

Annual Report 2015–2016

**Be**

generous



# At Eagle Hill Southport School:

**Our vision** is a world where people with language-based learning differences and ADHD are embraced for their strengths and potential, and where all teachers have access to training in best educational practices and current research.

**Our mission** is to provide transformative educational experiences that have lifelong impact on our students as well as thought leadership that engages the learning differences community.



FROM THE HEADMASTER

# You Make Our Future

Dear EHSS Community,

Just like our 102 unique students, each and every gift that is made to our school makes a difference. Thank you to all the donors who give financially to support our life-changing mission and vision. The impact of your contributions and our appreciation of them are felt well beyond the publication of the names listed in this report.

Your participation represents your personal EHSS experience, your dedication to the school, and your belief in our future.

I often say to our current families, “You’re going to wish that your child is still a student here next year, in two years, in three years,” because each day, we endeavor to create a better student experience. That mantra speaks to our future. We’re continually assessing and reflecting on the daily experiences of our students. We invest in professional development for our faculty, who serve as the foremost resource for our families and community in this evolving world of learning disabilities.

You make this possible through acts of kindness and generosity that make a difference in the lives of every EHSS student, every day. Our school is stronger because you care. We asked you to “Be generous,” and you said YES!



Benjamin Powers

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# Sullie's Success

*Alumna parent Amanda Desmond shared her daughter Sullivan's life journey since she transitioned from Eagle Hill Southport School seven years ago. When we hear such moving and heartfelt anecdotes about our alumni, we want to share these motivating stories of success with our EHSS community who has experienced—or might be about to experience—similar circumstances.*

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Dear Eagle Hill Southport,

My daughter Sullivan attended Eagle Hill for her 5th and 6th grade years. Her struggle with academics beat away at her confidence and caused her naturally anxious mind to spiral downward. The every-night turmoil caused great strain on her and the rest of our family.

From the first day at EHSS, I noticed her hair and clothes were a bit neater, and she walked with a bolder stride, and more important, she wore a smile on her face. As the year went on, Sullivan knew what was helping her learn. With a gentle tap on the table, she trained her attention to come back to her subject and focus again on learning. She no longer asked for my help on her homework. She was becoming independent.

The extra hour of mandatory sports at the end of every school day seemed pointless to me because some kids, including my daughter, didn't have an interest

in sports. But when she got her time on the court, she owned it. This experience helped her earn a spot on the varsity high school team a couple of years later as a freshman—with four varsity letters eventually to follow. Now I attribute the EHSS team with sparking her interest in cross-country, pushing her to compete for the high school, and giving her the drive, the fortitude and speed to carry her all the way to nationals in her junior year.

Sullivan attended high school at Ludlowe in Fairfield. She has at least four different learning disabilities, including ADHD and slow processing, but she owns every gorgeous one of them! She is accomplished and poised, and we still tap the table to bring her attention back to focus on her work.

Sullivan applied early to six colleges. Her dream school—an incredible academic reach for her—was Gettysburg College. Finally, one afternoon a big orange and blue envelope showed up in the mail. Every struggle and accomplishment she ever faced streamed down in the tears on her face. "Welcome to the team," it said. Following that one great acceptance were five others.

Sullie has accomplished more than I ever dreamed was possible before she attended Eagle Hill. I want to thank every kind and patient teacher who ever worked with her.

—Amanda Desmond



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Sullivan is currently a freshman at Gettysburg College. Her college application essay was a heartfelt yet realistic reflection of her LD journey from kindergarten through 12th grade. Her essay's conclusion, simply stated and reflective of her kindergarten diagnosis: "Not bad for someone who was never expected to read."

*Sullie (far left) with younger siblings Shay and Hayes and family dog Tucker.*

# One Man's Great Influence

We have a celebrity in our midst, and every day, it's abundantly clear why this man is respected and heralded as a person who does all things right.

He has all the cool connections for any curious, young mind—access to small and narrow pathways in the school attic, insider ties to the local fire department, and is the keeper of the school's fish tank. He knows everyone's name, and no matter the day, week, month, season, or weather, he always greets you with a warm smile. It's Mario Fiallo!

