



*Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited.
Imagination encircles the world. (Albert Einstein)*

Dear MSA Families:

Congratulations on being part of the MSA community and welcome to a new school year!

Marin School of the Arts represents a unique partnership among committed professional staff, student artists, and families - like you - who understand what it takes to develop and support MSA's award-winning programs. These programs provide an environment for students to deeply explore their artistic field of interest, through imagination, creativity, inspiration and passion.

Now more than ever, in these challenging economic times, the success of MSA relies upon the contributions of "many hands" in order to ensure that excellent staff, supplies, support and experiences are here for your student. With this in mind, we invite you to participate in the **MSA Many Hands** campaign.

The **MSA Many Hands** campaign raises funds through direct family contributions. These funds, and *thousands of hours of volunteer time*, directly benefit our students, their teachers and the MSA programs. We rely on your generosity and hope that you will join **MSA Many Hands** today. Please complete the form on the back of this letter and help make 2010-2011 a ground-breaking, remarkable year for your student!



Our budget is based on a minimum family contribution of \$600 per student.

Last year, MSA provided more than \$150,000 in essential program support through such contributions. This year, that amount must be significantly higher in order to achieve our goals and create the success for our students that we all desire. This cannot be done without your help!

Our students benefit from a strong community that pulls together to prove that a public school can still be on the cutting edge – winning awards, inspiring students, and broadcasting our belief that Arts education is alive and well, and absolutely essential to a rich and meaningful educational experience.

Join MSA Many Hands and pay your contribution *in full* by August 19th, MSA's orientation, and you will receive your coveted MSA tote bag that night!

Thank you,

*The MSA Foundation Board
on behalf of its students, programs and staff*

P.S. Enclosed is an information sheet with answers to frequently asked questions

Marin School of the Arts Foundation

625 Arthur Street, Novato, California 94947 **tel:** (415) 892-7915 **fax:** (415) 898-2418

email: info@marinschoolofthearts.org **web:** www.marinschoolofthearts.org

MSAF is a Non-Profit Tax Exempt 501(c)3 Corporation. Tax ID No: 51-0490730



The Marin School of the Arts is a non-profit organization 501(c)(3). Your assessment is tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. If you have questions, please call Board Treasurer Jamie Forester at 415-492-9099.

Pay in full by Aug. 19th and receive a coveted MSA tote bag at Orientation!

MSA "MANY HANDS" CONTRIBUTION PAYMENT OPTIONS (Check One)

Yes, I understand the need to support MSA financially and agree to pay the 2010-2011 student assessment of: ___ >\$1200 ___ \$1200 ___ \$1000 ___ \$800 ___ \$600

- I've already paid my full contribution of \$_____ for '10-11 Reserve an MSA tote for me!
I will pay in full by 8/19/10 the amount of \$_____ for '10-11. Reserve an MSA tote for me!
I choose the 50% now/50% later payment plan. First payment of \$_____ (50%) for '10-11. I will pay the remaining 50% by December 1st, 2010.
I choose the monthly payment plan. I would like to make arrangements to pay \$_____per month for ___ months for '10-11. (Please supply credit card information below)

Contributions: Our budget is based on a minimum contribution of \$600 per student, and all contributions are greatly appreciated!

Please mail this form with your payment, payable to Marin School of the Arts, 625 Arthur Street, Novato, CA 94947 or bring it with you to the August 19th MSA Orientation.

Credit Card Information (VISA, Mastercard, American Express, Discover): Enter your credit card details below or go to the "donate" link at http://www.marinschoolofthearts.org to pay via Paypal.

Name on card: _____ Type of card: _____
Card Number: _____ Expiration: _____
Signature: _____

Matching Contribution Information: [] Yes, my employer, (specify)_____ will match my contribution in the amount of \$_____ ; if I'm not sure, I'll check!

Please fill in the following contact information in full. Thank you very much!

Student's Name _____ Grade _____
Primary Parental Contact Name(s) _____ Email _____
Address, City, Zip _____ Phone _____
Alternative Household Parent Name(s) (if appropriate) _____
Phone _____ Email _____
Address, City, Zip _____



A Note about Family Contributions and Volunteer Engagement

We recognize that not all parents are equally able to contribute financially to their child's education. In some situations, such as parents working multiple jobs or serious family illness, volunteering time can be difficult as well.

