THE FOUNDERS CAMPAIGN
MAINE CENTRAL INSTITUTE

The Bell Tower

A newsletter for donors to MCI's Founders Campaign. Donors to the Campaign will continue to receive the *Belltower Newsletter* with Campaign news and updates for the duration of the Campaign.

Issue 1 January 2017

Pictured: Headmaster Chris Hopkins and Board Chair Norbert Young Jr. '66 celebrate the launch of the Founders Campaign during the Sesquicentennial Celebration in Parks Gymnasium.

A Message from Board President Norbert Young Jr. '66

On behalf of MCI's Board of Trustees, I am delighted to acknowledge the more than 135 donors who have contributed to date to the Founders Campaign. This inaugural issue of *The Bell Tower* provides news and updates on MCI's historic comprehensive capital campaign. Since we announced the Campaign last August, alumni and friends have given more than $660,000 to MCI. Each gift supports the promise we are keeping to the future, by creating a wonderful Visual and Performing Arts Education Center within JR Cianchette Hall, renovating the beloved Founders Hall, enhancing our outdoor athletic fields and increasing MCI's endowment. We will continue to keep you updated on our progress to raising a total of $6.5 million, and please know, *your* gift will bring us one step closer to meeting that goal by August 4, 2017.

Work Begins on Visual and Performing Arts Education Center

Major renovations to MCI's JR Cianchette building began in December 2016. The building, constructed in 1958, had served as classroom space for the math and science departments until 2003, and for various academics and arts classrooms since. When renovations are complete, all of MCI's visual and performing arts programs will be housed together, creating a unique artistic synergy on campus.

Lead gifts to MCI's $6.5 million Founders Campaign have made this work possible, according to Headmaster Chris Hopkins.

"Thanks to early generous contributions to the Founders Campaign, MCI has begun work to transform an existing building on campus into the Visual and Performing Arts Education Center, bringing all of the School's arts programs under one roof," Hopkins said.

The first phase of the renovation project focuses on the building's ground floor. The new space will feature a large vocal and instrumental center and a choral and piano studio. Additional spaces will be created for a music library, digital media lab, recording and practice rooms, upgraded restrooms, a new ADA restroom and ADA access.

Plans for the second-floor renovation will be presented to the School's Board of Trustees in early 2017, and will include renovations to spaces for visual art, Bossov Ballet and Drama.

Funds for the $700,000 project were contributed by donors to the Founders Campaign, which was publicly launched on August 5, 2016 during MCI's Reunion weekend.

Speaking on behalf of the MCI Board of Trustees, President Norbert Young Jr. '66 said, "We are deeply grateful to Founders Campaign donors, for they have made this major renovation possible. Their generous support is creating outstanding opportunities for MCI students involved in the visual and performing arts. This is just one example of what can be accomplished with the support of MCI's alumni and friends. As the Founders Campaign continues, we are keeping our promise to the future," added Young.

Campaign Funds Update

Money raised (as of January 18, 2017): $4.38 million
Donors: 143, including 35 faculty/staff
MCI Trustee Participation: 100 percent
Koester Challenge Funds Matched: $297,931

Thanks to our generous donors, 67 percent of the $6.5 million dollar goal has been raised.

Sixty percent of the $500,000 Koester Challenge has been matched, with $202,069 still available.

MCI Receives $10,000 Grant from Skowhegan Savings Charitable Foundation

Pictured: MCI guitar students; Bruce Harrington, Skowhegan Savings Assistant Vice President and Commercial Loan Officer; Renee Hawthorne, Skowhegan Savings Branch Manager, Fairfield & Pittsfield Branches; Christopher J. Hopkins, MCI Headmaster; Dean Neal, MCI Visual and Performing Arts Department Chair.

MCI has received a $10,000 grant from the Skowhegan Savings Charitable Foundation for the Founders Campaign. "We are grateful for the generous support of the Skowhegan Savings Charitable Foundation," Hopkins said in accepting the check, "and are honored to have earned their support for the Founders Campaign, which will strengthen MCI for the next 150 years."

"MCI is unique. We are pleased to support this independent school offering a comprehensive educational program to a multicultural student body," said Renee Hawthorne, branch manager of the Skowhegan Savings Pittsfield branch. "Our contribution is a team effort with the community to ensure that educational diversity is still available to the region for another 150 years," Hawthorne added.

