Save the Date—Let's Celebrate!
by Lyn Balistreri, Director of Fund Development

Question: What do you get when you combine the following:
• A celebration of outstanding educators
• Accomplished honorees
• A chance to mingle with friends old and new
• Appetizers, wine, and a delicious dinner
• A lovely setting
• An opportunity to help those who learn differently succeed
• An admission price of $ZERO

Answer: A heck of a nice evening!

I’m talking about Morrissey-Compton Educational Center’s Fall Scholarship Dinner. And guess what: YOU are invited!

Please save the evening of Thursday, October 10 and plan to join us at the Jennings Pavilion at Holbrook Palmer Park in Atherton. We are proud to present this year’s Outstanding Educators:

Joan M. Bisagno, Ph.D.
Nancy Cushen White, Ed.D.

Between them, our 2019 Honorees have 75 years of experience helping individuals with mental health and learning difficulties. Both come from a group of unsung heroes in our community—those educators who quietly, and from day to day, make a positive impact that can last a lifetime. For 11 years these heroes have been honored and celebrated by Morrissey-Compton Educational Center, which itself was founded by two of them, Carolyn Compton, Ph.D. and Patricia Morrissey, Ed.D., who were honored together in 2015. Our close collaborative relationships with many of our honorees,
A Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the summer edition of Morrissey-Compton’s newsletter! As I look through this issue, I find myself so proud of what our agency does and the many different ways we help students who learn differently, such as our new executive function groups for kids and our advocacy services for juveniles caught in the justice system. I would like to thank all the supporters who turned out for our "Donors Rock!" event last spring (pages 8-9). I’m also proud of how we continue to engage new and existing donors in our fundraising efforts (page 14) and that we have launched a new Smart Giving Program (pages 12-13) that has the potential to be of great value to our supporters. I strongly encourage you to check out the latter and consider contacting our Development Director Lyn Balistreri to find out how giving to Morrissey-Compton, or another cause close to your heart, might also benefit your own financial well-being.

A portion of this issue will be of interest to college-bound students and their parents. This was prompted by the recent college admission scandals and our desire to instill hope in students and families about preparing for college entrance exams and attending the “right” college for the student as opposed to what “looks good” on paper. “Does the College You Attend Predict Success?” (pages 4-5) examines whether attending an elite university is so important that it is worth paving the way for admission by any means necessary, and whether the college one attends is an indicator of future prosperity. As you will read, in most cases the data does not support the perception that attending elite colleges is the only path to success.

This is not the first time I have written about the undue stress that the American educational system places on students. In our winter-spring 2018 newsletter (you can find this article on our website under “Resources/Articles”), my article highlighted the need to consider alternative options for higher education that might be a better fit for a student’s unique abilities and gifts.

My main takeaway from all of this is, again, tremendous pride for all that Morrissey-Compton has done to help students overcome their learning differences and achieve more than they ever dreamed possible. For some, this did involve graduating from an elite college; for most, simply graduating from high school, and having the door open to attend college, was enough to put them on the road to success. I never tire of hearing their stories and witnessing their evolution into adulthood.

I hope that you are enjoying your summer so far and that we see you this fall at our fundraising dinner! And in life, an additional way to honor your favorite outstanding educators is to support our Scholarship Fund. Gifts in any amount are encouraged before, during, and after the event, and because tickets are free, all gifts are 100% tax deductible.

With Warmest Wishes,

John T. Brentar, Ph.D.

John T. Brentar, Ph.D.

Cover Story Continued

Celebrate Outstanding Educators this October!

who have included practicing clinicians, heads of schools, and classroom teachers have enabled countless individuals who walk through our doors to enjoy a comprehensive network of support that gives them an extra edge in conquering their academic struggles.

That’s the Ticket!

We want all our clients as well as local educators to feel welcome to attend regardless of their financial circumstances, which is why we do not charge for tickets. However, since Morrissey-Compton’s Scholarship Program has also played a key role in providing students with learning differences with the help that they need to do well in school and in life, an additional way to honor your favorite outstanding educators is to support our Scholarship Fund. Gifts in any amount are encouraged before, during, and after the event, and because tickets are free, all gifts are 100% tax deductible.

