Archeologist, learning to prune apple trees with a local farmer and building an irrigation system with an engineer. Our partnerships build strong relationships and strengthen the fabric of communities large and small.

This year, we have put lots of energy into our partnership with the Pollinator Pathway, a group dedicated to creating corridors of native plants for bees,

butterflies, and other key animal pollinators to live and forage. In 2017, MSGH Millstream became one of the earliest points along the pathway, which has since grown into a nationwide initiative with hundreds of participating towns. To promote native pollinators, our adolescents this year planted new native plant species in the fall, built pollinator houses in the winter, and in the spring used companion plantings in the vegetable garden to avoid the use of pesticides that would harm the hundreds of species that carry pollen from plant to plant, nobly fertilizing our crops. Most of our crops and more than a third of the world’s food crops rely on animal pollinators to reproduce. The vast majority of flowering plants needs pollinators to blossom.

*Maria Montessori said, “In our schools there is no such thing as a closed door which stands like a policeman barring the way.”*

The Pollinator Pathway is just one of many ways our adolescents interact with a wider

world, stepping through metaphorical doors that open to wider possibilities and segments of life as they approach adulthood. Maria Montessori said, “In our schools there is no such thing as a closed door which stands like a policeman barring the way.” She meant those words to be understood both literally and figuratively, a promotion of education as an “open door” experience, so much broader and more exciting than a closed classroom shut off from life, society, and partnerships for learning.

# THE ADOLESCENT PROGRAM

Happy 10th Birthday, Adolescent Program!

It is hard to believe that ten years have passed since the Montessori School of Greater Hartford sent its pioneer class to its beautiful New Hartford Campus for the inaugural year of the Adolescent Program.

Not long ago, I picked out my long pants and barn boots on the morning of my first day as a member of that inaugural class.

Although it feels like little time has passed, much has happened over the last ten years. There have been ten harvests, ten goat birthing seasons, ten maple tree taps, ten summers, autumns, winters, and springs.

For many people, their middle school education seems stagnant and stale compared to the excitement of adult life. This is not the case for alumni of the MSGH Adolescent Program.

The experiences that made our education what it was continue to buzz with life, creation, and potential. As alumni continue with their education and their working lives, they are reminded of the perpetual life taking place on the farm. A change of the season from winter to early spring makes one think of the goats beginning to have their babies and the vernal pools beginning to teem with critters. Fall means that Concord grapes are so plump they are hanging off the vine and waiting to be picked.

Life on the farm continues to breathe and grow. The knowledge about the changes of the earth and the creatures that inhabit it is preserved by all who have spent time as students in the Adolescent Program.

So, happy 10th birthday to our beloved farm school. Here’s to another 10, 100, or 1000 years of Montessori farm life and learning.

-Emma Stremper

Millstream Farm in 2014



# WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

BY RENEE LOCKHART, *Primary Guide*

A lot! It is because we love our children that we are here to support their growth and development. Maria Montessori states, "A man does not just happen; he does not just grow like a flower. A child does not act as an adult. We apply our energies, our maturity, to do something, but a child acts in accordance with nature in order to construct a man." That's mind-blowing! Your child is building their adult self.

How much does a parent need to help in that process? Again, I will quote what Maria Montessori wrote, "Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed," and let's add that which they have succeeded before. As adults in the child's life, our intentions are pure. We are truly coming from a good place. However, because we love our children, we must realize that not all help is helpful. Think about it a few times. The child who is having a hard time putting on their socks. The child who just got out of school drops their bags and their adult picks up the bags to carry them to the car. Maybe today the child is struggling with the zipper on their coat. Should we help? What will happen if we do?

It's uncomfortable to watch. The clock is ticking. However, unnecessary help creates a dependence on the adult. The child will not learn if we continue to help them with everything. So, love has a lot to do with it! It is because we love the child that we will allow them the opportunity to

practice and build the necessary skills. Let's not send the message to the child that they are not capable.

They can do it! In the Montessori classroom, we are fostering functional independence. When children can be free to do things for themselves within set boundaries, they can increase their self-confidence and self-esteem. They can grow into adults who can make decisions and do things for themselves confidently and capably.

