

FORZA VITALE!

Vol. 26, No. 3

A Newsletter for People Active in Montessori Education

Spring 2007

Greetings!

This is such a wonderful time of the year! I am amazed how my garden flourishes with new growth from one week to the next! I have only lived in Oregon for seven years and I'm still surprised how plants grow so prolifically in the Northwest.

This is always my favorite time in the school year as well. Each day is a new day with new surprises. The children blossom at this time of the year and we have an opportunity to celebrate each child's growth. I hope that you are able to celebrate your own metamorphosis this year too. We hope that celebrating the Centenary this year within your own community has offered you personal inspiration.

Portland has such a dynamic and supportive Montessori community. The Oregon Montessori Association strives to support your personal needs and the community's needs through hosting workshops, coordinating a media library, and printing the *Forza Vitale* for members, as well as hosting the Spring Tea. OMA is also anticipating the Centenary Celebration happening this fall at Pioneer Courthouse Square and look forward to working with our community to help coordinate this celebration.

Thank you for all of your support this year. I have learned a great deal and have enjoyed working with the OMA board and community members. Thank you for all of your input and ideas for strengthening OMA and your support for various community events. We are very excited to keep challenging ourselves to better support the dynamic needs of our community.

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Another Meaning of
Special Education

We hope that you enjoy this issue of *Forza Vitale*, which highlights the importance of inclusion. We are all interconnected and each person has gifts to offer the world. Just as our gardens are rich with diversity of plants, we have the opportunity to support the diverse needs of children, families, neighbors, and colleagues with our warm and respectful actions toward others, thereby creating an environment where all can flourish.

Peace and blessings,

Carrie Brown
OMA President

Forza Vitale!

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The Oregon Montessori Association was founded in 1979 to support the community of Montessori professionals, schools, parents, students, and all others interested in Montessori and early childhood education.

Oregon Montessori Association is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.

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CALENDAR



JUNE

25 – 29 **National Montessori Administrators Retreat**
Hotel Lucia, Portland
www.msb.org/retreat
503-439-1597

25 – July 27 **Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies**
North American Montessori Teacher's Association
www.montessori-namta.org

18 – Aug. 17 **Assistants to Infancy Session**
Montessori Institute Northwest
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org

JULY

12 – 18 **AMI-EAA Summer Conference**
Juneau, AK
www.ami-eaa.org

AUGUST

20 – 31 **Introduction to Montessori Education**
Montessori Institute Northwest
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org

20 **Annual Assistants' Workshop**
Oregon Montessori Association
Save the Date – Location and Details TBA
www.oregonmontessori.org

25 **Seminar on Parent Partnerships**
Montessori Institute Northwest
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org

SEPTEMBER

5 **Primary Teacher Training Course Begins**
Montessori Institute Northwest
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org

29 **Music and Movement Workshop With Sanford and Judy Jones**
Portland, OR
Save the Date – Location and Details TBA

30 **Montessori Centenary Celebration**
Pioneer Courthouse Square
Portland, OR
Details on back cover

Be sure to check www.montessoricentenary.org for celebration events around the world. ■



Thoughts from the Incoming Board Co-Chairs

What a tremendous and tumultuous year for our Oregon Montessori Association. Tremendous because the OMA hosted a school governance workshop, in addition to the fabulous Assistants' workshop, and winter workshop that focused on Music in the Montessori classroom. Tremendous because the OMA hosted a very special Centenary Spring Tea, and is planning a dynamic workshop in the fall with Sanford Jones.

Tumultuous because the OMA had a very difficult time recruiting someone to fill the Secretary position this year. We filled the position in late fall, and then lost this person to a move. Due to a puzzling lack of interest, our Secretary position sat vacant all year. In the face of the going into the next year without a leader, Annie Noonan and I decided that we would serve one more year as co-chairs of the OMA. We were

so inspired by a renewed interest and a diverse and dynamic group that we agreed to step into the leadership position.

We are very excited to work with the incoming and returning board, and are looking forward to sharing our excitement with the Oregon Montessori community. We hope that our enthusiasm inspires others to get involved with the OMA, through membership and involvement in OMA events, workshops, the *Forza Vitale*, and through service on the Board of Directors.

Warm wishes for a happy spring and invigorating summer,

Mercedes Castle
Annie Noonan
OMA Board Co-Chairs

Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2007 Oregon Montessori Association Awards

Kathleen Berry

Susie Huston Memorial Award Recipient

This award is given to a guide who encompasses true Montessori spirit. It is in memory of Susie Huston, who started and guided the elementary program at Corvallis Montessori. She was later a primary guide from 1987 to her death by an auto accident in 1992. Susie was a rare person whose tremendous gifts deeply touched those who came in contact with her. This award honors a guide who displays "the wonder of Montessori" in the classroom and is someone admired for their teaching skills.

The recipient of the 2007 Susie Huston Memorial Award is Kathleen Berry. Kathleen is currently the upper elementary guide at Montessori School of Beaverton. She has been sharing her gifts with many children in the Montessori community for years. This is what one member of the community has to say about Kathleen:

"Kathleen is not only the hardest working teacher I've ever seen, she is truly an inspiration to the younger teachers... and in the Portland community in general....She has continuously advocated for the health of our planet as a private citizen and especially by inspiring her students with a love and respect for nature."

Congratulations, Kathleen, and thank you for the work you do!

Jude Foster

Outstanding Dedication Award Recipient

This award honors someone whose promotion of Montessori education has made a strong, significant, positive impact on the development of Montessori education in the larger community (school, neighborhood, city, region, etc.).

The recipient of the 2007 award is Jude Foster, administrator and founder of Harmony Montessori. Jude has worked for many years on behalf of Montessori education. This is what one member of the community has to say about Jude:

"Jude's work reminds us of our core mission as Montessori educators and advocates—that we must all work together as a community for the sake of the child and a peaceful world."

Congratulations, Jude! Our community thanks you for all you have done and continue to do. ■

A Report on the AMI Open Forum in Amsterdam and a Call to Action

By Peter Davidson

Many of us have despaired for years at the pace of forward movement on the part of AMI. For decades it has seemed to be a rigid, hierarchical organization allergic to self-reflection and strategic thinking and disinterested in the opinions of its members. Granted, that is merely a perception, and not always accurate, but it is a perception shared by many. Having attended the AMI Annual General Meeting and first ever Open Forum in Amsterdam in April, I'm here to report that things are changing rapidly and for the good.

AMI is stepping up to the challenge of leadership of the Montessori Movement and the Cause of Children and re-inventing itself as a forward-looking, responsive, flexible, inclusive, and re-energized organization. Thanks to the visionary leadership of André Roberfroid and the entire AMI Board of Directors, we are in a position to capitalize on the momentum of the Centenary Year and move AMI forward with ambitious, achievable goals.