Seeking Sponsors

We are looking for individuals and businesses who might be interested in helping us underwrite the costs of the event, which will allow more money to go into our Scholarship Fund in 2020. We offer Sponsorship Packages for various levels of gifts. If you are interested in sponsoring, please contact Lyn Balistreri at (608) 396-8953.

Free Online Registration

Get to Know Our 2019 Honorees

Dr. Joan Bisagno was the assistant vice provost and director of the Office of Accessible Education and the Schwab Learning Center at Stanford for 20 years. She wrote the proposal and established the center with endowment funding from Charles and Helen Schwab. Before that, she performed psychoeducational diagnostic assessments and provided psychotherapy services at Children’s Health Council. Joan holds a doctorate in Clinical Psychology, a Master’s in Learning Disabilities, and several teaching credentials. She has authored or co-authored articles on dyslexia, assistive technology, and college students with disabilities. She is currently continuing her twentieth year as an expert panel reviewer for Educational Testing Services; is a disability consultant to the Minerva Schools at Keck Graduate Institute and to the Stanford Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Program; is a board member of Dyslexic Advantage; and maintains a private consulting practice.

Dr. Nancy Cushen White is a Board-Certified Educational Therapist, Licensed Dyslexia Therapist, and Certified Academic Language Therapist with both a Master’s and Doctorate in Education. She has received multiple awards for her contributions to the field of literacy education by several prominent organizations including the International Dyslexia Association. Besides being a clinical professor in the Division of Adolescent & Young Adult Medicine at UCSF, Nancy is a literacy intervention consultant and case manager at the Lexicon Reading Center in Dubai, UAE; a Slingerland teacher training course director at the Slingerland Institute for Literacy; and a consultant at the Dyslexia Evaluation & Remediation Clinic. Nancy has served on the boards and volunteered with numerous organizations including The International Dyslexia Association, Parent’s Education Network, SAFEVoices, California Department of Education, and the International Multisensory Structured Language Educational Council.

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Special thanks to CuisineStyle

by Pamela Keith

Make no mistake: Just because this event is free for attendees does not mean that it is not done right! Attendees can expect to enjoy a cocktail hour with fine wines and appetizers at a beautiful venue, followed by a delicious dinner provided by our friend Pamela Keith, who has catered many events for us in the past and always delivers a top-notch menu!

FREE ONLINE REGISTRATION for this event will be live at morrissey-compton.org in mid-August. If you would like to save a space, please email your name, address, and phone number to lyn. balistreri@morrcomp.org.
Does the College You Attend Predict Success?

by John T. Brentar, Ph.D.

The recent news of college admission fraud has been jarring to a number of people both in the field of education and among families. Although many people have suspected that influence (such as family legacy) can impact admission to specific colleges, the extent to which some families tried to game the system has been surprising. One of the parents was quoted as saying that he wanted “a roadmap for success as it relates to (our daughter) and getting her into a school other than ASU.” This raises the question posed in the title: Does the college you attend predict success?

Intrinsic Advantages

A 2017 survey conducted by The Harvard Crimson found that the incoming class of 2021 was made up of over 29% legacy students (i.e., those who had a parent or grandparent who had also attended the university). They also found that applicants with a Harvard legacy were three times more likely to get into the school than those without. Legacy students’ odds for admission were more favorable than students who had GPAs of 4.0; earned 2400 on their SATs; or held top leadership positions on newspapers, sports teams, or student councils. Family wealth was also positively correlated with admission.

Wealthy students are most common at elite universities. Based on analyses of anonymous tax filings and tuition records, The New York Times reported in 2017 that 38 colleges across the country had more students from the top 1% of the income bracket than the entire bottom 60%. Approximately one in four of the wealthiest students attend an elite college—universities that typically cluster toward the top of annual rankings. In contrast, less than one-half of 1% of children from the bottom fifth of American families attend an elite college; less than half attend any college at all.