Mario has been our facilities manager for more than 17 years and is undoubtedly one of the most dedicated and talented staff members on our EHSS team. He keeps the building in tip-top shape and manages all our many events with seamless effort. While we all know the wonderful things he does, last fall, one of the school's vendors who works closely with Mario was personally moved by his kind and good ways enough to purchase and dedicate a plaque in his honor. The plaque says it all:

## Locker 22

*There's much to be fixed between the windows and walls,  
but you never flinch when maintenance calls!  
Thank you, Mario, for all that you do for our school.  
Donated anonymously in gratitude.*

Continuing in the name of giving and honor, a year prior, Mario also was inspired to purchase and donate a locker plaque in the name of his father, who guided and influenced him all his life.

## Locker 84

*In Memory of Mario's Father  
Vincente Fiallo  
1923–2011*



*A locker "belongs" to a student for their entire tenure at our school, and when they leave, their plaque is given to them at our End-of-Year Program as a special remembrance of their experience here.*

*We continue to offer EHSS families the unique opportunity to sponsor a locker with your honoree's name.*

*If you are interested, please contact Emily Brady in Development for more details. Please note that these gifts are invested in the school's endowment fund and earmarked for maintenance and upkeep of the lockers.*



# Potluck Supper 2016

The annual Potluck Supper brings current parents, board members, staff, and faculty together to socialize and exchange their LD journeys before, during, and after EHSS.

Co-chairs Michele Cosentino, mother of Uzi Greenman, and Cheryl Guibone, mother of Wyatt Guibone-Goldsmith, transformed Tavormina Hall into a warm and beautifully decorated dining room to welcome and celebrate friends and fully embrace the school's "better together" theme. The evening featured a feast of delicious dinner dishes and desserts, prepared by parents, and were as varied and delightful as our families.

Headmaster Ben Powers welcomed guests and introduced the speakers: Julie Papp, EHSS's Social Studies & Science Department Head; Kristen Caruso, mother of current student Sarah; and Jake Sussman, an alumnus who attended EHSS from 2007 to 2009 and is currently a junior at Roger Williams University.

There is never a dry eye in the room by the end of the evening, and we thank all our speakers for sharing their personal journeys; as always, they affirm that we all relate on different levels.







## Jake's Journey

I stand before you tonight as an ABE student. Not a Disabled student. My name is Jake Sussman. Let's jump back to 6th grade, when I was thought to be quote/unquote "disabled."

Negative labels are destructive. Being labeled "disabled" was an absolute disaster for me. I became paranoid and was misunderstood. Most important, my world was full of fear, anxiety, and stress.

Eagle Hill saved my life. The teachers at Eagle Hill went all the way back to square one. They held my hand and took me through the learning process one step at a time. They recreated my world.

They gave me confidence and eliminated fear, anxiety, and stress from the equation. For the first time in my life, I learned something. I learned something every day over and over again until I was ready to take the next step.

It's the school that changed my life. I became a confident student who was given the tools to pursue my education and develop essential life skills that made me who I am today.

After my time at Eagle Hill, I attended the Forman School, a college-preparatory boarding and day school in Litchfield, Connecticut, that caters to students who learn differently. Using my skills developed at Eagle Hill, I was able to implement them at Forman and continue to be successful. And today, I am attending Roger Williams University.

I'm at Roger Williams because I embraced my difference in learning and used it as an asset because I have developed the skills necessary to make choices that are in concert with my goals. I have to advocate for myself. Having an LD in a mainstream school is not easy, but not impossible.

There is my story. But there are other stories. There are the stories of the parents. There are parents who are thinking about their sons or daughters who don't know whether they can get through this year, let alone all of middle school, high school, and college.

I am here to tell you that Eagle Hill WILL get them there... THIS is the place. This is the place that builds strong foundations.

Note: This is a portion of Jake's original speech. For his full speech, please watch the video at YouTube.com and search Jacob Sussman Keynote Address.

- 1 Evening speaker Kristen Caruso with Eileen and Bill O'Brien and Kristen's father, Tom Hopkins
- 2 Taylor Cotaling, Katie Loiacono, and Bianca Cenatiempo
- 3 Steve Sylvestro and evening speaker Jake Sussman T'09

- 4 Pam Michalowski, Maureen Vlak, and Carol Glassmeyer
- 5 Evening speaker Julie Papp and Heather Humphries
- 6 Potluck Supper 2016 co-chairs Cheryl Guibone and Michele Cosentino

- 7 George Clark, Jr., and Virginia Cargill
- 8 Lea Sylvestro, Ben Powers, and Melanie Higgins
- 9 Lauren and Brian Schiller with Ari Greenman and Michele Cosentino



# Better Together

## Academics Update

Our ultimate goal is to prepare each student for a more traditional environment that fits each individual's academic, social, and emotional needs. Our identity as a “transition” school is consistent with our mission, and the average length of a student's enrollment in our school is three years.

