m·s·p·c·c

Spring
2017

WHY MSPCC?

BY CHARLES V. SENATORE, MSPCC BOARD MEMBER

Turning points… crossroads… roads not taken. Those moments, knowingly or unknowingly, that chart the future paths of our lives. We all have them. Some may seem subtle. Others are momentous. They all are potential life changers. For some, the turning point might, in the moment, seem mundane. Such as whether I felt like hosting a party in Miami one night in 1982. I ultimately decided to do it, and, as it turned out, I met my wife that night. How different my life would have been if I decided not to have the party. Or if I had chosen to begin my career in a different city.

Or, more ominously, many years ago, one of my dearest friends missed a plane home from the UK, having decided at the last minute to complete some work. The plane she originally was on was the victim of the Lockerbie bombing. I would have never known her.

The point is that all of our lives are largely defined by turning points. They have massive impact. So, what do turning points have to do with MSPCC? For me, it's central to why I chose to join them as a board member. Research overwhelmingly supports what many of us know intuitively: children grow and thrive in a healthy, stable, loving family. We know that children facing abuse and neglect are substantially more likely to experience negative consequences as an adult, including depression, substance abuse, or even early death.

While there is much good work in many charities and agencies focused on relieving current suffering, MSPCC is unique. **We go to the root causes. We are about being that turning point in the life of a family and a child. We are about changing the arc of that child's life.**

How do we do it? We are all about prevention: about diverting children from the road not taken, the road that would, as research increasingly confirms, have led them to a difficult and unnecessarily challenged life. We work with families and at-risk parents. We support them to become more stable. We help steer them, through their challenges, to where their hopes for stability and love can emerge. In doing so, we create the foundation for each child to thrive and grow into a healthy adult. It is our aim to do this with countless families. Over and over and over again. And, ultimately, this is what would make those countless children in those countless families, when they do grow up, able to take that foundation, and use it to build another … and another … and another… healthy family of their own.

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From the Desk of Mary A. McGeown, MSPCC Executive Director

Dear Friends:

I love to bake. I learned from the best, my mother, who rarely followed the recipe, confident in her ability to add just the right ingredient. Eager to create my own goodies, I mastered the Easy Bake Oven, spending afternoons making cookies and cakes with my best friend.

So this week, I paused and smiled at the thought of a grandmother sharing with our staff a video of her grandchildren unwrapping a Christmas gift to reveal an Easy Bake Oven. Squeals of excitement. Jumping. Hugging. Pure Joy!

The story of grandparents and their grandchildren and how they find MSPCC is not uncommon. A mother and father struggling with addiction cannot care for their children. Loving grandparents hug and carry their grandchildren home. It was not the plan for this stage of their life, but it is a turning point for their family.

MSPCC works with all kinds of families—biological, kinship, foster and adoptive—so that children grow up safe, healthy and well-cared for. For this grandmother, as well as thousands of foster and kinship families, MSPCC is there to offer support, training, and resources to help them care for children who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in a new home, anxious to understand why, and in need of a loving adult they can trust.

And we do it with your support. As inspired as I am by the thousands of parents who open their hearts and homes to children, I am as humbled by your generosity. Thank you. And today, I am especially thankful to the person who donated an Easy Bake Oven to the MSPCC Holiday Toy Drive. Your gift put a smile on the faces of two small children and went a long way to restoring a childhood.

Sincerely,

Mary A. McGeown, Executive Director

True Heroes

When a child is placed into DCF custody, a foster parent plays a critical role in leading that child down a different path, one of healing. Adoptive and foster parents choose to take on this challenge, in an effort fueled solely by kindness, to provide this turning point for children. MSPCC's Kid's Net program engages foster parents to identify the information, training, and supports critical to ensuring children in foster care are offered safe, stable, nurturing homes.

On November 16th, MSPCC and the Boston Celtics presented the Heroes Among Us Award to two inspiring foster and adoptive fathers, Joe Sandagato and Tom Scott. Joe and Tom received training to first foster and then later adopt two boys, Malcomb and Anthony, biological brothers who had been separated in prior foster care. Since then, they have grown their family to include Victor, Ashley, and Devin. Joe and Tom are currently in the process of adopting two more boys! As you can imagine, Joe and Tom's lives have become increasingly hectic, but now their home is filled with joy. You have our admiration and respect, Joe and Tom, thank you for being our heroes.