Technology (MIT). This goal was a self-generated definition of success and not one supported or voiced by her parents. However, her parents were proud of Alexandra and her accomplishments. They described her as “a happy girl, so motivated and so just full of life.” She was also a straight-A student, class officer, and a member of the robotics team.

One morning, after making her bed and cleaning her room, Alexandra walked to a highway overpass and jumped. What her parents, teachers, counselors, and friends did not know was that she was haunted by inner demons. Her parents found amid her belongings two journals comprised of “two-hundred pages of self-loathing and despair.” One entry said, “What will get me into MIT? Valedictorian, first robotics captain, 100 plus hours service award, model U.N., attend both conferences, win.”

While setting high goals for oneself is not intrinsically harmful, guidance counselor Scott White noted that “There’s no balance on these goals. Not every person can reach them. Whether that child can reach them, it’s sort of unknown. But if she did, there would be another goal beyond that. You know that and I know that.” White added, “We have a culture that makes kids think that if they are not perfect, they are less than good.”

Academic Achievement

Had she lived, Alexandra may or may not have gained admission to and ultimately graduated from MIT. But what we can say with reasonable certainty is that her choice of university would likely have had little bearing on her future success. That would have depended on Alexandra herself.

A study conducted at Rice University found that a student’s sense of belonging, growth mindset, and personal goals and values are important predictors of success once a student is enrolled at a university.

One of the researchers, Dr. Fred Oswald, reported that these three competencies were important predictors of students’ college persistence and success as measured by grades, retention, and graduation.

He defines sense of belonging as the extent to which students feel that they belong in college, fit in well, and are socially integrated. Approximately 85% of studies measuring students’ sense of belonging demonstrated a positive impact on their college GPAs.

Growth mindset is defined as the college students’ beliefs that their own intelligence is not a fixed entity, but rather a malleable quality that college can help improve. Seventy-five percent of the studies measuring students’ growth mindset showed that it had a positive impact on their college GPAs.

Establishing personal goals and values linked to a future outcome or achievement in the future was the third critical variable. Approximately 83% of the studies measuring personal goals showed this characteristic as having a positive impact on students’ final course grades.

Beyond University

The reason Ivy-League graduates generally do better than state-school graduates is not because of their Ivy League education. The critical predictors of success are intrinsic factors such as talents, motivation, and intelligence.

In his book, “Everybody Lies,” Seth Stephens-Davidowitz affirms that the college a student attends may not matter in terms of future success. He points to a paper published in 2002 by two economists, Stacy Dale at Mathematica Policy Research and Alan B. Krueger from Princeton University, which found that elite colleges “tend to accept students with higher earnings capacity.”

Dale and Krueger gathered data on thousands of high-school students: where they applied to college, where they were accepted, where they attended, family background, and income as adults. They looked specifically at the 1995 earnings of individuals from similar backgrounds who had been accepted by Ivy-League schools and were college freshmen in 1976. They compared those who did attend Ivy-League schools to those who went elsewhere and found that the two groups had similar incomes later in life, which supports the assertion that students who are equally talented will do equally well regardless of alma mater. In 2011, the researchers studied an even larger sample by reviewing the 2007 earnings of about 19,000 adults who were freshmen in 1989 and found similar results.

Background Matters

Interestingly, and by contrast, the outcome for students from low-income families appears to be different. A 2017 study conducted by Raj Chetty and associates at the National Bureau of Economic Research found that that low-income students appeared to reap greater benefit from attending an elite university. Specifically, they found that lower-income students at an elite school have a “much higher chance of reaching the [top 1%] of the earnings distribution” than those at an excellent public university.

Therefore, saying that one’s choice of college doesn’t matter requires a more nuanced interpretation. Although low-income students often face significant hurdles in being accepted by a top-tier college, once accepted, it might just give them an extra edge towards future success.
How Parents Can Create an Environment that Feeds Success with College Admission Exams
by Emily Elrod Black, Alchemy Test Prep

Preparing for standardized tests is a stressful experience for many students. And, as the recent college application scandal highlights, parents can also experience a tremendous amount of stress and investment in the process.