Every Day, Every Student

**4:1**

STUDENT–FACULTY  
RATIO

Lindamood-Bell's  
VISUALIZING & VERBALIZING\*

Executive Function Coaching

**Technology**

INTEGRATION FOR  
LEARNING & PRODUCTIVITY

Orton-Gillingham  
Approach

READING INSTRUCTION

**228**

MINUTES PER DAY FOR  
READING, WRITING, STUDY  
SKILLS, & LANGUAGE  
COMPREHENSION

\*Eagle Hill Southport School is NOT Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes, nor is it affiliated with, certified, endorsed, licensed, monitored, or sponsored by Lindamood-Bell, Nanci Bell, Phyllis Lindamood, or Pat Lindamood. Lindamood-Bell—an international organization creating and implementing unique instructional methods and programs for quality intervention to advance language and literacy skills—in no way endorses or monitors the services provided by Eagle Hill Southport School.

**27**

FACULTY MEMBERS  
100% TRAINED IN THE  
ORTON-GILLINGHAM  
APPROACH

**Every Classroom**

USING RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM APPROACH

**102**

CURRENT STUDENTS

**Enrichment Experiences**

ATHLETICS | ARTS | MUSIC | FIELD TRIPS

## Farewell EHSS Students

Eagle Hill Southport School is most proud of the students who transitioned into new school programs in the fall of 2016. Congratulations, alums! Come back to visit—our doors are always open.

Vincent Abriola  
Alexi Andresky  
Isaac Arias  
Charles Banks  
Brendan Barrett  
Gavin Barrett  
Max Bello  
Morgan Bello  
Charlie Berry  
Peter Bonczek  
Micah Bory  
Hunter Brooks

Francesca Buono  
Peter Cagnassola  
Cannon Coolidge  
Sumner Curvat  
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Jared Kay  
Jerry Keefe  
Kayleigh Keefe  
Charlie Keller

Reagan Knauf  
Rachel Levy  
Zachary Lowenberg  
Annabel Olsoff  
Cameron Perkins  
Anastasia Rivera  
Campbell Robertson  
Gabrielle Saffan  
Kathryn Tansil  
Jaden Volz  
Robert Zabarsky

Students were enrolled in the following schools in the fall of 2016:

Darien Public Schools  
Easton Country Day School  
Fairfield Public Schools  
Maplebrook School  
Norwalk Public Schools  
Platt Technical High School  
Purnell School  
St. Joseph High School  
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School  
Stamford Public Schools  
The Stanwich School

Trinity Catholic High School  
Trumbull Public Schools  
Westport Public Schools  
Windward School  
Winston Preparatory School  
Wooster School





## Students Give Back

Upper School Student Council activities and fundraisers include outreach to Grasmere Elder Care (Fairfield, CT), Person-to-Person (Darien and Norwalk, CT), Youth Services Opportunity Project (NYC), school-wide special events including the Halloween Spooktacular, Thanksgiving Luncheon, Spirit Day, and more.

The Lower School's community outreach is through The Kindness Project, a monthly initiative in which EHSS partners with organizations to bring kindness into the greater community. Outreach includes Ben's Bells (Bethel, CT), Project Linus (Danbury, CT), Brady's Smile (Fairfield, CT), Operation Smile (Virginia Beach, VA), and The Open Door Shelter (Norwalk, CT), to name a few. Each opportunity offers a chance for our students to work together and make their/our world a better place.

## Educating Educators

Our faculty is trained in the best research- and evidence-based approaches to help our students with LD/ADHD achieve success. To extend our reach and help as many students as possible, we provide teacher training and professional development for educators, including Orton-Gillingham Approach and Reading Screening Training. Our outreach training also helps inform educators located at schools where many of our students will transition; this helps to create an informal and supportive bridge for EHSS alumni.

