

Date: April 13, 2015

Mansfield Town Council  
4 South Eagleville Road  
Storrs, CT 06268

Dear Mansfield Town Council Members,

My name is John Chandy, and I am professor at the University of Connecticut. My wife, Binu, a member of the Town's Planning and Zoning Commission, and I have been residents of Mansfield since 2002, and we have been parents of two students in the school district since 2006, with our oldest son graduating from Mansfield Middle School year. I am providing this statement in support of continuing to appropriately fund the Mansfield School District. We, along with many other families in town, look at the Mansfield School System as the crown jewel of the Town of Mansfield. It is the reason that many of us moved to Mansfield and stay in Mansfield. What has impressed us the most with the entire Mansfield school system has been the availability of strong enrichment programs that have kept our two sons engaged and excited about attending school every day. Especially important has been the wide range of activities available at the Mansfield Middle School including the school Math Counts, Science Quiz Bowl and robotics programs. As you may be aware, these teams have been among the most successful at MMS – winning the district championships in Math Counts last month, winning the state Science Quiz Bowl last year, and reaching the world championships in robotics the last five years. This type of success does not happen in a vacuum or by accident. It takes a dedicated teaching staff as well as students that are energized by the learning that these programs provide.

As you know, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education is an important area of national need and it is critical that we find ways to engage students in STEM. As an electrical engineering professor, I always lament that that few college students consider a career in engineering. By the time they reach college, it usually too late to kindle that interest. That spark needs to be lit earlier – in elementary and middle school. The MMS robotics program is an example of how this engagement can work to positively involve students in a variety of STEM activities. Robotics at MMS started out as a small activity with a few motivated students. That has grown into a program that has over 50 actively participating students at MMS as well as another 20 or so in robotics programs at the elementary schools. These robotics programs have also done a great job at involving girls and getting them interested in a possible future career in STEM.

As the town council debates the school budget, I ask them to consider the impact these programs make on our children. If the budget is level-funded, schools will inevitably have to make a choice and I fear that the enrichment programs will be targets of possible cuts. Instead of doing so, I hope that the council can in fact, fund these programs, especially robotics, as a line item within the budget. Just as athletics is a highly valued and needed part of the school offerings, academic teams such as Math Counts, Science Quiz Bowl, and robotics, need to be equally valued and funded accordingly.

Thanking you,



John Chandy

21 Max Felix Dr,  
Storrs, CT 06268

From: **Silvia Dorado** banacloche65@gmail.com  
Subject: town council meeting  
Date: April 11, 2015 at 9:24 AM  
To: Perkins D PerkinsDN@mansfieldct.org

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Dear Mr. Perkins,

Thank you very much for reaching out to us (parents).

We (my husband and I) hope that at least one of us could be present at the meeting but in case we cannot make it this is what we would like to share with the Town Council.

Dear Members of the Council,

My name is Silvia Dorado and I live in 29 Storrs Hts. Rd. I plan to read the following statement personally but have also given

permission to Mr. Perkins to read it for me in my absence.

## Statement:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about our opinion on the topic of “having a line item on the schools budget included to fund robotics.” Let me share our personal story to show why we think this is crucially important for the district.

My son is a bright 4th grader from Southeast Elementary school. His brother attends MMS and both have thrived in the Mansfield school system. He has a strong interest in science, including robotics, and

because of his interest I applied, and he got admitted in the Charles H. Barrow Stem Academy in the Windham district. After meeting with his teacher in Southeast and the principal of MMS to discuss how he would fit in MMS, we have decided that he will follow his brother and attend MMS. We have done so for many reasons including the quality of the school and the school's responsiveness to parents concerns which I have experienced first hand. I do have to say, however, that I was finally sold on the idea of sending my son to MMS because of the robotics program. The fundamental attraction of the Charles H. Barrow Academy is the brand new equipment

they have which I think my son would enjoy. But knowing that he would have access to, at least, part of this equipment in MMS through the robotics program tipped the balance in favor of deciding for MMS.

In summary what I want to say by sharing our personal story is that including an item in the budget to support robotics is a strong indication of this community's commitment to science education and a reason for parents not to choose to go out of district.

Thank you for your attention,

Best regards,

Silvia Dorado

Silvia Dorado

"Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar."

"Wanderer, we have no road, we make the road by walking."

(Antonio Machado)

Good Evening,

My name is Doug Perkins and I live at 920 Storrs Rd. and work at Mansfield Middle School.

I would like to thank you, the members of the Town Council, for your service and for giving me the chance to address you tonight. We are living in a time where education is being attacked from many different fronts. I would like to make a case tonight for supporting the school budget beyond what is being proposed. I have heard arguments that we are spending too much per student in Mansfield, the insinuation is that we are not getting what we pay for. I would like to argue that we are getting more than we pay for. Our schools have been recognized at some of the best schools in the state. We have done very well on objective measures of test scores. But our students are so much more than the results of one test.

Mansfield students are able to compete with the best in math competitions, sports competitions, writing competitions and music competitions. We have sent teams to the World robotics competitions 6 out of the last 7 years. Mansfield residents pay a lot for education but the Board of Ed, administrators, faculty, staff and students deliver beyond what is paid for.