As part of AMI's Strategic Planning Process, hundreds of AMI members from around the globe gathered for the Open Forum to discuss and express opinions on five major questions:

1. If there were no boundaries or restrictions, where do we want the Montessori Movement to be in ten years' time? What are our aspirations and dreams? What will the Montessori Movement look like? What will its impact be?
2. What are the challenges and obstacles facing the Montessori Movement?
3. What is AMI's role in leading the Montessori Movement?
4. What capacity, services, capabilities, and resources will we need to carry out our leadership role and

achieve the goals we envision?

5. How can we maximize the contribution of the various stakeholders and what steps can we take to harness individual efforts of all those working for the Montessori Movement?

From this discussion, goals began to emerge. These goals were presented to the AMI Board on Saturday as part of the General Meeting. The Board decided wisely, I think, to defer a decision on goals until they had heard the opinions of as many members as possible.



So, this is a moment of great opportunity for all of us who are "in the trenches" to have real and vital input into the future direction of AMI! I would like to invite each of you to consider your responses to these five questions. Further, take them to your next staff meeting and brainstorm your responses as

a community. You can send your responses directly to AMI or you can send them to me peter@msb.org and I will collect ideas and opinions into one document to send to AMI. Let's not let this historic opportunity pass us by.

The second thing we can all do immediately is to work to increase AMI's membership. Did you realize that you needn't be AMI-trained to be a member? That means membership is open to parents, board members, alumni and friends. This will create an immediate revenue stream so that AMI can hit the ground running once goals are established.

Whatever you have thought of AMI in the past, I'm asking you to join me in supporting the creation of the AMI of the future. ■

Peter Davidson is the administrator of the Montessori School of Beaverton.

Putting Action into the Montessori Movement: An Inclusive Open Forum in Amsterdam

By Jennifer Davidson

At the beginning of Montessori's second century, many Montessorians are recognizing this as an important time for action. The worldwide Centenary celebrations this year have generated momentum for the Montessori movement and the objective is now to sustain this momentum. The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) called an Open Forum to begin strategic planning to further the Montessori movement. Its objectives were to gather Montessori constituents to brainstorm goals for the Montessori movement for the next ten years, to assess its challenges, to define AMI's role as a contributor to the movement, and to create action plans to achieve these goals.

Representatives from AMI affiliates, training centers, material manufacturers, staff, board members, schools, teachers, students, and parents came together on a sunny morning in Amsterdam to begin this next stage of the Montessori movement. Participants came from all corners of the world, including Pakistan, Romania, the UK, Mexico, Australia, the US, Japan, and many other European nations. The Portland Montessori community was well represented by me, Peter Davidson from the Montessori School of Beaverton, and Patricia and Nancy Wallner, the pedagogical staff from the MINW Assistants to Infancy Summer Courses.

Over three days, Montessori constituents met to brainstorm and discuss the next steps for the Montessori movement as a whole and to define AMI's contributions to the movement. The main goal areas included:

- Connecting with researchers to supplement our pedagogy and inform the research of others
- Establishing operational resources for effective functioning of the Montessori movement
- Developing outreach programs and parent education
- Increasing the number of schools, teachers, trainers, and training centers

The overall aim is to fulfill Montessori's mission to place all the children in our world at the center of society and to assist them in becoming transformative elements leading to a harmonious and peaceful humanity, and to organize and mobilize the Montessori Movement to this end.

During the Forum, Elisabeta Negreanu from Romania took a moment to remind everyone of the meaning of the AMI logo. The three circles represent the Montessori movement as a whole. The innermost circle represents the Montessori pedagogy, method, and core knowledge Dr. Montessori established. The second circle represents AMI, its training centers, teachers, and schools, symbolically surrounding the inner circle as Dr. Montessori envisioned AMI protecting the integrity of her work. The outer circle represents the expansion of the Montessori movement and all those who are connected such as parents, researchers, advocates for children, and all Montessori allies. All are essential components of the complete Montessori movement.

The concept of these three circles gave structure to our conversations over the remainder of the Forum. Our work as Montessorians encompasses all three levels: to continue the research and development of the pedagogy, to protect the integrity of Montessori, and to share our knowledge of childhood with all those around us. I imagine these three circles ever moving outward, like ripples in a pond.

The AMI board will now continue the strategic planning process by refining the goals proposed by the Open Forum, soliciting feedback and suggestions from Montessori constituents, and taking action to achieve these goals. The intention is to complete this process by the end of 2007 and begin actively working toward these goals before this Centenary year is over.

AMI will be turning to Montessori constituents during the next stages of this work with the hope that all will participate. If you would like to join AMI in the next steps in strategic planning, you can easily join by visiting their website: www.montessori-ami.org. This is a very exciting time to contribute to the movement that Dr. Montessori herself began a hundred years ago. I urge you to think about your own personal vision for the next ten years of the Montessori movement and consider what steps you can take to achieve them. The Montessori movement will go as far as we will each take it. ■

Jennifer Davidson is the Executive Director of the Montessori Institute Northwest.

More Alike Than Different

By Pamela Cripe

As I pondered the theme of this month's newsletter, I was compelled to write about my experiences guiding children who are classified as "special needs," who are integrated into the classroom with typically developing children.

I believe that regardless of whether a school accepts children with "special needs," we, as guides, all have children in our classrooms that exhibit needs that deviate from the normal path of development. In most cases, these children are not diagnosed by a physician or other specialist with a specific learning challenge. As we observe them from the first days of their enrollment we may begin to realize that they don't meet the textbook definition of typically developing children, and if you are a new guide with limited experience, as I was many years ago, I wondered if I would be able to meet every child's need. I began to ask myself questions about the child's behavior, lack of ability to socialize, difficulty with the basic Montessori materials. Now this last one was a very interesting experience for me in the early days. I thought that every child would respond to my careful and precise lessons. I found out that most children do, but for some children I would need to rethink the process in which they communicate, socialize, adapt to the environment, or in the way they learn.

The first student I had who presented learning challenges was a young girl who was born premature with complications that left her with partial blindness, a delay in speech, and a severe physical impairment: she had only one leg. Her other leg had a prosthesis from the hip down. This young girl was three years old. When I was told that this family wanted their child to be in a Montessori school and she would be in my class, my initial thought was, no, there is no way that I am going to be able to meet this child's needs. How will she be able to communicate with the other children? How will she

be able to get around the classroom, go outside and play, or go to the bathroom? Will she gain the independence she needs from the classroom environment? These were just a few of the concerns I considered before making the decision to accept her.

