



October 13, 2011

Today, you are the most important person in the world to a child who needs you. I want to tell you why, 12 years after our daughter left Columbus Montessori Education Center, I am even more passionate about its mission and the gift it provides to our children and community.

We came to Columbus Montessori as desperate parents. Sophie, then 3, was in a terrible situation. Our once-good daycare had decayed, with poor supervision and few activities, after all three classroom teachers bolted. Sophie was miserable. I was unable to focus on my job knowing my child was being neglected. This situation is all too common when schools lack the financial support necessary to retain quality teachers and provide children with rich educational and developmental experiences. Parental distraction then becomes a problem for employers.

I will never forget dropping Sophie off that first day to Columbus Montessori. I nervously raced to pick her up after work. When she saw me, she danced into my arms and said, with such relief in her voice, "Oh, Mommy, this is such a good place!" She said a mouthful.

If you still have children at Columbus Montessori, I can tell you how this investment will pay off. This is not a guess; this is what I know from experience of watching alumni blossom. Whenever our suburban newspaper carried a story about a successful student, more often than not, I knew the child from Montessori. The winning team from the national Future City architecture contest? Two of three were Columbus Montessori kids.

National Merit winners? Columbus Montessori kids dominated again. Student council president, delegates to CISV peace camps abroad, leads in theater productions, winners of national writing contests? CMEC kids were front and center. Kids who respect their environment, respect others, and respect themselves? Columbus Montessori kids rule.

Daily, I still see the legacy of Columbus Montessori in my daughter, now a senior at Interlochen Arts Academy, an international college-preparatory boarding school. When I asked Sophie to describe Columbus Montessori's impact, she said, "Tell them this. Growing up in Bexley, I would have never been exposed to so many people who were different from me. I learned to respect people for who they are."

Our children will inherit a global economy that demands an understanding and appreciation of other cultures. It is just one more reason why your support of Columbus Montessori is a sound investment. And by making a donation to Columbus Montessori, you keep tuition rates competitive allowing must-have dollars to be provided in a tax-deductible manner to make this education more affordable.

No matter how hard some parents try, however, they would be unable to give their child a Montessori education without our scholarship fund. If you are an alumni or supporter, I can tell you how your contribution helps these children.

Columbus Montessori rescued a second child the week Sophia arrived there. To protect this young woman's privacy, I will call her Sara. The child of a troubled family, her options were few and her prospects dim. Columbus Montessori accepted her and saw her path. When needed, the school stepped in to protect Sara. She started first grade ahead --- and has stayed ahead,

giving her confidence and an expectation for success. Today, she works two jobs to save money for college. She hopes to become a doctor.

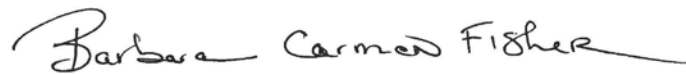
I am and always will be grateful to those families who came before us and established Columbus Montessori so that Sophie and Sara were afforded an excellent start in life. My husband and I have continued to support the school, and are grateful it continues to thrive and help other children, especially through these changing economic conditions and through state funding cuts.

Columbus Montessori's accomplishments are many: It is a 3-Star Step Up to Quality Early Childhood Program and is accredited by the National Association of Education for Young Children and the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. With new Director Lenn Turner, the school has improved facilities, retained 90 percent of the staff, strengthened the elementary program and extended Children's House hours.

Your donation to the Annual Fund drive is critical. These dollars help retain a highly-skilled faculty, purchase Montessori materials and maintain low student-teacher ratios that nurture each child with an individualized education. Your Annual Fund donation contributes to closing the gap between tuition and actual expenses. And it is crucial to obtaining grants, since funders rightly view the percentage of donors as proof of parental and community support.

We can invest early in our children or we can pay later, through higher taxes, the costs for remediation and social services. Education is the only thing that can permanently change a family's economic circumstances, and the results are generational. So I am asking you to change the world -- one child at a time -- by making a generous pledge to the Annual Fund. Please complete and submit the enclosed pledge form by October 20th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Carmen Fisher". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Barbara Carmen Fisher
Alumni Parent to Sophia Fisher