Why I Give

MCI gave me so many opportunities as a student. I am proud to continue my family's long tradition of giving back to the School that has served our community so well for 150 years.

As an alumna and new faculty member, it is my pleasure to support the Founders Campaign!

~Erin Fitts '02

I supported the Founders Campaign because our students, faculty, and community will benefit from the planned improvements.

Also, as a member of the Class of 1984 I feel we all have a responsibility to give back to the School that truly has shaped our lives.

~ Eric Thompson '84

This campaign is truly comprehensive and diverse - like MCI. Not only does it touch the students of today and the future in the arts and athletics, it inspires memories of the past for alums who remember fondly their time spent in Founders Hall by maintaining this historic building for future generations.

~Michael Hodgins '86

Why I Give (Continued)

MCI opened doors for me, a "Townie," athletically, socially, academically. MCI stimulated my curiosity. It gave me the analytical tools I needed to understand "things" and to make stuff happen. MCI inspired me to explore my inner and outer worlds. It taught me that hard work, personal responsibility, a positive attitude and EDUCATION would deliver "success" regardless of how I chose to define "success." MCI "did good" by me and for that reason I give to the Founders Campaign so that future generations can experience the same great MCI education I was blessed to enjoy. ~ Gregg Patterson '69

I don't feel like I am just investing in an institution but in the ideas and people I believe in. People who truly care about a town I grew up in and the youth from around the world that come to MCI to gain an amazing education and to experience what we did growing up. After living in various parts of the country it only makes me appreciate more the foundation I got from MCI and the wonderful community called Pittsfield. It is a tradition that I want to see kept alive for others to benefit from. ~ Peg Olson '84

As a Pittsfield native and alumnus, I appreciate the value and perspective that an MCI education provides for its student body. We felt it was very important to support the Founders Campaign to help ensure that MCI can continue to thrive as the centerpiece of community pride and activity and to offer its unique international and multicultural learning environment to local students. ~ Robert Cianchette '78 and Hillary Ginsberg

During my first visit to MCI and Pittsfield, my husband's alma mater and home town, I could see how special the School was, in every way. I attended a traditional suburban Connecticut public high school and was totally unfamiliar with the idea of a Town Academy having both day and residential students from many different places in a small-town environment. I was immediately captured by the unique role that MCI plays in the entire community, the dedication of its faculty and staff, the devotion of its alumni, and the spirit of its students. It's an honor to do everything I can for a place that provides extraordinary opportunities to so many people in so many ways. ~ Elaine Patterson, Trustee

The Koester Challenge Inspires Others

Pictured: Tom and Anne Koester

Tom and Anne Koester first set foot on MCI's campus in March 2016. Neither grew up in Maine, nor attended MCI as a student. So how did two individuals with little connection to the School decide to make one of the most extraordinary philanthropic acts in the history of Maine Central Institute?

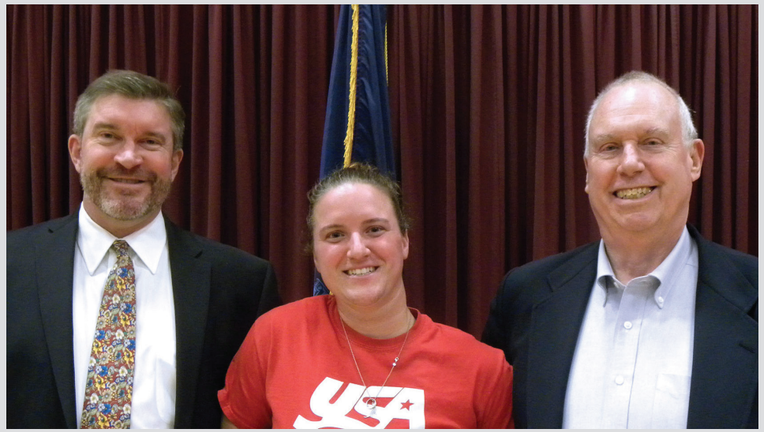
Humble and modest, the Koesters want little in the way of recognition for their generosity. They are successful business owners, having operated TC Koester Inc., for forty-eight years. Located just outside of Philadelphia, the business is a manufacturers' representative firm providing air, gas and materials handling equipment primarily used in air pollution and water pollution control applications. Their son, Tom Jr., now runs the business, which leaves Tom and Anne more time to dedicate to their passion: hockey.