When I accepted this student I learned that I was not alone and would have tremendous support to assist her and me with her challenges. Her parents were working with Portland Public Schools' early intervention program, and she qualified to have regular visits from vision, speech, physical, and occupational therapists. You are probably thinking that all of these people would have been an interruption to our peaceful classroom. Well, I

had the same thoughts, initially. I learned that the specialists came individually and usually once a week. I had six month and annual meetings with the specialists to review goals and develop new goals. I found that without exception, the specially prepared environment was enough to meet her needs and she exceeded the goals that her special team set.

It was amazing for me to have this girl for a student. The only change I had to make to the classroom was a special bar installed in the bathroom for her to hang on while she removed and replaced her prosthetic leg.

Over the years since I had the remarkable opportunity to work with this young girl, I have had many other children who have come to me with a variety of disabilities/learning challenges. I am not a special-needs teacher nor do I have any special training, with the exception of my primary training at Montessori Institute Northwest. I found that it was enough to make a difference in the lives of all of the students who have entered the doors of my classroom. I learned that through a prepared environment, observation, documentation, interpretation with the help of specialists, and the appropriate response,

(continued next page)



I could include all children. I just need to meet each child where they are and realize that children who exhibit different learning styles or other challenges are more alike than different. I am a different teacher than I was 24 years ago because of including a diverse mixture of children in my classroom. I've learned to "think out of the box," that it's all right when presenting a lesson on number rods to limit the number of rods to four for the initial lesson. It's all right to place some discreet colored dots on a tray to give a child a visual cue of where to place their thumbs, in order for them to carry the tray with success.

It's been rewarding for me to work with the various agencies and learning specialists. Our collaboration has given me a better understanding of the students in my class. Their expertise has assisted me in making the necessary changes in the environment to ensure that each child will be successful in reaching their

fullest potential. Each child has had the opportunity develop concentration on his/her activity, that leads to appropriate work, allowing them to find their own unique path and succeed as they make the most of their learning style and pace.

As each of you observe the children in your classroom who may learn a little differently, I encourage you to pause a moment, continue to observe, and to remember that every child moves to a different beat. We have the distinct privilege of giving children the gift of time in our Montessori classrooms. ■

Pamela Cripe is a primary guide at Providence Montessori School in Portland. She received her training from the Montessori Institute Northwest in 1983 and lives in Vancouver, Washington with her husband. She has two grown children and enjoys walking, biking, crafts, and reading.

Another Meaning of Special Education

By Nancy Lehner-Wallner

Most of the time, when we hear the term "Special Education," our thoughts go to the child who needs specialized help. Perhaps the child has a speech delay, or an orthopedic handicap. The child may have social or emotional issues, have one of the rampant learning disabilities, like ADHD or dyslexia, or be one of the many who have been labeled somewhere on the autistic spectrum disorder. Special Education brings up thoughts of a child with inadequacies; someone "less" than other normal children, someone who has difficulty learning.

But, there is another way to look at what "Special Education" means. Is it only in reference to the disabled child? What about the rest of the class? What about those children who have never seen a physical handicap? What about the adults, the parents, and other staff?

Years ago, I was working at a school in California. There was a boy, Patrick, with cerebral palsy. He entered our school at around four years old as an experiment, to see if our programs could somehow meet his needs emotionally and academically. With support and guidance from the parents, Patrick went through Primary, with an extra year tagged on because of emotional delays. Everyone wanted to make sure he was ready to handle the elementary materials.

When he was ready, he moved into a lower elementary classroom; a bit older than some of the other children, but, physically much smaller than all of them. Again, this was an experiment; the teacher was completely inexperienced with inclusion on any level. Again, the parents worked with and completely supported the staff. Patrick flourished. Apple Media did a video that year, featuring Pat: "Mainstreaming and Montessori"

was done over four days, with a professional crew of five people. The making of the video changed the attitudes and enlightened many to the philosophy of Montessori. It was a true learning experience for all that were involved.

The video shows Patrick negotiating Montessori materials; it shows him working with others in educational and social situations. Children were helping him when he could not physically manipulate some of the activities due to his lack of fine motor control. It shows interaction and complete participation in the classroom, in class plays, and on camping trips.



But, it didn't stop there. The video also shows interviews with his class-mates and their parents. And this brings me back to the point of Special Education, and the education of others.

Throughout the video, one of the strongest underlying themes that can be seen is the reaction of those without a disability. The effect Patrick had on their lives is profound. The education they got was one of acceptance, tolerance, patience, empathy, support, and guidance, to name a few. They learned that in life's game, everyone is not dealt the same hand.

Patrick went on to participate with Shared Adventures, a non-profit organization that offers and promotes the experience of various activities for all people, of any disability. The list includes surfing, white-water rafting, indoor rock climbing, kayaking, scuba diving, and more. One year, they decided to organize and promote "Ability Awareness" assemblies to the school district. Patrick was one of a team of four (and the only child) that went out to public, traditional schools. Armed with his array of wheelchairs, he directed and led wheelchair races with his peers. Again, the purpose was to educate the able-bodied children and adults. Again, he had the opportunity to open minds and attitudes, and maybe change their lives.

Throughout his school years, Patrick learned not only the academic necessities to get through school, he also learned about respect, responsibility, and independence. He learned the meaning of being a friend, and having friends. He learned he was okay with what life dealt him, and anyone can tell you there is nothing wrong with his self-esteem or sense of humor. His friends learned those lessons right along with him.

Patrick is now 22 years old. He is thriving in college, and hopes to become a nutritionist. He maintains contact with many of his friends from the old Montessori days, even though they are now scattered around the world pursuing their own careers. As he buzzes around town in his wheelchair, people everywhere stop to chat with him. Patrick's circle of friends has expanded over the years and includes much of our community. I am so proud to be his mother. ■

Nancy Lechner-Wallner holds AMI credentials in Assistant to Infancy, Primary Education, as well as a Special Education. Currently, she is assisting the 2006-2007 training course at MINW, as well as presenting workshops and lectures on parenting and special education. She enjoys ballroom dancing, sailing, and gardening in her free time.

The Primary Montessori Curriculum and Its Benefits for Deaf Children

By Julie Vaillancourt

Having a deaf brother and witnessing his frustration and difficulties throughout his schooling has given me the opportunity to recognize the pedagogical shortcomings of deaf education. Throughout its history in the United States, deaf education has bobbed back and forth between the extremes of oralism (teaching deaf children to speak and lip-read only) and manualism (teaching deaf children sign language only, ignoring the mainstream language of spoken English). There have been attempts to integrate the two, but those have come up short. Recently, experts on deafness have put forth a ground-breaking idea that could potentially revolutionize deaf education. This concept is based on the notion that English is a *second* language to deaf children, and American Sign Language (ASL) is their *primary* language. By giving a child a strong foundation in ASL, he can thus learn English (the second language) with more ease and be able to function confidently and comfortably in the mainstream culture of hearing people.