## Community Lecture Series

We serve as a resource to the learning differences community, and our Community Lecture Series provides opportunities for relevant, engaging conversations about the latest in research and practice in the field. Through generous underwriting support by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, we provide regular lectures by experts in the field, including researchers, practitioners, and successful adults with LDs.

Please visit our website for more information on upcoming lectures:  
[www.eaglehillssouthport.org/CLS](http://www.eaglehillssouthport.org/CLS)

## Free Literacy Screening

In spring 2016, EHSS launched a new program named Early Reading Screenings for pre-kindergarten to third grade children in our surrounding communities. Screenings are conducted by school administrators and teachers, all of whom have received specialized training in literacy test administration and interpretation.

## Summer Programs

Summer is a time for EHSS to welcome community families to our Summer Programs. Our programs provide a learning experience for students entering kindergarten through grade 9 who will benefit from ongoing remedial assistance and/or specific instruction in learning strategies and study skills to maintain their progress. Last year we admitted more than 80 students.





## Athletics & Co-Curricular Activities

The student experience at Eagle Hill Southport School is rich with athletics and co-curricular activities that complement what students are learning in school.

Traditions especially are important to everyone at EHSS and promote a sense of community within our school. Throughout the year, the school routine begins with morning assembly, Headmaster Powers' newly established "Powers' Punch Line" (joke of the day) presentation, Shutterbug, and a variety of other beloved daily traditions. In everything we do, we strive to provide a "more than" school life for students who have often had a "less than" experience in traditional school settings.

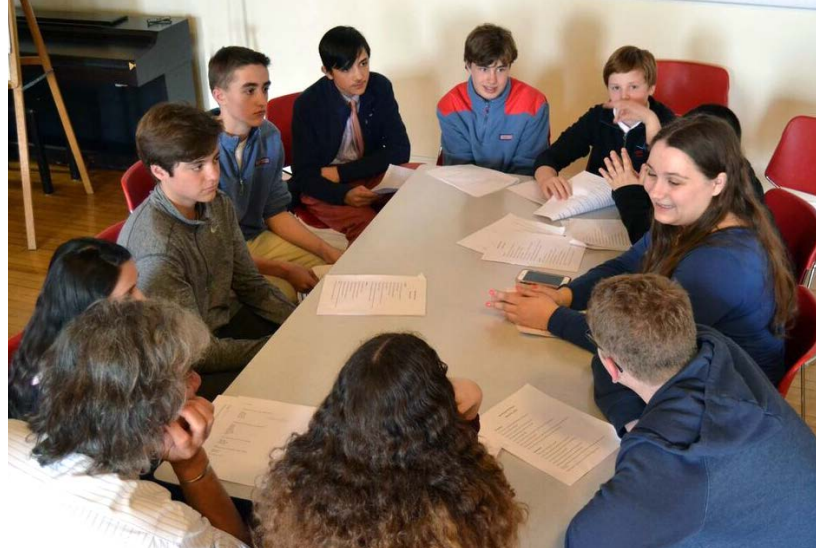
Yearly traditions include the fall soccer and cross-country Jamboree, December's Ice Skating Party, March's Big Game basketball competition, and June's Beach Day.

Seasonal sports include soccer, cross-country, cheerleading, basketball, and baseball. All students receive formal art and music instruction on a rotating basis. The halls of EHSS continue to serve as a rotating gallery for student artwork, allowing the whole community to appreciate these creative efforts.

During the winter season, students who are not on an athletic team participate in enrichment activities and physical education classes. Activities typically include MakerKids, coding, indoor bowling, gym games, outdoor survival skills, and Girls on the Go.











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Benjamin Powers

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# Financial Statement

## Statement of Activities

For the years ended August 31, 2016 and 2015

REVENUES, GAINS & OTHER SUPPORT	2016	2015
Tuition & fees	\$5,043,227	\$4,947,302
Financial aid	(370,316)	(559,035)
<b>Net tuition revenue</b>	<b>4,672,911</b>	<b>4,388,267</b>
Contributions, net	251,801	277,490
Investment return used for operations	211,199	220,063
Fundraising event income, net	98,919	110,429
Other income	34,694	28,198
Net assets released from restrictions	—	—
<b>TOTAL REVENUES, GAINS &amp; OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$5,269,524</b>	<b>\$5,024,447</b>