In nurturing a child's growth and development, the expression of love takes on many forms. It means giving them the space to discover their own capabilities, encouraging them to take on challenges, and being there to offer guidance when needed. Love truly does have everything to do with it - our unwavering commitment to the child's growth and well-being is the essence of love in action.



## MSGH ALUMNI

My name is Alice Murchie, a rising sophomore in college. I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting MSGH during this spring's Special Person's Day. I accompanied my neighbor, whom I babysit, and I was able to see her life inside her classroom. We shared something in common: we both had Mrs. Lockhart as our Montessori Primary 3 teacher. This fact was something that brought me so much joy and comfort knowing that my former teacher continues to touch so many young lives and to make them feel so special. The materials and familiar work brought back nostalgic memories, particularly the metal insets, cursive alphabet letters, and sewing buttons on fabric scraps.

As I walked the halls of MSGH, I was immediately brought back to my younger self. I often accompanied younger students to their classroom in the morning; this was something that I felt compelled to do and allowed me to feel independent, and MSGH supported me while I did this. From a young age I was able to care for those around me, and I have continued to do so today. I am studying to be a Nurse, where I too will help others and lend a helping hand.

The community of MSGH is one that is welcoming, supportive, and kind. I was overjoyed to visit as an alumni and see so many familiar faces that shaped my life for the better.

*-Alice Murchie*



# Special Person's DAY

THANK YOU TO THE FAMILY ASSOCIATION



Thank you to the Family Association. The year has been full of appreciation and support for MSGH. The FA started the year gifting every student with a fall pumpkin and ended with a glorious faculty and staff breakfast spread, with many acts of appreciation and support in between. Thank you for maintaining our close-knit community and strengthening our roots.



# COMMUNITY LUNCH at the Adolescent Program

By Melissa Pavick, Adolescent Guide

At Millstream Farm, we are absorbed into the beauty of our natural environment and reap the bounty of what the plants and animals offer at our weekly community lunches. Each Wednesday, we have a group of dedicated students who work on the menu, the proliferation of ingredients, the preparation of those ingredients, and of course, the way the meal will be prepared for our entire community.

As you might imagine, this is a huge task! The students take their food seriously, as most adolescents do. Our goals are typically to have delicious and sustainable lunches that will feed 18-23 people. We always use ingredients harvested on the farm, and try to employ a “no-waste” philosophy when it comes to portions. Our meals are also very economical! As we usually eat meals from our own sourced ingredients, they tend to average just around \$1 per person, per lunch!



In some cases, we might cook a special meal connected to a culture or part of our learning. For instance, we recently learned about America’s Founding Fathers in Humanities, and so decided to cook some meals from Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello for a community lunch. This idea came from the students, as it was Monticello that introduced macaroni and cheese to the United States! We also welcome parents who would like to share a part of their culture with our school; they may share recipes or their time in cooking with us on this important day.

Within the cooking groups, the students decide to take on a specific responsibility or role. While everyone on the cooking group works as a team, they also must work on their own responsibilities to ensure we have an organized, diverse, and delicious meal. The students take on these specific responsibilities for 2 hours, which assumes leadership in an area. In doing so, the students are constantly communicating about their work, and ultimately, take on roles outside of their own to ensure our community lunch is a success!



Community lunches are a wonderful part of life on Millstream Farm. We appreciate the opportunity to share in something that is meaningful, and grateful for the abundance that the farm brings!

# TEACHER STUDENT PARTNERSHIP

*Amanda Rouleau, Primary Guide*

Without words, we locked eyes from across the room and she knew what to do. "Can I help you with that?" the third-year asks the younger child. The younger child agrees, and she shows him how to slowly slip the thread through the stubborn bead. The third-year look back at me with a small smile, proud of her ability to intervene and help. I smile back bigger, amazed at the growth that I've seen in her over the past three years in my classroom and happy for her to have this sense of accomplishment, which can only occur through her own self-sufficiency.