It must be understood that ASL is not English. It does not follow the grammatical structure of English, nor does it have a written language accompanied with it. The finger-spelling and the signed alphabet that many of us are familiar with is not necessarily ASL, but rather a signed translation of English! They are really two completely different languages: one is spatial and manual (ASL) and one is linear and oral (English).

Because of the absence of the auditory sense, completely deaf people are not naturally prone to learning English. Their natural "tongue" is signing, and this does not mean signing decoded English! Rather, it means signing with their hands using space, facial expression, and hand-shapes to express concepts, actions, time, and even grammar, though it looks nothing like English structure. For example, in English, we say, "What is your name?" In ASL, if you were to translate that into English, it would look something like, "You name what?" The two are quite different, and ASL is the natural language that must be learned first. With a strong base in a primary language, deaf children can *then and only then* learn the second (less natural) language of English. They would learn it in a word-for-word decoded form, known as Signed

English or Manually Coded English (MCE), as well as learning the processes of lip-reading and speaking.

I believe that the Montessori prepared environment would be the perfect environment for a deaf child to build this foundation for language and to thus grow up to be a functional, confident, and independent adult. Unfortunately, many deaf children often miss out on learning a language because they either are not taught anything or are taught English (signed or oral) exclusively. This childhood experience begets deaf adults who can not function as well in society. They are often seen as unintelligent or "simple." This is not surprising, though, when you think about the fact that they do not have a strong language foundation. How can one use intellect, learn about the world, or express abstract thoughts without language?

This is where a Montessori curriculum would be invaluable. The primary curriculum values language highly, and it starts with children young enough to soak it all in and learn language with ease. Unfortunately, there are not many Montessori schools for the deaf, but a very prominent school located in Florida (Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf) epitomizes this *bilingual* education proposal and works hard at maintaining Montessori principles. Blossom administrator Julie Rutenberg states, "At Blossom, language is developed through the use of the Fairview Learning Curriculum. Fairview is a bilingual approach to reading as it simultaneously improves English and ASL skills. Mastery in ASL as well as the ability to use English affords our students the opportunity to communicate effectively in both a deaf and mainstream world" (Rutenberg, p. 1).

If one word were to be plucked from all of Dr. Montessori's beliefs about children, it would be "universal." Children from all over the world show the very same observable tendencies and inner drives. Very young children function with the Absorbent Mind and Sensitive Periods, while progressively becoming more conscious and aware of their mental intellect. They all tend toward normalized personalities, and need an environment (physical and psychological) that will support this. They go through

the same stages and show the same needs, language being one of them. The Montessori environment is a perfect environment for any child, the universal child, the deaf child.

What a benefit this environment could be for the child who, throughout much of American history, has been treated as dumb and hopeless, primarily because no one taught him *language*! Fortunately for that little soul, language is experienced the first day he enters the Casa, and is a very significant part of the entire Montessori primary curriculum. Most of the curriculum, as luck would have it, can remain essentially unchanged despite the child's deafness.

Practical Life activities would hardly change a bit, since most of the presentations for those exercises are unspoken anyway. Some of the Points of Interest, like placing jars and pitchers on the table *soundlessly*, would be emphasized with slow movements and by making as little vibration as possible. The Silence Game would be interesting, in that the children would already be very familiar with auditory silence. However, the important component of the Silence Game is controlling the will, and it must not be forgotten that silence essentially means a lack of movement. "Absolute silence is the equivalent of absolute immobility" (Montessori, p. 117). Would the child, not hearing sound, be able to recognize the silence in non-movement? David Wright, deaf author of Deafness, believes he would:

The world in which I live seldom *appears* silent... In my case, silence is not absence of sound but of movement... Suppose it is a calm day, absolutely still, not a twig or a leaf stirring. To me it will seem quiet as a tomb though hedgerows are full of noisy but invisible birds. Then comes a breath of air, enough to unsettle a leaf; I will see and hear that movement like an exclamation. The illusory soundlessness has been interrupted. I see, as if I hear, a visionary noise of wind in a disturbance of foliage" (p. 11).

So even in the Silence Game, the deaf child would be able to participate fully, by being extremely aware of his surroundings on a visual and experiential level. There

is no reason that the deaf child would not be interested in this activity, because if Dr. Montessori's theories are correct, children are interested in silence not because of the lack of sound it produces, but because of the opportunity it provides for the child to practice his will.

In the Sensorial area, the five senses (visual, tactile, auditory, gustatory, and olfactory) are experienced, including the stereognostic sense. There are only two activities for the auditory sense, and those are the Sound Boxes and the Bells. Those would most likely be eliminated when teaching completely deaf children. However, everything else in the area could be utilized to its full extent. The Sensorial area would be just as beneficial to a deaf child as to a hearing child. There is no need to add anything so that the deaf child "heightens"

his other senses. That, in fact, is a myth. David Wright states his exasperation toward this common misconception, saying, "[It is an] irritating theory that the loss of one sense is compensated for by the quickening of another. There are no compensations, life is not like that. At best, we are offered alternatives. We have no choice but to take them" (p. 12). In the Montessori environment, deaf children (just as with hearing children) are given the keys to the world of sensory perceptions.

And in the same way, there should be an atmosphere of permissiveness so that the child feels like he can work in a variety of purposeful ways with the materials. Most likely, the deaf child has encountered either a neglected or an overprotected upbringing. Providing him with these Sensorial manipulatives to experience the world in a safe and permissive environment is overwhelmingly important. The Sensorial area must be honored and utilized.

Another important aspect of the Sensorial area is the language that accompanies the materials. And this is where Montessori education and deaf education fuse and become most exciting! In a bilingual education, it is necessary for the child to be fluent and comfortable in a mother tongue. To the deaf child, this is ASL. So in the Language area, the child will have his primary Spoken Language (Enrichment of Vocabulary and Language Experience) based in ASL. There will be, of course, a teacher whose first language is ASL, or

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at least is extremely fluent in the language. This is critical to success in the Spoken Language area. A child must be in an environment where his language is being supported in the correct way. That child will be having conversations, getting vocabulary of different classifications, experiencing signed poems and songs, seeing true stories being told, and playing the Question Game. The child will form a strong foundation of a first language *before* beginning to learn English in the signed and written mode.

Learning English as a second language for a deaf child is where things get interesting, and it is certainly a topic for experts and experienced authorities in the fields of deafness and education. However, there are contributions that a Montessorians could make on this level, and these suggestions may work extremely well for deaf children, particularly in the Language area of the classroom.