How parents conduct themselves during this time sets the tone for their children’s experience, and the power of a grounded, supportive parent should not be underestimated. As an SAT tutor who specializes in helping students achieve elite scores, I see firsthand how my students with low levels of anxiety and high levels of self-confidence have the easiest time raising their scores. Students with high anxiety and low self-confidence, by contrast, are often stunted by the weight of the pressure they feel.

Manage Your Own Stress
If your child is struggling with test anxiety and you are also feeling stressed by their performance, it is best for them if you can take steps to decrease your stress. Anxiety can have a significant impact on a student’s ability to process information, make decisions, and learn. It is important that an anxious student has a calm, supportive environment, rather than one that exacerbates their situation.

Motivate with Hope, Not Fear
While fear is a strong motivator for a lot of people, hope is obvious: Fear makes students anxious, and when they’re really anxious, they don’t perform as well. Hope and desire, on the other hand, can inspire students to work just as hard while also imbuing them with a sense of confidence. Anxiety is a delicate thing—a small amount can help students focus, but too much can impair them.

Set Skill Goals, Not Score Goals
Fixing on your student’s score is not helpful. I cannot emphasize this enough. Scores naturally fluctuate with focus, time of day, and fatigue. I recommend that you do not go on the emotional roller coaster of following your student’s every practice test score. It is exhausting and pointless. Instead, reframe progress in terms of skill goals. For example, each week your child should set specific goals for the skills, habits, or concepts they plan to work on that week. It could be anything from learning the comma rules to working on pacing for reading the passages. When you want to check in to see how it’s going with your child, ask about how the skills are coming along. If your child has made progress with a skill, they have improved at the test.

Measuring progress based on skill goals is more concrete than measuring progress based on scores. Also, it reinforces for your student that the path to a better score is in working on the specific things they’re struggling with.

In general, I think of the parent’s role as creating an environment that feeds success. They can do this by providing the “nutrients” their child needs to thrive in the application process. I have never met a student who experienced their parent’s stress as helpful, so stress would be an example of something that is non-nutritive. What each child needs may vary, but managing your stress, motivating with hope instead of fear, and setting skill goals all provide a great foundation from which you can help your child achieve the most that they can.

Common Misconceptions of How to Prepare for College Admission Exams
by Emily Elrod Black, Alchemy Test Prep

Misconception One: All test prep books are created equal. Unfortunately, this couldn’t be further from the truth. You should be using test prep books that feature real (official) practice tests—that’s it. You can purchase a book of official tests, or you can get them online for free. The reason why you should only practice on real tests is because no one has managed to mimic the tests very well (I can easily recognize a “fake” SAT or ACT when I take one), and a critical part of preparing for the SAT or ACT is becoming familiar with the actual test. Also, please be wary of test prep companies that write their own practice tests—these tests are often very different from the real thing and do not provide you with helpful practice.

Misconception Two: The best way to prepare is to take a bunch of practice tests. Students often come to me because they’ve taken a lot of practice tests and seen no improvement in their scores. As an SAT and ACT tutor, it makes perfect sense why this happens: Taking practice tests doesn’t teach you what you don’t know. Instead of churning through test after test, I would recommend using my four-step approach: take a test, analyze your mistakes by pinpointing the causes of all of your errors, learn the concepts or skills you’ve discovered you’re missing, and then take another test. The path to a better score involves repeating that process until you’ve eliminated all of your mistakes and mastered the relevant content.

Misconception Three: I should measure my progress with my weekly scores. The reality is, scores wax and wane with fatigue, time of day, distraction, etc. Making meaning out of every score can be exhausting, stressful, and often misleading. A student who takes a practice test at night after a long week at school, for example, may get a score far worse than is normal for her. Instead of measuring progress with your score, I would recommend measuring it in terms of the skills you’ve been working on. Each week, set clear skill goals—what are you going to work on? Then, at the end of the week, if you’ve reached your skill goal, you have made progress. The path to a better score is 100% about skill development, so let the way you think about progress reflect that.
Our Supporters ROCK!

Our Donor Thank You Event was One for the Ages—ALL Ages!

