UMass Amherst

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Save Fort Hill! Rally on Wednesday, Oct. 28th at 4pm

1 message

MSP <msp@umass.edu> Fri, Oct 23, 2026 at 5:07 PM
To: All Unit Email List <allunit@groups.umass.edu>

Dear all,

Many of us are concerned about Smith College's decision to close the Center for Early Childhood Education (CECE) at Fort Hill. This email shares direct asks from their union and some information pertinent to our organizing work around childcare.

MSP has reached out to the Fort Hill Teachers Association (UAW Local 2322), which represents the childcare workers at this 200-year old education program. Smith's decision blindsided these workers, who have been at the bargaining table for their first collective bargaining agreement and fighting for a living wage for over a year. They've asked MSP to support them and the families with which they work in a few ways.

1. MSP members are welcome to attend the Fort Hill Childcare Solidarity Meeting on **Tuesday, Oct. 27th from 5:00-6:30** in the First Churches Rec. Room, Northampton. This event is organized by UAW Local 2322 and the Western Mass Area Labor Federation (flyer attached).

2. Show up to the Fort Hill rally and march on **Wednesday, Oct. 28th at 4:00pm in Pulaski Park, Northampton**. Bring signs and/or come hold the MSP banner and stand up for workers and families!

3. **When it's ready, sign the Fort Hill Teachers Association's petition.** The educators at Fort Hill are working on a petition and will send it to us when it's ready. **They are still determining their demands**. Energetic organizing is happening very quickly among many groups affected by this news– and of course it is happening *around* their job of caring for little ones. We'll send a link when it's

ready! (Many of you have seen a petition in circulation. You're welcome to sign it, but please note that it's aimed at Smith admin in advance of an upcoming faculty meeting.)

4. How else can you help? **If you are an MSP parent with a child at Fort Hill or are generally concerned with childcare options at UMass, please reach out to organizer, Kristen Streahle.**

MSP & the Fort Hill Teachers Association

MSP was proud to welcome Fort Hill teachers to our multi-union childcare rally during our bargaining campaign in 2024. They spoke to us about our region's childcare crisis, the critical work that they provide, and their struggle earning less than a living wage. In light of our organizing efforts, the UMass administration told *The Hampshire Gazette* that UMass would complete a new childcare center in 2027

> University spokesperson Melissa Rose stated that the university recognizes "the need for increased child care capacity to support our community," and that it "plans to build a modern and expanded facility to replace the existing center" at 21 Clubhouse Drive.

> "The new center will allow for a 50% increase over the current capacity of approximately 87 children," Rose said. "We are commencing the design phase of the facility so that construction can be completed within the next three years."

Despite such plans which are still in a very early stage of design development, our need for adequate childcare remains very high. As of this week, our beloved Center for Early Education and Care (CEEC) has a wait list of approximately 180 families and still does not offer infant care – a key service provided by Fort Hill. UMass CEEC staff have confirmed to MSP that they're currently clearing their 2022-2023 wait list.

We'll be in touch as this campaign develops and welcome your organizing energy around this issue!

Yours in solidarity,
Kristen

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Massachusetts Society of Professors
The union representing faculty & librarians at UMass Amherst.

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2 attachments

Union-solidarity.jpg
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