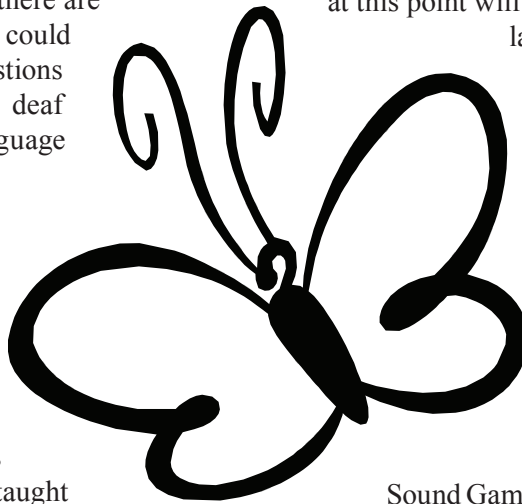
Once ASL is established, the child can begin to study English. This may come at different times for different children, depending on the first three years of their life and their individual encounters with the language. What is important, though, is that English is taught (or at least the process is taught) before the age of six, while the child is still in the formative stages for unconscious and efficient learning. The first thing one might do in the Language area would be to offer the experience of Spoken Language for Signed English in the same way that the child experienced it in ASL. Just as a hearing child cannot jump into writing or reading without spoken language experience, a deaf child cannot jump into writing or reading without the same spoken language experience *in this new language*. So the teacher (one who is trained in Signed English) would go through the same exercises with the child: telling true stories, the Question Game, classifications and vocabulary, reciting poems, and reading books. The reading of books becomes important now because at this point, the child will recognize that Signed English (not ASL) is what symbolizes all the words and writing he has seen all his life. By connecting the Signed English with the letters on the page, the child will grasp the importance of this second language, and knowing that it is a huge part of his culture, will *want* to learn it! These thoughts may be unconscious, but making that

connection is essential.

Contrary to the curriculum for hearing children, the order of activities for Language might need to be altered for the deaf child. This is because in order to comprehend Signed English, the child will probably need to know finger-spelling. In order to know finger-spelling, the child will probably need to know the letters of the alphabet. And in order to understand what the significance of the alphabet is, the child will probably need to understand phonemes. This brings us to the Sound Game, which may start the moment a deaf child enters the Casa. In the Sound Game, there would need to be an understanding of what phonemes are and what they signify. The child at this point will most likely understand that there is a

language going on that he is not a part of, so this might not be too big of a leap. Phonemes in the Sound Game will be taught using cued speech aligned with lip-reading. Even though it is shown that lip-reading is not ultimately a successful way of communication, the child will understand that these phonemes and shapes of English-speaking lips will relate to the letters that he will need to know in order to read. So by using cued speech in the

Sound Game, the child will be able to successfully transition to the Sandpaper Letters.



The Sandpaper Letters will be used in the same manner as with hearing children, except here the teacher will start by prompting the child to think of words that start with whatever the cued speech sign is for a particular vowel or consonant. When the teacher traces the Sandpaper Letters for the child, she will introduce the actual sign of the letter as well as the cued speech sign which signifies the letter's appearance on the lips. The sign of the letter is the translation of that English letter into sign language. This means that there is a signed symbol for each letter of the English alphabet. Finger-spelling arises out of this translated alphabet, where English words can be spelled out into symbolized letter signs. The deaf child, like the hearing child, is probably familiar with the signed alphabet, and this may not be new to him, although the visual appearance of the letter in connection with the *name* of the letter, as well as in connection with the *cued speech* of the letter will be a huge event for the child.

Once many of the Sandpaper Letters have been introduced

(and Spoken Language in ASL and Signed English are continuing), the child can start the process of the Written Language. This process includes the Moveable Alphabet, Metal Insets, and Aids to Handwriting. The child can spend a lot of time on the Moveable Alphabet, and with the teacher's guidance, they can act together to work out any kinks that may be present in thinking of words and building them. It is not hard to imagine why the Moveable Alphabet work may be challenging for the child, since when he is thinking of words in his head, he is most likely thinking of how they are signed, not how they sound. But research has shown that deaf children have been observed to be able to more properly speak out the sounds of a word once they first had experience with the actual sign of that word. For example, a child was much more likely to say aloud something close to "water" if he was first taught the sign for water and then taught the way to say it out loud and how it looks on the lips (Lloyd, p. 48). This is where professional opinion and expertise could really extend this proposal.

After writing comes reading, and if the child has worked through the phonemes and their symbols, he can begin the process of reading. However, reading in the Casa does not begin until the child first shows spontaneous reading capabilities. How would a teacher know if the deaf child is spontaneously reading? It would take careful observation. Perhaps the child would sign out a label by finger-spelling and then spontaneously make the Signed English sign for that word. Perhaps there would need to be a more formal and interactive way of figuring out if the child could read. Either way, it would be wise not to start the reading too soon, as that can set a child up for failure.

Once the writing and spoken levels of the child's Signed English are pretty secure, the reading can continue almost as it would with a hearing child. The Phonetic Object Box, the Phonograms, Reading Classification, Function of Words, and Reading Analysis activities would present wonderful opportunities for the child to really experience the English language in a way that perhaps a hearing child could not. The deaf child does not have the grammar and syntax of the language built in his subconscious. He has learned them as a second language, and these reading exercises could really solidify that knowledge in a fun and exciting way.

And last but not least, the deaf child in the Montessori Primary classroom will experience the Mathematics area. This can be accomplished rather easily without the

auditory sense, and the lessons can be given in either ASL or Signed English, depending on the individual. However, it may benefit the child to keep Signed English to the Language area and to utilize and build ASL in the other areas. This is because children learn about the world with greater ease if it is experienced in their native tongue. "In the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, Americans institutionalized the premise that children are best educated, transitionally at least, in their most fluent language" (Lane, p. 120). Also, the child is still forming his first language, and it is very important to continue to support that development.

It appears that a Montessori primary curriculum would be invaluable to deaf children. None of it would be possible, however, without the support of the parents. Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf recognizes this, and includes in their school philosophy that parent involvement plays a crucial role in the academic success of deaf children. The parents need to speak the child's natural language of ASL in front of him and provide experiences for the child to encounter Deaf culture as well as hearing culture (the mainstream). They must also support learning Signed English as a second language. Most importantly, however, all this must be based on a foundation of genuine appreciation and love. ■

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The Intergenerational Program at The Terrace

By Cathy Dorner

Nine years ago, Childpeace Montessori School, located in downtown Portland, was invited to start a Montessori classroom in a newly built assisted-living facility named McAuley Terrace in inner southeast Portland (now known as The Terrace at Laurelhurst Village). The original administration at Mt. St. Joseph planned to include an intergenerational program for the benefit of their residents. Of course, as Montessorians, we were intrigued with this wonderful idea and how a program like this could be just as mutually beneficial to the children. We started our classroom in March 1998.