This child, only 5-and-half years old, approached a 3-year-old who was trying to string beads but could see he was growing frustrated when he couldn't get one on. She sensed this all happening from across the room and had the overwhelming desire to help. She had been on the same journey as him and was once 3 years old trying to complete the very same activity. This third-year knew the exact moment when she needed to assist in the situation.

The dynamic between the teacher and the third-years is crucial. Especially towards the end of their third year, these children feel like an extension of myself. We understand each other without speaking; I see the slightest change in emotion on their faces and can respond in the way I know they respond to best. They attend to the classroom in just the way I would – tidying each material exactly how it's supposed to be, wiping tables and chairs at the end of the day, and keeping the younger children moving along through their day. "These children have internalized the norms of the environment to such a degree that they feel they must care for it;" it's truly theirs and they want to work hard to keep it beautiful and functioning well." We are a team working towards the same goal. It's a special partnership only possible after a long time together and a relationship that sets the foundation for trusting adult relationships throughout their lifetime.



## MSGH FIELD DAY



Thank you to all of our dedicated family and parent volunteers! You truly made Field Day special.

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From Seeds to Seedlings:

# The CROWNING YEAR



BY SARAH MCCABE, ELEMENTARY GUIDE

The 6th year, the crowning year, the year of abstraction, the crystallization of all that has been absorbed. The year of leadership, of newfound confidence, of self-realization, of “big fish in a small pond” and preparation to become a “bigger fish better equipped for a bigger pond.” Its importance, at times, is underestimated. Its importance, at all times, is understated.

Understated, by definition, means “presented or expressed in a subtle and effective way,” which is precisely how the Montessori method helps students arrive at this harmonious year. The fruits of their labor finally reveal themselves. All of that sensorial work that came before is solidifying in the mind of the child, and he or she abstracts.

It is synonymous with the life cycle of a plant. The seeds of knowledge are sown in years prior, as far back as the toddler years. Let’s call this the “Seed Era.” Grace and courtesy lessons, fine-motor skills, introduction to languages and early classification all set the stage for the child’s “Germination Era.” From this point, great care is taken in order to provide all which is required for the successful development of a seedling. In the plant world, these necessities are water absorption, adequate light exposure, chilling and warming of temperature, oxygen intake and, last but not least, time. All are delicate variables in nature’s equation.

For the Montessori child, in addition to the most basic human needs being met, there is a need to develop the imagination through concrete, sensorial experiences. As Dr. Montessori writes, “Touching for the younger child is what imagining is for the older child... Thus, at different levels we encounter parallel phenomena.” (From *Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 22).

Take the Binomial Cube material, for example. The Montessori child may first encounter the Binomial Cube puzzle at the primary level. There, the child is tasked with following the steps to properly disassemble and reassemble the cube.

This same material will reveal itself time and time again both at Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary. However, when the child becomes reacquainted with the material, each time it will

be in a new light with some new aspect of it introduced by the guide. The guide will take students through a progression of other concrete materials intended to deepen the child’s understanding of how numbers interact to form complex, yet predictable relationships. Gradually, the student will return to the Binomial Cube by the end of Upper Elementary in order to tackle the abstract concept of the expanded equation:  $(a+b)^3=a^3 + 3a^2b + 3b^2a + b^3$ .

Allowing the child to abstract in this way prepares him or her for the higher-level mathematical thinking to come later in life, as binomials are useful in statistical and probability analysis.

The word abstract originates from the Latin word, “abstractum,” which means “to draw away.” It’s based on experience and what has allowed humans to transform their environments. Humans take in and classify information from the environment, and then they draw on the essence of that experience, which is what making an abstraction ultimately is. We need concrete experiences to come to abstractions in every case.

Towards the end of Elementary, the child has understood the quality and process of something once the material is left behind because they realize they don’t need the material anymore. At this point, they can apply it on paper or apply it to other things within the environment. This is the goal of the crowning year. As with germination in a plant, this process takes time and - inevitably - patience. All that comes before is in deliberate preparation for this final year, and we witness a robust seedling emerge in time to enter its “Adolescent Era.”