Please recognize that all families make difficult decisions about their finances and their time, in order to support causes that are important to them.

We do not want MSA's financial needs to be an obstacle to motivated students who would benefit from participation in the MSA program.

We do, however, ask parents who are unable to contribute at this time, to re-assess their ability to contribute financially as soon as their circumstances begin to improve.

Volunteer Engagement

In addition, we ask all families to please consider ways you can provide volunteer support to MSA, by contributing your skills, your energy and your enthusiasm. The MSA programs cannot survive without time donated through strong and consistent parent volunteer engagement. As one of MSA's *priceless* volunteers, not only do you contribute directly to the strength of the school, you also work along side other wonderful MSA parents, building friendships, strengthening bonds and forming a strong community for the benefit of our students. Please fill out the MSA volunteer form, and answer the call when you are invited to participate.

Thank you,

The MSAF Board of Directors

OVER, PLEASE

Marin School of the Arts Family Contributions: Frequently Asked Questions

MSA is part of a public school program. Why are we expected to help pay for it?

MSA provides material support, equipment, staffing, and enrichment experiences far beyond what the Novato Unified School District (NUSD) supports. In fact, beyond classroom space and a number of teachers, we receive less than \$1,000 in other funding from the district to cover the supplies and activities necessary to support a high quality, awards-winning program. Our teens receive an arts education that rivals, and in most cases far exceeds, the arts education at exclusive private schools– and for those, families pay up to \$30,000 a year. There is simply no way to provide MSA's programs without a creative fundraising plan, a cornerstone of which is family giving. In addition, many foundations look for a record of strong family contributions before they consider granting support, and we need to be in position to qualify for grants.

What does our contribution support?

MSA pays for teachers of smaller-sized classes that fall below a district minimum number of students, as well as equipment, equipment repair, Performing Arts Center support, expendable art supplies, professional development for our teachers, student scholarships, visiting artists and much, much more. In addition, once again this year, NUSD will *not* provide a grant to cover the salary for MSA Office Manager Annie Hartje, without whom MSA could not function. We recognize the essential support Annie provides by personalizing the education our students receive, recruiting new students, and helping connect our families to the school. As a result, we are committed to raising an extra **\$55,000** again this year.

Our student's program booster group also does fundraising. What's the difference? Should I give to both?

In a word, YES. Each of MSA's 10 art disciplines has needs beyond what general MSA funds can support. MSA cannot function without the core family contributions, and individual disciplines cannot provide additional materials and experiences without discipline-specific fundraising. Your full participation directly impacts your student's experience.

Who makes funding decisions?

MSA's governance structure includes elected board members who represent all 10 disciplines in the program and who advocate for the entire school. In addition to a volunteer President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and other committee chairs, Booster Committee Presidents or their appointees serve on the MSA Foundation Board. MSA Director Mark Peabody and Annie Hartje are also on the Foundation Board as non-voting members.

In addition to family contributions, what other fundraising activities does MSA do?

During the school year, we charge admission for Soirees, sell MSA logo clothing and host a major event, the MSA Showcase. Accompanying the Showcase is a three-week online auction, which is a core part of our overall fundraising effort. We also welcome direct and in-kind contributions.

What effort is made to win grants?

A great deal! We continually seek and apply for grants and welcome the help of parents and community members. Often grants do not provide ongoing program support, which is a core need, but grants can sometimes be found to fund special programs or buy equipment. We would love to have at least one parent or small committee from each discipline scouring websites for grant opportunities to supplement current efforts. Can you help? If so, please email us at info@marinschoolofthearts.org.

What activities would MSA add if there was extra funding?

The possibilities are endless: Expand programs for which there is more demand; hire an MSA guidance/career/college counselor; bring in more visiting artists; add disciplines; provide scholarships for students pursuing advanced training.

Are families that can't pay excluded?

No, our contributions are voluntary. Lack of financial support does not impact a student's participation in MSA, but it is critical that families understand that fundraising is absolutely essential.

What can I do to help?

In addition to family contributions, the school needs the skills, energies and commitment of hundreds of volunteers. Help in your student's discipline, fill out the MSA volunteer form, and answer the call when you are invited to participate. Submit your "Many Hands" contribution early; sign up to solicit items for the online auction; shop the online auction; reach out to family members and encourage them to give. All these actions help support MSA's awards-winning arts program!