Since there is little precedent for a Montessori program of this kind, it has been quite a learning process to balance the intergenerational activities, find our proper niche in The Terrace community, and yet still adhere to the Montessori principles of the child's independence and full uninterrupted classroom work periods. We have strived to be careful not to over-stimulate the children yet provide meaningful intergenerational experiences for them. As the years went by we found more and more ways to extend what the children can offer the residents and how to compliment both communities. Now, the Intergenerational (IG) program has developed much farther than we had originally foreseen and is becoming rooted in a growing shared culture of The Terrace and Childpeace School.

Our classroom is located within an assisted-living facility which houses about 60 apartments, a dining room, activity rooms, a garden room, and a few quiet rooms. The outside classroom door leads to the parking

lot. The inside classroom door leads to a lobby area for residents to sit, talk, or read the paper. The beauty salon is beside our classroom and three residents live directly across the hallway from us. We use the laundry facilities and have some of the housekeeping and maintenance services. The school buys its own food and functions independently from Laurelhurst Village for the most part.

The Terrace (or the former McAuley Terrace at Mt. St. Joseph) received a generous grant over seven years ago to create a more accessible courtyard to the residents and

to provide more participation in the garden, as well as a playground area with a play structure for the children. This new courtyard format has a long sidewalk lined with raised flower beds for even wheelchair-bound residents to use. Many perennials, small trees, and shrubs were donated to the



Children share their work with the residents during Open House

landscape. A small fountain adds grace and tranquility and is often a spot where residents like to sit. There is a covered shelter where we have our hot dog barbecues and class picnics in the spring. The courtyard can be accessed through the chapel, the outside entrance, and the dining room area of The Terrace and is open for employees and relatives as well as us. Residents often enjoy taking their daily exercise walking laps around the courtyard.

We began the program with a \$25,000 grant awarded to us by Mt. St. Joseph from Catholic Health Initiatives. This money covered the costs of classroom materials,

furniture, and other operational necessities. I initially began the classroom with eleven three- and four-year-olds from the surrounding neighborhood. As the class grew by the second year we had received an additional grant for an Intergenerational Liaison and hired Carol Johnson who is AMI trained and has had experience working with seniors, as well as the three- to six-year-old children. Unfortunately, that grant only lasted a year and was never renewed due to many financial difficulties. Carol was hired by Childpeace to keep the IG program thriving as well as become one of our staff at The Terrace. Carol was able to continue her Liaison position: connecting the residents with the children, maintaining the program, enrolling residents, communicating with the activities department, and documenting the highlights of the program.

As the Intergenerational Liaison, Carol recruits residents that have a good demeanor with the children. The IG program's most active residents must have a criminal history check (in compliance with our CCD regulations as a preschool facility) in order to visit the classroom on a regular basis. Carol maintains their records and updates them each year.



Children walking through dining room in Chinese New Year parade

Building the Intergenerational Program

Learning how to create and grow an IG program, for us, was based on following the interests of the residents and the children and trying to determine what was working and what was still missing. Originally, we had worked with a smaller number of residents because of these requirements and had minimal contact with the other residents. It became apparent after awhile that we needed to expand the program to other residents who didn't want to read or commit to regular visits with the children. Many of the residents don't feel comfortable being the center of attention or just feel overwhelmed in front of 24 children. Some residents are debilitated due to a stroke, macular degeneration, etc., and are not able

to do that much with the children. We found that we were not reaching out to these residents and giving them the chance to participate in other ways.

This led to a realization that we could be more instrumental in going to these residents for tea visits in their apartments, inviting them to join us for lunch, or having them drop in during our "open houses." Each resident receives child-made soap on their birthday, delivered to their door with cards made by the children. We regularly visit the dining room to sing a few songs during their lunch hour. As we reached out, the residents responded and participated more and began to feel more comfortable in the presence of the children.

What was still missing was a shared culture that brought the generations together and set traditions in place. It took a few years for us to fully understand that we had this unique opportunity to enhance the community and expand the intergenerational boundaries. We decided to host a few social events throughout the year that allowed

the children and residents to follow the seasons and mark the passage of time. Not unlike the children, the residents love festivities, celebrations, and parties. These events brighten their days and connect them with their past. In the fall, we put on a Harvest Party; at Thanksgiving, a luncheon made by the children; caroling at Christmas; a Chinese New Year celebration in February; a spring tea party; and our annual courtyard parade at the end of the school year. Many of the residents remember these events and look forward to them again the following years.

Our smaller, subtler acts are appreciated as well. "Sparkle," our gerbil, doesn't live in the classroom but

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just outside the door where the residents can watch her, too. Our hallways are decorated with seasonal displays, poems, and artwork made by the children. The residents enjoy perusing the walls and windows as they pass by. As I work in the classroom, it is not uncommon to look up and see a curious resident peering through the window. Little things like this have helped us to tie a bond with the resident community. We used to leave bouquets of flowers on the dining room tables but the residents liked them so much, they took the vases to their apartments and we ran out of vases! Just the fact that residents can watch the children as they play on the playground each day is a joyful experience for many. It always surprises us when we get a little card from a resident, who we don't know, thanking us for being here and saying how much he loves to watch them play.

The residents are usually quite appreciative of our presence. For many, it is pleasurable just to watch the children play on the playground or greet them in the hallway. Occasionally we have a resident make a cynical remark or another that just has a grumpy approach with everyone. Thankfully, this is the exception not the rule.

One year we had some problems with our playground and had to play in another grassy area that was very close to some of the residents' windows. One resident in particular complained about the noise. In the classroom later that day, I told the children that maybe some residents were complaining because they did not understand that we couldn't play on our playground and had to play here until the problem was resolved. What if we wrote a note and explained our problem and delivered it to all the residents in that building? We wrote a note and made many copies then quietly walked down the hallways taping the letters to their doors. The next day we received many letters back thanking us for the note and assuring us that they actually enjoyed watching us play and didn't really mind the noise. Even the resident

who had complained the loudest softened her original objection. Our neighbor across the hall grumbles when we get too loud, but she is always one of the first to pop her head in during my prep week and ask when the children are coming back from summer break.

I don't know that we could measure how the residents benefit from our intergenerational program. Though we haven't interviewed residents per se to document the rewards of the program or how they feel about it, the best conclusions come from our daily observations, like a child spontaneously telling a resident she loves her or an older gentleman chuckling from a child's innocent comment or funny story. After one of our annual parades in which we sang the song "Sunflower" as we marched around the courtyard, I heard a man pushing his walker

whistling the same tune all the way down the hallway. These observations come from living with the residents and the children each day. They are frequent yet subtle reinforcements to us that the intergenerational process works.