## MSGH ADVENTURES



## Cooking Together!

### Monika Czajkowski, *Toddler 1 Guide*

Children are more likely to eat the food when they are involved in the preparation. Our classroom is equipped with a variety of child-size cooking utensils along with access to larger kitchen equipment, which we use almost daily. As a classroom community, we start by exploring the specific ingredients with all our five senses: sound, sight, touch, smell, and finally taste. Children enjoy measuring the ingredients, pouring them, stirring them and observing what happens when we mix the ingredients together.

While the fun of discovering new things never ends, the children are learning fundamental skills and growing from these food preparation activities daily. The children are practicing their fine motor skills, their patience to wait for their turn and their grace and courtesy skills. Drinking a delicious smoothie, they have helped to prepare, not only nourishes their bodies but also their confidence and curiosity!

We encourage you to invite your children to the kitchen to help with meal preparation. They will not only learn a new skill but also spend quality time with you and feel a sense of belonging as they contribute to your family.



# The MOVING-ON CEREMONY



Look at how many people we have here! You've traveled from near and far. Some of you are here in spirit because you couldn't be present. But aside from that, there are so many people and experiences that have been a part of this journey in so many different ways.

Do you remember the first time we set out, shovels in hand, ready to build trails in the forest? Or our first Micro E sale, where we witnessed the art of our business at the farm? The awesome ninth year trips that we didn't go on, but heard about? Perhaps the long bus rides to and from school every day? The goats kidding every spring and the times we have to say goodbye? Or the small things: staring at the ceiling after completing a test early or sketching science notes on the top of a computer because retrieving a notebook was too much work?

These memories make me the person I am today, standing in front of you and telling you that during the most important years, so far, of my life, they shaped who I am. It was at MSGH where I was first truly exposed to the world, the complex and confusing world that I will spend the rest of my life figuring out. I remember vividly sitting in the classroom, gazing at the ceiling and waiting for the school year to begin. It started with a few short papers and an unorganized planner, but eventually, the passion of the teachers won over my love and respect.

Something else came with the farm, other than a completely new experience; love, a love for my surroundings, as well as gratitude. I was encouraged to take my time, to stop and look around before life can pass even further by, to stay in the moment. The vast forest surrounding our school was an opportunity for adventure. The garden was an opportunity for growth, and the animals, for love and care. When I was in seventh grade, we set out

across the street with baskets foraging for grapes to make jelly. We passed by a patch of stinging needles. I had heard stories of the itching and the swelling that those weeds had caused, but the guides showed me otherwise. Those "dangerous" needles were our lunch the following day.

It's these things that are irreplaceable. I like to think of it as forming an alliance with the Earth. There is abundant food everywhere we look and the farm helped me see the endless resources that are available to us in nature.

At the farm, I firsthand witnessed the true benefits of academic integrity, passion, and hard work. I observed these traits from my guides and classmates during my three years at Millstream. From my peers, I became inspired and driven to succeed. I was reminded to seek beauty in each subject, especially the virtually unappealing ones like closely studying the compost or finding ways to convert goat manure to gas. And while these weren't my favorites, I respected them. I learned to appreciate the hard work of others, to be curious, to ask questions, and to further establish myself as a worldly citizen.

At the farm, I learned to say goodbye. In the past months, I have come to the realization that life is not just a series of events that take place over a span of years, decades if you're lucky. It has a bigger meaning. It is a vacuum or a puzzle where everyone is finding their place in this world. I learned this from my good friend César. We spent summer nights under the vast, night sky, admiring the stars, talking about where we might eventually end up. It was here where I was reminded that nothing is permanent, the bugs in the grass, flowers in the ground, and people on Earth are here for such a short period of time. The nightly views of the stars encouraged me to appreciate the present and truly be grateful for the people and things around me in the moment, for each is such a significant point in time.

The memory of César encouraged me to meet new people. Later, as I made connections with others through school, adventure and travel, they shared their dreams with me. Some dreamed of making music and bringing together the world, others dreamed of moving to the U.S. and bringing their

siblings along, but every time I met a new person and later said goodbye, I would find myself thinking like them, seeing the world through their eyes. Ultimately, having these young adults as friends helped me choose what kind of person I want to be and which morals are most important.