We had SO much fun at Morrissey-Compton’s Donors ROCK!, an event we held to thank our loyal supporters on Thursday, April 25th! It took place at The Great Highway, which as you can see is a spectacular venue with lots of gorgeous classic cars and memorabilia. Milkshakes and sliders were served, everyone walked away with a gift, and the atmosphere was stunning! We are so very grateful to all those who participated, and especially to the Yvonne and Angelo Sangiacomo Family for underwriting this special evening, Cuisine Style by Pamela Keith for providing the delicious food, Kathie Sheehy for volunteering, and on-site Event Director Rozalyn Mendence for her help in planning a wonderful and memorable experience.
Creating An Escape Route from the School-to-Prison Pipeline

by Mark Westerfield, Psy.D.

In an effort to make a difference at the intersection of the school system and the juvenile justice system, Morrissey-Compton Educational Center partners with San Mateo County Juvenile Probation Department through Project YEA (Youth Educational Advocates). Project YEA was developed in response to educational advocacy to youth on probation and their families. This distinctive program can provide a corrective experience to youth who have had negative interactions with the special education system at school and assure them that their families, teachers, probation officers, mentors, and counselors all support their academic success.

Juvenile Justice Statistics

The National Center for Education Statistics reports that about 14% of all public school students receive special education for a variety of disabilities including learning disabilities, attention difficulties, and mental health disorders. However, the U.S. Department of Education has estimated the rates of disabilities among youth in the juvenile justice system to be as high as 80%. A study published in the Journal of Learning Disabilities of nearly 1,400 ninth graders entering school in the lives of children.

The Role of Our Schools

Schools can contribute to the path towards the juvenile justice system in what has been termed the school-to-prison pipeline. School suspension is a strong predictor of future contact with the juvenile justice system and decreases the likelihood that children will graduate high school. In turn, achieving high school graduation is a crucial event in the lives of children. The 2003 Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report said that high school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely to be arrested in their lifetime, and nearly 70% of the incarcerated population did not graduate high school. The data is even more stark for minority youth. In 2008, Columbia University Professor of Sociology Bruce Western and colleagues found that 37% of Black men between the ages of 20-34 without a high school diploma were behind bars. These racial disparities often start in the school system as well. Studies published by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and Psychology in the Schools found that Black and Latinx youth are three times as likely to be suspended as Caucasian students.

Schools are also in a unique position to provide support and opportunities to at-risk youth. In particular, youth who qualify for special education are entitled to receive extra services such as 1:1 or small group support, smaller classes, accommodations in the classroom, and school-based counseling. Sadly, for many families, accessing these services and navigating the special education process is a significant challenge, which can be exacerbated by school districts that are reluctant to identify students with disabilities and provide services due to limited resources.

Unfortunately, it is often the children and families most in need of support that fall through the cracks.

How Project YEA Helps

After being referred to Project YEA, a youth’s educational records are reviewed, and both the youth and their parents or guardians are interviewed. This process allows Morrissey-Compton’s staff psychologists (myself and Laura Chyou, Ph.D.) enough information to determine whether a student is receiving adequate support in school. Often, students with clear signs of learning disabilities or mental health disorders are not receiving any support in school, and we work with the youth’s family and school district to request an assessment for special education eligibility. In other situations, we attend IEP meetings for youth already identified as special education students to advocate for their needs or help them transfer to a school program that is a better fit.

Project YEA is proud to have served over 85 students and their families this year, with several achieving high school diplomas and many more receiving support for previously unidentified disabilities.

A complete list of the references cited in this article is available at morrissey-compton.org/articles.php.

EF Groups

EF Pilot Study Shows Great Potential!

By Meredith McEvoy, M.Ed. and Erin Powers, M.Ed. BCET

This past January, Morrissey-Compton Educational Center conducted a pilot study at Redeemer Lutheran School in Redwood City teaching an executive function (EF) course to sixth through eighth graders.

Over the eight weeks of the course, students learned about the six main areas of EF, including: goal setting, planning, prioritizing, flexibility, organizing, and relaxation. In addition to studying the overall concepts involved in EF, we aided students 1:1 with their individual challenges. We spent class time learning about types of memory, study strategies, and focus techniques, as well as organizing binders, cleaning out lockers, and looking at how to keep track of assignments.