Though Tom did not play hockey himself, he became interested in the sport when his son began playing as a young boy. He built an impressive résumé, including serving as president of Atlantic region of USA hockey, where he was responsible for about 43,000 players. In 1997, Tom had served as the head JV boys coach at the Hill School in Pottstown, PA for four years, when Chris Hopkins arrived and became his assistant. The two coached together for seven years during which time they and their spouses, Anne and Suzanne, developed a close friendship, visiting each other's vacation homes during the summer and gathering for dinners together. "Chris is a great person and I've always enjoyed my friendship with him," stated Tom.

Though Chris left the Hill School to come to MCI, he and Tom stayed in touch. They spoke often of MCI, and it was through Tom that Chris first learned of Christy Gardner, a sled hockey player and future Patterson Lecture Series speaker who lives in Maine. Tom had retired from USA hockey to devote more time to the Paralympics, in particular sled hockey. "I fell in love with the sport and the players," Tom explained. "I received an appointment to the IPC, which is an international Paralympic organization, to be on the committee that runs sled hockey. I was in charge of worldwide development and now I'm in charge of worldwide competition. I ran the Sochi [Winter Olympics] event and I will run

the one in Pyeongchang in Korea in 2018. I do the organizational work for the tournaments to determine who and where each team is seeded. I also work with the organizing committee for the Olympics and Paralympics."

In the fall of 2015, during a discussion about MCI and in particular the progress of the Founders Campaign, Tom asked if he and Anne could come up to visit campus and attend Gardner's Patterson Lecture Series speech. He was eager to see in person the academic community that Chris had described to him over the years. Chris eagerly accepted and on March 9 and 10, Tom and Anne visited campus.



Pictured: Headmaster Chris Hopkins, Patterson Lecture Series Speaker Christy Gardner and Tom Koester in Parks Gymnasium after Gardner's PLS talk.

"I was really impressed," stated Anne. "The buildings are beautiful. We stopped in to see one of the ballet classes and it is amazing how good they are." At the end of their visit, Tom and Anne were shown some drawings of future facilities upgrades and heard once again that this was the first comprehensive campaign in the School's history involving not only buildings and renovations but endowment and the growth of the Annual Fund. They also learned of the unprecedented way that the Trustees and others had already committed to the Campaign, and that the School had received its first $1 million gift.

Tom stated, "To be very honest, after sitting down and talking with Chris for a while I finally asked him, 'what can we do for you?' We were very impressed with the School and he and I had talked over the years about what the Campaign was intended to do." Tom and Anne departed from campus saying they wanted to help and needed to talk. A week later Chris received word from them that they wanted to initiate a $500,000 Challenge.

The Koester Challenge matches the next $500,000 MCI raises for the Founders Campaign, dollar for dollar. With this opportunity provided by Tom and Anne, gifts will go twice as far towards helping students, doubling the impact.

Chris was understandably stunned by their generous offer and asked what had inspired them to make this commitment. Tom and Anne simply said that in 48 hours they saw countless examples of how MCI was serving and inspiring a diverse student body. "I think we are fortunate to be in a position to be able to help people," stated Tom. "We've helped the sled hockey community and we've seen the rewards that that's reaped. My philosophy is that we should help people so they can take advantage of new opportunities. Both Anne and I want to do things that will improve society and improve the lives of people. If we can help in a little way to expose students to new opportunities that they would enjoy and perhaps give them a better situation in life, it's the right thing to do."

Of the intent behind the Challenge, Tom explained, "We hope the Challenge will encourage others to give, to help strengthen MCI so the students will have better facilities and more opportunities. We thought that this would be a great way to perhaps affect the young people's lives."

Since the public launch of the Campaign during Reunion Weekend 2016, $297,931 of the Koester Challenge has been matched. "We are so thankful to the Koesters for their generous gift," said Board President Norbert Young Jr '66. "This challenge has already energized supporters and provides an amazing opportunity for those who believe in strengthening the future of MCI."

Summing up their challenge gift in his characteristically straightforward way, Tom added, "It's all about the kids, isn't it?"

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