Teachers routinely volunteer their time outside the school day at events like history day, the school play, the MMS robotics tournament, a myriad of music and arts events around the town, adding value to our per pupil expenditure. Consequently students are excited to spend their "free time" singing to Senior Citizens, taking challenging math tests, designing awesome robots, learning how to write a persuasive essay to get donations for good causes, (like the robotics team), and collecting food for the needy. These are all value added activities that are not seen on any ledger or audit but help make the community of Mansfield a wonderful place to live and work. Teachers and students are engaging in the most important business worth investing in—The future.

Thank you  
Doug Perkins

Jack Champagne 4 patriots Square

### **Robotics presentation for board of Ed**

Robotics isn't just building and programming robots. It's something that helps kids become the future engineers and programmers. In robotics kids design, build, program, document, and most of all solve problems. During robotics we have had many problems that we spent time looking for a solution we look through the programming and look for building issues. We document the problems we have had and find solutions. We look for issues with our designing and if one part of our robot isn't built right we redo that part of the robot. But most importantly we have fun in robotics. In robotics we play fun games (competition) with our robot by putting it on a field and competing against other robots to see who can score more points. If robotics is funded then we will be able to make our robots better and more complicated and learn more about robotics. We will have more resources to build robots out of and more resources to learn about robotics. The high school is going to the world's competition and they have definitely inspired us. They have come in to help us after school with our robots and help us solve problems with the building and programming. And that is why I think robotics should be funded by the board of Education.

**Thank You,**

April 13, 2015

To the Mansfield Town Council:

*Town Clerk's Copy*

My name is Cindy Dainton. I reside on Mansfield City Road in Mansfield Center. As a matter of full disclosure, I am not a Mansfield native but was transplanted here when I was 4 years old. I attended the following Mansfield Public Schools: Storrs Grammar School, Buchanon School, Southeast School, Mansfield Middle School and EOSmith High School. I have a Bachelors of Science Degree and a Master's Degree in Human Development/Gerontology.

I am responding to all of the publicity concerning the Town Council meetings and the request of the Department Heads. To begin, I believe that each elected member of the Town Council truly wants to be a member and has a good heart. I believe that each of you truly wants to do what is right for the residents of Mansfield.

When looking at meeting etiquette, it is up to the elected members of the Town Council to set the tone for the meeting. I would ask each of you to think about your trust level of the other members of the town council. It is not a requirement for all of the elected town council members to agree with each other or even to like each other. It is important that you have a mutual respect level and treat each other respectfully. As a resident, I feel that it is important that differences exist on the Town Council so that all options for the Town of Mansfield are discussed fully and openly. Once there is a level of trust and respect among the elected members, this will impact the public's response to the Town Council and to the business of the Town of Mansfield.

As a follow up, the tone that you set as a Town Council affects how the Town Staff operates in all of the Departments. As elected members of the Town Council, you set in motion how the business of the Town will operate. The standards that you set filter down through the Administration and Department Heads.

In terms of the public and their recent criticism, I have the following comments. I believe that the public's criticism is based in fear. For instance, regarding the recent financial issues, there is an underlying fear that this issue could be more rampant than is currently being discussed. The Town Council's response should focus on what steps are being taken and put into place so that this does not happen again. I have also heard some additional concerns:

- Taxes are going too high and I will not be able to afford to live in town.
- The town is growing exponentially and is no longer the charming town that it used to be.
- The town is really run by UConn and the town only kowtows to the University.
- Residents are tired of hearing about "benchmarking" with other towns. This is Mansfield and Mansfield is where I want to live not some other town.

There are many ways to proceed from this point. You have a staffed Human Services Department which could provide you with training on team building, human development, and ways of dealing with the public. The Town also has a staff member that is trained in Robert's Rules of Order who could also do some training with the Town Council. I believe that the Town Council should use some of the resources that it has at its disposal before going to outside resources.

I have full faith that this Town Council will be able to resolve this issue in a prudent and reasonable fashion. Each of the elected members plays a very important part in the governance of the Town of Mansfield. Thank you for your patience. Go forth and govern!

Respectfully,

*Cindy*

Cindy Dainton



*Town of Mansfield*  
*Proclamation in Honor of Earth Day 2015*

WHEREAS, the global community now faces extraordinary challenges, such as global health issues, food and water shortages, and economic struggles; and

WHEREAS, all people, regardless of race, gender, income, or geography, have a moral right to a healthy, sustainable environment with economic growth; and

WHEREAS, it is understood that the citizens of the global community must step forward and take action to create a green economy to combat the aforementioned global challenges; and

WHEREAS, a green economy can be achieved on the individual level through educational efforts, public policy, and consumer activism campaigns; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to broaden and diversify this global movement to achieve maximum success; and

FURTHERMORE, let it be known that the Town of Mansfield, Connecticut hereby encourages its residents, businesses and institutions to use EARTH DAY to celebrate the Earth and commit to building a sustainable and green economy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town of Mansfield, Connecticut, does hereby pledge this Earth Day, April 22, 2015, to support green economy initiatives in Mansfield and to encourage others to undertake similar actions.

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Elizabeth C. Paterson  
Mayor, Town of Mansfield