### EXPENSES

Education programs services		
<i>Instructional</i>	\$3,413,249	\$3,517,997
Supporting services		
<i>Administrative</i>	1,269,613	933,072
<i>Facilities &amp; meals</i>	410,982	394,054
<i>Development</i>	148,217	108,548
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$5,242,061</b>	<b>\$4,953,671</b>

### CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

From operating activities before depreciation	\$27,463	\$70,776
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<b>DEPRECIATION</b>	<b>(\$89,030)</b>	<b>(\$114,776)</b>
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### CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

From operating activities	(\$61,567)	(\$44,000)
---------------------------	------------	------------

### OTHER CHANGES

Restricted contributions	\$147,787	\$126,278
Investment return (loss) net	503,168	(132,786)
Investment return utilized for operations	(211,199)	(220,063)
Change in value of minimum pension liability	(496,119)	(153,062)
Loss on sale of assets	(19,975)	(3,038)
<b>TOTAL OTHER CHANGES</b>	<b>(\$76,338)</b>	<b>(\$382,671)</b>

Change in net assets	(\$137,905)	(\$426,671)
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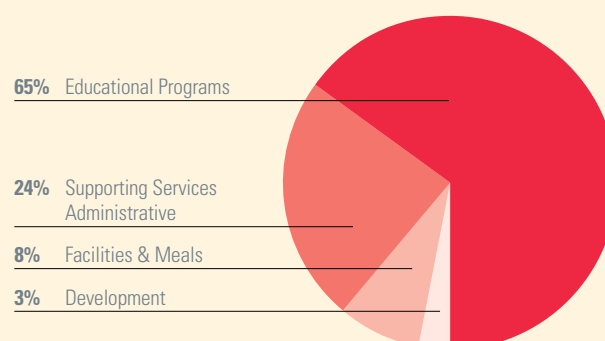
Net assets—Beginning of the year	\$5,908,227	\$6,334,908
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<b>NET ASSETS — END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$5,770,322</b>	<b>\$5,908,237</b>
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## Revenues



## Expenses



# All Our 2015–2016 Donors

Tuition alone does not cover the cost of an Eagle Hill Southport School education. Gifts to the annual fund, income from our endowment, and special events help to fund yearly operating expenses such as teacher training and development, program enhancements, and equipment for classrooms and activities.

Thanks to our donors, we are also able to increase accessibility to our educational program by offering financial aid to students who may not be able to attend the school otherwise. Gifts of all sizes have an impact on our school and our students. Thank you to those who supported us in the last year.

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Mr. Peter Michalowski, in  
honor of Owen Michalowski  
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Walker,  
in memory of John Upton



## The Tiriolos' Own Love & Dedication Give Back to EHSS in an Unexpected Way

*Pat and Barbara Tiriolo are Isabelle Theisen's grandparents. Isabelle is a student at EHSS in her third year. The following was a heartfelt request to family and friends to give differently in celebration of the couple's 50th wedding anniversary.*

Dear Family and Friends,

We have been very fortunate to benefit in life and in love. The greatest gift we can receive is your continuing friendship and your presence at our celebration. In lieu of any gift, we would be honored by a contribution to Eagle Hill Southport School in celebration of our 50th anniversary.

Eagle Hill is a special place to our family and we feel very fortunate that our granddaughter Isabelle benefits from the services provided by the school. We have witnessed firsthand the significant academic progress she has made since enrolling. Her improved self-confidence is a true indication of the impact of her experiences at the school. Your tax-deductible contributions will allow Eagle Hill to continue to provide future students with a transformative learning experience.

We look forward to celebrating with you.

Barbara & Pat

### DONORS WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS WERE MADE IN HONOR OF PAT & BARBARA TIRIOLO'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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## BECKERER FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Est. 2005 by Bob Beckerer to provide support for financial aid.

Mr. Frank S. Beckerer, Jr.  
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## CASEY COLEMAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Est. 1999 by George and Katie Coleman to provide support for financial aid.

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## STEPHEN D. COLHOUN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Est. 1991 by friends and family in memory of Stephen Colhoun to provide support for financial aid.

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## FERNANDES FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Est. 2010 by the Fernandes Family to provide support for financial aid.