From the farm, I was encouraged to explore the world freely. During our class trip to Costa Rica, I observed nature, paying meticulous attention to everything there was to see in El Bosque Eterno de los Niños. At first, the thought of sleeping in the jungle for a week seemed unpleasant, but I was soon amazed by the ecosystems that thrived all around us. The leaf cutter ants that marched by the millions home to their families and frothy cascades that loomed 164 feet overhead

inspired me to draw and write for days. This relates back to the broad topic of life, the conversations under the stars, the vacuum of life that moves so uncontrollably fast, the gorgeous nature around us and people and things that are not always meant to stay, but are just with you for a short while, keeping you moving a little bit further on your individual path.

So enjoy life; smell the flowers! Drink in the sunsets and the sunrise, the majestic skies, good days, and not so good ones, take advantage of everything life has to offer because those first steps, lessons, and connections I made by exploring, have all contributed to the person standing before you today, proud, motivated, and ready for the future.



Fred Faulkner

# MSGH 2023-24 GRADUATE SPEECHES



Honestly, it's kind of weird standing up on this stage. Over the past ten years, I've always sat with my classmates, watching the 9th graders give their amazing speeches, thinking: "Yeah—that's not gonna be me." In the back of my mind, it felt like this day would never come, or that, at the very least, when it did come, I

would be all grown up, with some sort of mustache and beard, and mature beyond my years. Obviously, I have grown up at least a little bit, but I never did manage to get that beard.

Before this school, I'd gone to a day school in Nashville, Tennessee. Back in that school, I behaved poorly and acted out a lot. But I didn't mean any harm—what the teachers there didn't know was that I was just terribly bored. I felt that I wasn't being challenged—that school didn't have the personalized learning experience that I really needed. When I moved to Connecticut and enrolled at this school, I was a shy little kid that'd just turned four years-old. I would spend much of my time next to Ms. Jessica, for I was terrified of interacting with the other kids.

It was here that I first discovered my love of learning. Ms. Jessica, my primary teacher, would introduce me to all of the materials that make up the backbone of my education: the stamp game, the pink tower, the small and large bead frames, and many others that I've forgotten the names of but were important nonetheless. My favorite of them all were the materials used for mathematics. I loved mathematics, and I made it my goal to learn all of the mathematics materials in the Primary I classroom before I moved on to Lower Elementary. This passion for mathematics, along with one for learning, followed me through my elementary years.

Over time, as I gradually became accustomed to the MSGH community, I felt myself becoming more social, more integrated into the community. In third grade, my friends and I spent much of our school time creating comics and exploring our creativity. It was here that I developed yet another interest—that of writing, and later of drawing. Later on, in sixth grade, my friend and I began creating music on GarageBand, and posting it on Youtube. This cultivated my appreciation for music and composition. It seemed that no matter what I did, my passions and interests seemed to only multiply as

time went on, for Montessori had allowed me to explore subjects that I'd never even thought of exploring, whether they were academic or not. The independence that I had at MSGH truly allowed me to spread my wings.

Soon after, I joined the Adolescent Community in my seventh grade. Though I'd visited a few times before, I didn't really know what to expect. However, to my complete surprise, I was met with a balance of challenge, emotional and academic support, a beautiful campus, and yet another sub-community to find my place in. Though things weren't perfect, it always turned out fine in the end. Then, in my eighth grade, we went on a nine-day trip to Costa Rica to learn about biodiversity and peace. We spent five days in a station in the Children's Eternal Rainforest, where we took regular hikes to the rainforest, observed nature, and had a lot of fun while still learning important lessons that we probably wouldn't have learnt anywhere else.

Finally, my ninth grade year arrived. This year felt a bit surreal, because it was hard to believe that I was really leaving this school. Although I'd known that I'd have to leave, it was hard for me to imagine myself applying to schools, supporting the other farm students, and, last but not least, giving this speech.