I often think of my old childhood neighborhood as we walk down the hallway. Having the children there



Celebrating the Chinese New Year with the residents

provides the residents with a more neighborly setting—simple greetings in the hallway, the din from the playground, passing children lugging the laundry basket to the community washing machine, the apartment visits, riding the elevator with children who can't wait to push the button for their floor. Instead of an assisted-living facility, it becomes a living environment that is more genuine and adds a bit of sparkle and depth, thanks to the children.

Thanks to the residents, this kind of environment is full of opportunities for the children to learn acceptance and respect for others outside of their normal experience. Since the building is full of walkers, wheelchairs, scooters, or residents with amputations, minimal vision,

and poor hearing, children learn to accept the handicaps and differences and barely notice them once they have been with us for an initial period of time. They learn how to greet a resident and how to hold the door for them. We have lessons on how to walk safely in the hall, never run because we could hurt a resident or knock her down. We need to use quiet voices because if we are noisy in the hallway we could be disturbing a resident's nap, a TV show, a phone conversation, a visit with a relative, or letter writing. This is their home. That is why they are called "residents."

Generosity towards the residents comes naturally to the children. Offerings of spring strawberries, flowers, pumpkins, a child-made button brooch, an embroidered swatch, a painting, and a little poem are frequent and a great delight to the recipient. All the events, decorations, and crafts are made in some way or another for the benefit of the residents and to give the child a deeper purpose for doing or creating them. The act of giving is so spontaneous and simple yet very powerful to the child when they see a creased face bloom into a radiant smile and receive a grateful hug. The child's happiness comes purely from the giving act. In a "give-me" world, this is a profound experience that all children would be lucky to have.

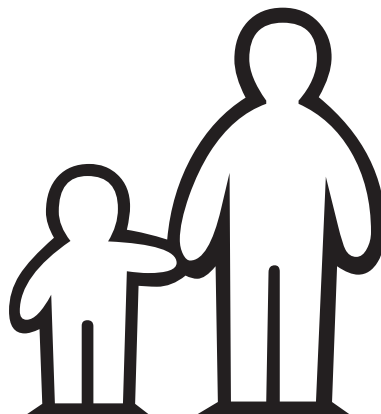
The children develop strong bonds with the most familiar residents. One of our older girls loved Jeanette, a resident that had to move to the Seattle area last year. The girl made a special little button brooch and wrote a letter. Unfortunately, I didn't see the letter until coming upon it while I was cleaning during prep week. I sent the letter to Jeanette with a translation of the girl's letter so she could read it. The letter read:

Dear Jeanette, I miss you. I made a present for you. I am worried about you because you haven't written me and I am so worried. Are you sick? I love you Sophia.

Jeanette immediately sent a letter back with a little writing tablet as a gift to Sophia and assured her that she was fine. They communicate regularly now. By the time a child has been in our program three years, he/she has made a very special connection with one or more

residents and each has a story like this to tell.

Sometimes residents die. Carol does a wonderful job talking to the children about this subject. They seem to understand that residents are at the end of life and that their bodies can just wear out. We try to take a matter-of-fact approach to the life/death cycle and provide a process for the children to express their feelings by making gifts, sometimes a quilt for the family, and ceremoniously planting a rock in our memory garden outside. Rhoda, one of our residents with macular degeneration, had a very frank conversation with the children after one of the residents had died. She had told them that she knew that she would die someday but it didn't worry her much. "It makes me feel good knowing that there will always be a child like one of you to take my place when I go."



Currently, we are in the process of recording the lives of the residents most involved with the children. These stories of the residents are told and read over and over and become a permanent part of our oral and written tradition in the classroom. These wonderful stories will remain in posterity.

We hope to see similar programs sprout up around the country. Maybe there are other Montessori programs in assisted-living facilities that we are not aware of. It certainly would have been helpful to have a precedent to go on rather than

to stumble along through trial and error. For this reason, we would love to share our experiences with current programs and/or help shape future programs based on what has worked for us. Intergenerational programs are a wonderful way to: 1) reverse the present trend toward age segregation by bringing the generations together in ways that children often don't experience these days; 2) expand the potential for many more intergenerational programs as more and more of these kinds of facilities are built and our population ages; and 3) set the groundwork for a more integrated and caring society as children and elders bring out the best in each other and shine a light on the rest of us in between. ■

Cathy Dorner has been a guide at the Terrace for nine years and with Childpeace Montessori school for 16 years. On weekends and after school she likes to head straight for the garden.

Inclusion

By Elizabeth Hale-MacKinnon

Inclusion is when my 14-month-old child looks into the kitchen and sees her dining table set with a lovely iris and table linen, when she crawls into the living room to find the miniature conga set upon a cloth by the hearth ready for her little hands to strike, when we walk hand-in-hand into her bedroom to make her bed, a handmade mattress nestled into a frame made by her father and her uncle, and then when she takes a tiny cloth from the laundry basket and goes to wipe off her small rocking chair, then her large mirror, the image of a magnolia next to her bed in a frame hung low and then to fold the cloth and know right where it should be stored.

In this beginning of her life, we are eager to facilitate her involvement and her independence; we want her to know that her environment is predictable and ordered. We want to provide for her a myriad of opportunities for exploration and real work. Wait and observe, be available but not in the middle of her activity. She knows we are nearby and she can trust that her work is important and will not be interrupted. Most of all we want her to know that she belongs and that we value her in our family.

If each child were so welcomed and encouraged in his natural impulses, who would we find filling the children's house? Who then would those children be as they devour Cosmic Education and search, questioning and studying people as adolescents, certainly, who would these children be as adults?

Let's remember the importance of this first social group that the child experiences and as educators. Let's empower parents and always recognize the need for partnership in the work of supporting the child in his awe-inspiring task of self-construction, which begins at home. ■

Elizabeth Hale-MacKinnon is a mother and Montessorian.

Graduation

By Cathy Dorner



When I was a young child
Just maybe two or three
I first came to this classroom
As scared as I could be

Everyone was nice to me
I learned to find my way
I practiced all my lessons
And grew each and every day

Then one day the teacher said
Its time to graduate
I felt happy and excited
For I could hardly wait

I practiced my last lessons
And polished all the cups
I swept the floor so neatly
You could not see the dust

We passed around the amethyst
With best wishes and good thoughts
We sang the friendship song
And I blew the candle out

Now its time for my new school
But... I never will forget
All the lessons I have learned
And the friends that I have met

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Inclusion: A Colorful Journey

By Dave Andrews

You are born “in.” You are part of a community. You are born into a society that by its very nature includes you. You – and your parents when you were young – had and still have hopes and dreams and believe that you have a right to choose your own future and make decisions for yourself. You will meet many people along your journey and you will experience many opportunities, which in turn will provide you with more opportunities. You will mingle with society and have an opportunity to meet many people. Some of these people will be acquaintances, some you will have relationships with, and a few will become your close friends. Your journey is colorful.