Before the course began, we administered questionnaires to the eight students enrolled in the class so they could rate themselves in several areas of EF. In addition, each student had a parent and a teacher fill out the same questionnaire, indicating strengths and challenges for the individual student. After the course was complete, the students and the same parents and teachers filled out the questionnaire again to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

Practical Methodology

An integral component of the class was the EF resource binder that each student built throughout the course. The binder was divided into the different areas of EF. It was the student’s responsibility to organize their handouts and projects into the different categories and to keep the binder organized. It served as a practical application for the skills they were being taught. At the end of the course, they were given the binders to keep in hopes that they will refer them as they continue their academic careers.

Positive Response

The students in our class were hardworking and open to learning new skills. We were impressed with their growth over the course. Several students exhibited some noteworthy “ah ha!” moments that we wish we could have caught on tape! For example, after organizing his binder, one student exclaimed, “My binder has never looked this good! I’m never going to let it get messy again!” The students were trend candidates for this class because it was evident that they wanted to be there. They asked relevant questions and were engaged in the class activities. And of course, it didn’t hurt when we brought in treats!

Promising Results

Between the small group setting, supportive environment, and individualized mentoring, the students were successful in bolstering their EF skills. The data collected from questionnaires illustrated that the students were able to generalize many of the skills that they learned. While there were still some discrepancies between the student, parent, and teacher ratings, a noteworthy trend we observed is that students rated themselves as improving over time and having more self-confidence after the course was finished. When the students were asked if they would recommend this course to a friend, all of them replied yes. One student elaborated, “Yes, [this class] is helpful for kids who have problems organizing, [being] flexible, starting homework, and turning in work on time.”

Our plan for the future is to continue teaching these types of courses in local Bay Area schools, using grant funding where possible.
Philanthropy is deeply personal.

In today's world, there are countless needs and multiple agencies to address them—from whom, every day, we receive multiple 'asks' that seem to speak directly to us.

Some causes have almost universal appeal. Who wouldn’t want to help a child with cancer, or feed a hungry person? Others causes, such as preserving a local park—or helping individuals who learn differently—will likely appeal most to those whom they directly affect.

We might give to a cause simply because it catches us at the right moment. For instance, you might decide to support a friend’s online birthday fundraiser, put some change in Santa’s kettle, or give towards a so-called “checkout charity” at your local supermarket.

These fundraising strategies are wonderful ways to support a nonprofit’s annual fund, the money it raises on an ongoing basis throughout the year to help fund its day-to-day needs. On the other hand, they are less likely than others to generate a personal connection to its mission that we are willing for us to continue that support on an ongoing basis, for we must feel enough cost of our groceries to support a worthy cause. But it won’t bite hard into our budgets—to round up the change in Santa’s kettle, or give towards a so-called birthday fundraiser, put some change in Santa’s kettle, or give towards a so-called “checkout charity” at your local supermarket.

Impact

That is undeniable. 37 years, Morrissey-Compton’s innovators, and healers—after perhaps even improving it!

A bold statement, I admit. Individuals who call the Bay Area home are among the savviest donors to be found anywhere. I have no doubt that most of our loyal donors have skilled financial planners to help them manage their wealth, whether that be modest, vast, or (like me) imaginary.

That said, most financial planners are NOT specialists in Charitable Giving Strategies. While they may be wonderful at helping you manage your money, their goal is to protect and grow your net worth. That is where ‘Smart Giving’ comes in, and why it is so exciting to be launching this program at Morrissey-Compton. Our goal is to help you find creative ways to manage your assets and accounts that can benefit both you and the causes you care about—whatever those might be.

What Do We Mean By “Smart Giving?”

Here is a question for you: Were you able to itemize your charitable gift deductions last year, or did the new standard deduction make it unnecessary for the first time? If it is the latter, you are well-positioned to discover how you might become a Smart Giver!