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## ANDREW KOSTIN TECHNOLOGY FUND

Est. 2008 by Susan Kostin in honor of her son, Andrew, to provide support for classroom technology.

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## MADISON HUI KWONG FUND

Est. 2007 by Timothy and Chelsea Kwong in memory of their daughter to provide support for professional development.

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## CAROLYN LAVENDER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Est. 2013 by friends and family in memory of Carolyn Lavender to provide support for financial aid.

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## THE CAROLYN LAVENDER & KELLY WIEMAN FUND

Est. 2011 by the Wieman Family in honor of Carolyn Lavender, who first suggested EHSS to their daughter, Kelly. The funds are unrestricted.

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## QUINSEE FAMILY FUND

Est. 2010 by the Quinsee family to be used at the discretion of the Headmaster and the Board of Directors.

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Mr. & Mrs. Paul A. Quinsee

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## WALTER S. ROBBINS FUND FOR SERVICE LEARNING

Est. 2009 by the Robbins children in honor of their father to support service learning at the school.

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## GRANT V.A. ROBERTS FUND FOR ART & MUSIC EDUCATION

Est. 2005 in memory of Grant V.A. Roberts by his family to support art and music programs.

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Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation  
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## SOUTHPORT CONGREGATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Est. 1992 by the Southport Congregational Church to provide support for financial aid.

Southport Congregational Church

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## TAVORMINA FAMILY ENDOWMENT FUND

Est. 2002 by the Tavormina family to be used at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

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Dick, Marissa & Ben Ferguson T'07  
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## JOHN D. UPTON SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Est. 1990 by John Upton to provide support for financial aid.

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Estate of John D. Upton  
Mr. Andrew B. Walker

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## BARBARA & FRANK WENDT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Est. 2004 by Barbara and Frank Wendt to provide support for financial aid.

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Barbara & Frank Wendt

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# Spring Benefit Donors

The annual spring benefit is our largest fundraising event for the school. Thanks to our fabulous co-chairs, Lorelei Atwood and Christina DiSabato, this year's event was outstanding.

The co-chairs along with their committee members transformed The Inn at Longshore into a Caribbean oasis for the evening. Parents, alumni, board members, friends of the school, and faculty and staff in attendance supported the school through the live and silent actions, giving tree, and games. We thank everyone who helped to make this year's event a success.

## BENEFIT CHAIRS

Lorelei Atwood &  
Christina DiSabato,  
Benefit Co-Chairs  
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1 Front row: Rebecca Lazorick, Janet Brogan, Ben Powers, Karen Jeffers, Janet Steinmayer; back row: Paul Doocy, Dave Sylvestro, Dick Ferguson, Nikos Nicopoulos

2 George and Caroline Olmo

3 Michael Brown, Bob Perry, Alex Novak T'99, Melissa Brown

4 Zibby Perkins, Lorelei Atwood, Maggie Macari, Sara Brown, Emily Brady, Dede Warner, Lea Sylvestro, Christina DiSabato, Tina Vasquez

5 Katie Coleman and Casey Coleman T'97

## Ways of Giving

**GIVE ONLINE** at [www.eaglehillssouthport.org/giving](http://www.eaglehillssouthport.org/giving).

**CALL US** at 203.254.2044. The Development Office can be reached Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

**MAIL US A CHECK** in the envelope included with this report. Please include a note indicating if you'd like to honor someone with your contribution this year.

**GIFT APPRECIATED STOCK** to EHSS. For instructions on how to transfer stock, please contact the Development Office.

**DOES YOUR EMPLOYER MATCH YOUR GIFT?** Many employers like GE, Goldman Sachs, and Unilever—to name a few—will match your contribution to EHSS. Check with your employer's office of human resources to see if they participate or call the Development Office and we can look it up for you.

**GIVE A LEGACY GIFT.** Setting up a trust, including EHSS in your estate plans, or naming EHSS in a life insurance policy are ways you may consider supporting the school. For more information and to find out how your gift can best support the students, please contact us.

**INVEST IN EHSS.** Donors who choose to contribute to the endowment are investors in the future of EHSS. The named funds and restricted accounts are important resources that ensure the school will have a support system for years to come. These funds strengthen our academic programs, athletics, financial aid offerings and provide for continued professional development. Donors are encouraged to support these funds in addition to their annual gift each year.

# Thank you!







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