To learn more about foster care and adoption, please call 617-983-5800

BOARD SPOTLIGHT:
Susan Levine joins the MSPCC Board of Advisors

Please join us in welcoming our newest member to the MSPCC Board of Advisors - Susan Levine! Susan is the Head of N.A. Private Equity HR and Talent at Bain Capital. She brings a strong professional skillset and clear connection with MSPCC's mission. When asked, "Why MSPCC?" she states, "I am honored to serve on MSPCC's Board of Advisors and Eliot Community Human Services' Board of Directors. As a mom, I know firsthand how raising children can be both rewarding and daunting so I appreciate the work to support young parents. As a professional, I am fortunate to be in a position to lend my expertise and support as a member of both agencies as they join forces to reach more children and families."

At Bain, Susan is responsible for human capital management for the firm's investment and portfolio operations professionals while also leading the firm's charity, Bain Capital Children's Charity. Susan is a graduate of Harvard Business School, the University of Pennsylvania and Georgetown University. Aside from her support of MSPCC and Eliot, she enjoys spending time with her husband and three sons, cheering on her favorite Boston sports teams (Celtics, Red Sox and Patriots), baking and distance cycling. Welcome Susan, we are so thrilled that you have joined the MSPCC family!

ADVOCACY UPDATE:
FOSTER PARENT CONFERENCE

Mobilizing partners and policy makers to support children is one of the things MSPCC does best. As the lead provider of foster care parent support in Massachusetts, MSPCC is uniquely situated to advocate alongside foster families to improve outcomes for children in foster care. As part of MSPCC's Kid's Net program, we coordinate MAFF, the foster family association, dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for children who cannot live with their biological families and the families who care for them.

Early this winter, MSPCC and MAFF hosted its biannual foster and adoptive family conference, "Fostering an Addiction Free Future," to address the topic of substance abuse and its effects on foster children and families. Substance abuse was cited in more than 30% of the reported cases of abuse and neglect investigated by the Department of Children and Families. The conference provided an opportunity for foster parents to learn from experts how to care for children who have witnessed their parents overdose and strategies to prevent substance use in foster youth.

Preventing substance abuse from affecting families is a priority for MSPCC. Through our work with the Children's Mental Health Campaign, we successfully advocated for universal evidence-based screening and counseling in public schools to detect risk for substance use and address it early. To learn more about supporting MSPCC's work to prevent substance abuse, please visit childrensmentalhealthcampaign.org.

For the past several years, PwC has provided gifts for MSPCC families. This year they outdid themselves, buying and wrapping toys for over 100 children. For more information about corporate volunteer opportunities please contact jclerc@mspcc.org.

INVESTING IN MSPCC THROUGH THE MARY ELLEN SOCIETY

THE MARY ELLEN SOCIETY HONORS SUPPORTERS WHOSE GENEROSITY VIA BEQUESTS OR LIFE INCOME GIFTS ASSURES MSPCC'S FUTURE EXCELLENCE.

Mary Ellen Society members receive invitations to all MSPCC events and donor appreciation gatherings. If you have already included MSPCC in your estate plans, or would like to learn more, please contact Melanie Lima, Director of Development at 617-587-1587, or via email at mlima@mspcc.org.

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UPCOMING EVENTS!

For additional information about our events email jclerc@mspcc.org

BOSTON MARATHON
Team MSPCC

Monday, April 17th

We are looking for runners who have already registered for the 2017 Boston Marathon and who want to make the most of their experience by fundraising for MSPCC.

TURNING POINTS
Annual Dinner

Tuesday, April 4th

Please join us at the Fairmont Copley Plaza as we proudly honor Stephen G. Pagliuca for his 18 years of dedicated service to at-risk youth and leadership at MSPCC.

DRIVE FORE KIDS
Golf Tornament

Monday, June 5th

We welcome you to join us at Wollaston Golf Club in Milton for MSPCC's annual golf tournament!