Smart Giving is when you learn how to leverage your financial resources to benefit your favorite nonprofit organization(s). Connecting with a financial planning specialist who has special expertise in charitable giving is likely the most effective way to accomplish this goal. Your individual wishes and potential outcomes might include:

• Increase the impact of your gift without necessarily giving more
• Minimize capital gains, income, and estate taxes
• Prevent taxation of assets going to your heirs
• Guarantee retirement income
• Integrate Long Term Care Planning
• Preserve your assets
• Free up or leverage unproductive assets
• Become a part of a legacy society

Program Origins

In January, we invited our loyal supporters to participate in an online survey to share with us their vision for Morrissey-Compton’s future (we are still collecting responses, and I would love to share the results with you in a future newsletter). But one thing that became clear to us right away was that if we wished to position ourselves for maximum success in the coming years it was time to launch a planned giving program that incorporated many different ways to give, including a legacy society.

For the past few months, I have been working with a local Certified Planned Giving Specialist who has generously given his time to help Morrissey-Compton create and launch our Smart Giving program. His guidance has been invaluable, and if you are interested in setting up a consultation with him, he is happy to do so free of charge.

However, the first step to becoming a Smart Giver is to get in touch with me so that we might discuss your goals and potential resources. My contact info is in the box above.

So, what do you think…shall we make this a win-win for both you and the causes you care about?

Let’s talk about it!

*Morrissey-Compton Educational Center does not endorse any one financial planner, will receive no financial gain from facilitating contact with a financial planner, and may or may not ultimately benefit from a consultation.

Give from the Heart—But Why Not Give SMART!

by Lyn Balistreri, Director of Fund Development

Our Case for Support

Although this article is meant to get one to think about charitable giving in general, we would be remiss if we did not point out that, although its focus is very specific, Morrissey-Compton Educational Center has a leg up over many other agencies in how its annual fund ties into its long-term impact.

Our annual fund is heavily centered around filling an immediate need, which is raising money to provide full and partial scholarships for families who would not otherwise be able to afford our services. But the long-term effect of those services is limitless, because when an individual gains access to those services, they become better-equipped to become successful in life. These individuals are tomorrow’s leaders, teachers, innovators, and healers—after 37 years, Morrissey-Compton’s long-term impact on many lives is undeniable.

So—if your goal is to have an impact on future generations… then choosing to include Morrissey-Compton Educational Center in your Smart Giving may well be the ideal investment!
Heidi Wheeler, Psy.D.

Dr. Heidi Wheeler has a background in family psychology and psychoeducational assessment. Upon earning a B.A. in Psychology with high honors from the University of California, Berkeley, Heidi pursued her M.A. and Psy.D. from Azusa Pacific University, where she was recognized for her interdisciplinary work and commitment to applying her clinical knowledge in an international context during her two-year postdoctoral internship at the American University of Beirut Medical Center. As part of her clinical training, Heidi also completed rotations in the child trauma and child psychological assessment clinics at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. She served as the head of the assessment department at Smart Kids with Individual Learning Differences (SKILD) in Mansourieh, Lebanon, where she trained and supervised a team of clinical and educational psychologists in psychoeducational assessment and therapy. She is also a respected writer and speaker throughout the Levant and has consulted on matters of war and refugee trauma in international contexts. Heidi recognizes the importance of and is dedicated to providing technically sound, trauma-informed evaluations for ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse children and adolescents. Why? Because if she is not working, she enjoys cooking, reading fiction, and traveling.

Morrissey-Compton Welcomes Three New Psychology Post-Doctoral Fellows This Fall

Julia Clark, Ph.D.

Dr. Julia Clark has interests in psychological assessment and in working with children with disruptive behavior disorder and their families. After receiving her B.A. in Psychology from Whitman College, she worked as a research project manager in the Psychology Department at Stanford for two years. She then attended the University of New Orleans and received her M.S. in Applied Developmental Psychology. Julia completed her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Louisiana State University and her pre-doctoral internship at the University of Utah Neuropsychiatric Institute. During her internship year, she provided therapy and assessment services to adults, children, and adolescents hospitalized for psychiatric concerns and worked in a partial hospitalization treatment program with children and adolescents. Julia is trained in using a range of evidence-based treatments and assessment measures for both children and adolescents including DBT, DBT-AC, motivational interviewing, behavioral management training, and functional family therapy. Throughout her graduate training, Julia has worked across a variety of settings including a pediatric clinic, an inpatient psychiatric unit for adolescents, a summer day treatment program for children with ADHD, and the departmental psychological services center, completing comprehensive psychological evaluations. She is a Bay Area native and is glad to be back.