During my time at this school, I've met so many people, I've learnt so many things, and last but not least, I've done so many things. I feel that the Montessori education system has helped me and countless others learn independently in a hands-on way. It encourages collaboration over competition, and total understanding over basic grades. The three-year class system allows older students to help younger students, and ultimately allows the older students to practice their leadership skills. Montessori is all about following the child, relying on the child's innate urge to learn, and giving them the resources and time to fulfill their thirst for knowledge. All of these aspects of the Montessori education results in a tight-knit community in which learning can actually be fun and exciting.

I'd like to say thank you to all of the guides that I've had at this school. Without your kindness, wisdom, and support, I wouldn't be the same person today.

Now, years later, most of what I can remember of that old, Nashville day school is me looking at a calendar. Thinking now, as I'm about to end my ten years at this school, maybe that meant something. Maybe that memory was meant to remind me of how fast time can slip between your fingers if you're not paying attention. Maybe it was to remind us all to seize every single day, take advantage of every single moment, before it goes away. Now, all I can do is look to the future, to the bliss, sorrow, anger, and everything in-between. Though today marks my last day as a student of this school, I feel that I'll always be a part of the MSGH community. Lastly, I feel that I'm ready to take the next step, and start a new journey, beardless or not. Thank you!



I would like to begin by paying my utmost respects to Caren Ross, Jack McArdle, Priscilla Marshall, Alex Pape, Melissa Pavick, Colleen Casey-Nelson, and Nancy Rivera.

My name is Stella Mae Cobb, and I have just come to the end of my journey at Millstream farm.

In July of 2023, I left behind my world, home, and friends in Brooklyn, New York to begin a new adventure in the serene, cold, and quaint world of Norfolk, Connecticut, in the historic home where my father grew up. In late August, I began my first year at Millstream, and it was so far beyond my expectations of what a school can be, that I was overwhelmed.

Every day, I learned something, created something, contributed to something, and made a connection. I was immediately engrossed in the philosophy of the Montessori education. I was so eager to build another world and to experience the farm and the culture of the

school completely. I wanted to be a part of everything and absorb everything.

I am so incredibly honored and proud to be in the presence of my friends, loved ones, guides, and fellow students today. You have all made me and so many others feel so valued, appreciated, and seen throughout the year, and you are all so incredibly imperative to my identity. I truly cannot thank you enough.

Additionally, my family and loved ones deserve nothing but the biggest tribute and I am eternally grateful for your wisdom, insight, and endless inspiration that you have all blessed me with. You have made my brain, heart, and all the other parts of me stronger, wiser, and kinder over the years and I truly would not have the courage to stand up here today without you.

Events and core memories I will cherish forever:

- Meeting my platonic soulmate
- Making true friends
- Feeding, playing, and learning with the goats and sheep.
- Becoming a godmother to my beautiful Victoria
- Meeting someone just like me
- Learning about what the world is made of
- Learning what people are made of

Stella Mae Cobb



# Thank you for your dedication!

The unwavering commitment and dedication of our staff in supporting every child defines the essence of MSGH - it's the staff who amplify MSGH's true shine. Together, we boast over 400 years of dedication to MSGH!

Each staff member has brought multiple moments of affection to MSGH. As we swiftly approach celebrating our 60th year, we want to first take a moment to celebrate a few milestones within the MSGH staff community!

Thank you for all that you do, today and every day. Thank you for giving us years filled with joy, laughter, and cherished memories. Together, and for decades, MSGH has nurtured life-long learners by enriching childhood and strengthening families. Thank you!

THANK YOU ORLA FOR 30 YEARS!



THANK YOU LESLIE FOR 15 YEARS!



THANK YOU STEVE FOR 10 YEARS!



THANK YOU ERICA FOR 10 YEARS!



THANK YOU JACK FOR 10 YEARS!



THANK YOU CAREN FOR 10 YEARS!



# MSGH ALUMNI



Nathaniel Aronson just completed his freshman year at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, where he plans to major in psychology and minor in Spanish. He runs cross country, does indoor and outdoor track and field for Bates and is also part of an a capella group. During the summers, he continues to work for the Max

Restaurant Group in West Hartford. He volunteers regularly with children at the local Lewiston schools and in CT as a youth running coach.



Maia Aronson is entering her senior year at Hall High School and is engaged in a college search. Her language choice at Hall is American Sign Language. She works as a host at Avert in West Hartford Center and volunteers weekly at Healing Meals in Simsbury. During the fall, she plans to manage the girls field hockey team.



Levey London is currently enrolled at the Watkinson School, and has been accepted into a program that offers a second high school diploma in the creative arts upon completion. At Watkinson, he is

also a co-head of the Jewish affinity group. This year he has done volunteer work (tech support) in a hospital in the Dominican Republic, and has been accepted into a selective internship program at Hartford Hospital.



Maeve Dowd stopped by our "Celebrate West Hartford" booth to say hello!

Thank you, Maeve!

Jonathan Coss graduated middle school and will be attending Hall High School in the fall. He played baseball and soccer over the years. Jonathan recently started playing tennis and is practicing to join the football team in high school. He has been playing the violin for five years and wants to work on getting in to the top orchestra group, the "I Giovani Solisti" at Hall by his sophomore year.



Jonathan and Alexis Coss in Ms. Teresa's Toddler classroom, 2015.

Alexios Coss just finished 4th grade and will be starting his last year of elementary school in the fall. He plays baseball and soccer, and plans to start flag football in the fall. Alexis plays the cello and enjoys music. He also enjoys drawing and is hopeful to join the Art Quest program next school year.



## Check Out the MSGH School Store!

Use the QR code to shop MSGH shirts, hoodies, tumblers and more! Your purchases help MSGH earn credits towards certain sports-related equipment, for use at school.

## MSGH SPIRIT DAYS



Hey Alumni, We want to hear from you!

Participate in our alumni survey by scanning the QR code or email alexandrar@msgh.org for more information.



60 YEARS OF MSGH!

## CELEBRATE WITH US!

This coming year marks MSGH's 60th year of dedication and commitment to our greater community. We would love everyone to celebrate with us no matter where you are. We will have events to gather all members of our community including our staff, students, parents, grandparents, families, alumni, and friends both past and present.

Don't hesitate to stop in any time and you will be greeted with a warm MSGH welcome! We truly would love to see you and to hear your MSGH story.

Let's get ready to celebrate our Diamond Year! If you would like to volunteer in any way, please email [alexandrar@msgh.org](mailto:alexandrar@msgh.org).



# The MSGH Children's Fund

Dear Families and Friends of MSGH,

As we reflect on the end of another rewarding school year, we are filled with a sense of gratitude for the unwavering support of our community. Whether volunteering time or energy to assist a classroom or event, or making a contribution to our Children's Fund, the MSGH community came together to support our incredible school in so many ways throughout the year.

The Children's Fund is an important part of our school that allows us to offset the cost of tuition by supporting classroom materials, professional development, cultural enrichment programming as well as our Flexible Tuition Program. Your gift to the Children's Fund signifies your endorsement of our mission and represents an investment in our MSGH community.

As we enter our 60th year, let us come together once again as a community to ensure that our school continues to be a beacon of excellence in Montessori education.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our school's mission. We wish you a wonderful summer!

With gratitude,

*Alex Rozenfeld*

Alex Rozenfeld

Development and Community Outreach Manager



**"Within the child lies the fate of the future."**

**-Dr. Maria Montessori**



## Montessori School of Greater Hartford

### 2024-2025 Children's Fund

#### Categories of Giving

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

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

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

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

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Please initial here if your company will match this contribution

#### AFFILIATION TO MSGH:

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

#### MY GIFT IS:

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

To give online, visit:

[www.msgh.org](http://www.msgh.org) ➡ Support MSGH ➡ Children's Fund



For questions, please contact Toko Odorczuk, Director of Advancement at 860.236.4565 ext. 112.

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

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

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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



### 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

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Toko Blais Odorzuk

#### LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Erica Killer and Xarea Lockhart

#### CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS, GRAPHICS AND LAYOUT

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