Zach Rosenberg, Psy.D.

Dr. Zach Rosenberg specializes child and adolescent therapy and assessment. Zach earned his Doctorate at the PGSP-Stanford Psy.D. Consortium, where he received clinical training providing therapy and psychological assessment to children and adolescents in Bay Area schools and community mental health centers such as CHAC and StanVista. As a doctorial student, he also worked in the Prevention and Intervention Lab at Stanford University’s Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, where he completed diagnostic assessments for adolescents with mood symptoms. Zach recently completed his predoctoral internship at the APA-accredited Southern Arizona Psychology Internship Center. There, he continued his therapy and assessment training with children and adolescents in a community mental health setting, and additionally worked at the University of Arizona’s Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques Center as a therapist for college students with learning challenges. Zach routinely utilizes a Cognitive Behavior Therapy approach and is especially interested in treating children and adolescents with depression, anxiety, and trauma. He is a Bay Area native whose hobbies include watching Warriors, Sharks, and Giants games; hiking; and listening to music.

Thank You for Funding $100k Worth of DREAMS!

How you might ask, can one quantify dreams in dollars? Use your imagination—that’s what we do!

Our annual spring crowdfunding effort, Fund DREAMS, Support MORRISSEY-COMPTON raised more than $100,000 to help those with learning, emotional, behavioral, and social difficulties. The dreams that are funded by your donor dollars are those of the individuals and families who need our help but cannot afford to pay full price for services.

The dreams that are funded are as varied as the individuals who walk through our doors, but they are always worthwhile. Here is what $100,000 can do:

- Give nine children the opportunity to discover their strengths, build self-esteem, and make lifelong friends by attending Challenge Summer School.
- Eleven individuals can discover the nature of their learning differences—and gain access to the tools that can help overcome them—by receiving psychoeducational evaluations.
- Help young people resolve self-esteem issues, social/emotional problems, and ineffective behaviors by providing 73 hours of therapy.
- Enable students to do better academically and enjoy the same opportunities as their peers with 97 hours of tutoring.
- Provide 150 parents of children with learning differences with valuable strategies to help their children succeed through free Parent Education classes.

We are so very grateful to each and every person who participated in this effort: to our donors, for giving so generously; to our staff, board members, and other friends for fundraising with their networks on social media and through email; and to our sponsors, shown above, for providing such wonderful incentives to motivate others!

If you are interested in helping Morrissey-Compton Educational Center create and implement a vision for our future, then you might just be a fit for our Board of Directors! We are looking for passionate, energetic, and innovative new Directors to further strengthen our Board and help guide us in meeting the many challenges—financial, technological, social, and philanthropic—that will be inevitable in years to come. Our goal is to continue to strengthen a team whose members represent a variety of professional and personal viewpoints and who will work together to ensure that we will continue to provide the very best quality services to individuals and families, as well as champion us in our role as advocates for those who learn differently.

For info regarding staff presentations, contact Sue Garber, M.A. at (650) 322-5910 ex.116 or sue.garber@morcomp.org.

Seeking New Board Members

If you are interested in becoming a Board member, contact John Brentar at (650) 322-5910 ext.102.

Expertise Offered

Bring a Speaker to Your school, parent group, or other organization! Morrissey-Compton’s staff experts are qualified to speak on many subjects related to education and learning differences. We offer a variety of topics to choose from, or you can request topics customized to fit your needs.
It is the mission of the Morrissey-Compton Educational Center to empower those with learning, behavioral, and social-emotional challenges to succeed throughout their educational journey. In a supportive environment, Morrissey-Compton Educational Center, a nonprofit, provides the highest quality diagnostic, intervention, and treatment services through innovative programs with scholarship opportunities.