How would you feel if someone told you none of the above is true for you? How would you feel if others said you did not have a right to be part of society and you could not be included, but rather, you had to be excluded? Well, maybe you could play with others for a half-hour a day, but otherwise you had no right to be a part of your community. What if someone told you the only reason you can’t be part of your community is because you are different? A body part works differently, your brain works differently, or you act differently so you do not have a right to be in your community. You can’t do what you would normally do because you are different. Does it sound like discrimination? Does it sound illegal? Does it sound immoral? Does it sound unnatural? Does it sound colorful?

It is unnatural. It is discrimination. When we think about the above situation we see gray. Yet this is what happens to children with disabilities in our society. The fact is disability *is natural*. It is a natural part of human existence. There always have been people with disabilities and there always will be people with disabilities. Unfortunately, our society continues to view disabilities as unnatural. We pity people with disabilities rather than treating disability like gender and ethnicity. We exclude people rather than include disability as one of many natural characteristics of being human. We, as a society, can no longer permit people to be excluded. Exclusion is morally wrong and begets profound loneliness. We need to create a colorful journey for people with disabilities from birth to death.

How do we begin? How do we create a colorful journey? There are three aspects to creating a successful inclusion environment. Believing in it philosophically, believing all children can learn, and very importantly, believing you can do it. The first and most important piece is that you have to believe in inclusion. You must believe that inclusion makes a difference. You must believe in inclusion, not because inclusion is “in,” or because you have to, but because it is right to give all children equal opportunity to participate with their peers. Say to yourself, “All children with a disability have a right to be included in an environment they would otherwise be in if they did not have a body part that works differently.” Fair means that each child has access, opportunity, and modifications made so they can experience life like any other child. Inclusion is a moral imperative. Successful inclusion cannot happen until you truly believe that it should.

Once you believe inclusion is a moral imperative you need to understand disability is a social construct. Norman Kunc is an adult with cerebral palsy who lectures to people around the world about living with a disability. He says there are two definitions of disability: 1) Disability “as a series of limitations” which comes from the perspective of people without disabilities. Norman says people with a disability define disability as 2) “How I am perceived by society.” This is how the social construct of disability is formed. We need to change our attitude about disability and rather than see it as a limitation, we need to assume competence. Every child deserves to have common, ordinary experiences. Assume a child is thinking, caring, and has feelings. Even if that child is not showing us what he/she knows we need to show that child respect, not just love, but r-e-s-p-e-c-t, and we need to have high expectations. Why can’t a child listen to Shakespeare? Assume competence. Is it true that every child hears every word and understands everything you are saying?

Our thoughts about people with disabilities need to be re-framed from “what is impossible” to “what is possible.” People with disabilities will do more when we provide circles of support among peers and community and expect more. Currently, according to Kathy Snow,

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a disability advocate, 75% of adults with a disability are unemployed. There are fascinating stories out there about people with significant disabilities who are part-owners of businesses, live with a circle of friends, and live colorful lives.

The third aspect of making inclusion successful is to believe in yourself. Believe you can do it, because you can!!! There are medical professionals, special educators, teachers, and others in society who think teachers are not able to provide the quality services a child with a disability deserves, so therefore the child must be removed to get what he or she “needs.” I differ from some of my colleagues in this assumption. I know that well-trained teachers who understand individualized instruction, are open to adaptations, accommodations, and support from a team can not only do the work, *but can do it better*. Who better than the child’s teacher, who knows him better than anyone outside the family, to have a positive influence and effect change?

It is not easy. You must work hard to make inclusion happen successfully. Parents, teachers, and specialists CAN work together to make inclusion work. Working hard, using area resources, and making a few adaptations and accommodations can be the difference between failure and success. It is everyone’s job to teach ALL children. All children deserve equal opportunities.

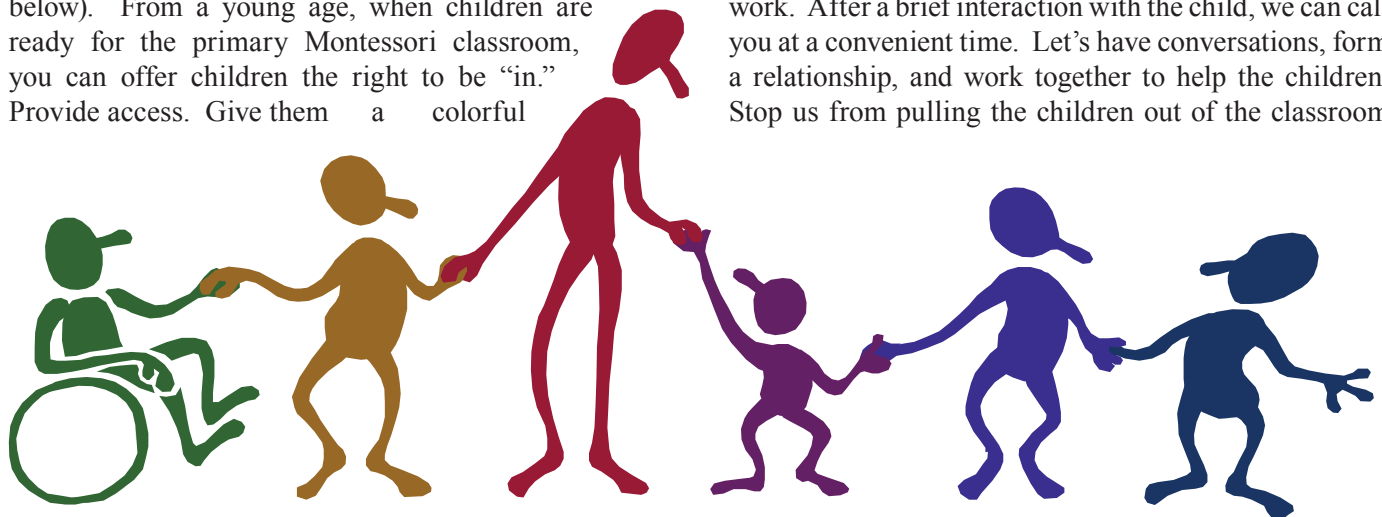
What does inclusion mean to Montessori? Inclusion is a societal issue, but schools could be the places that pave the way to what is right. Sadly, public and private schools continue to be a place where exclusion is encouraged. Private schools open to only the “best and the brightest” and public schools exclude without addressing the least restrictive environment (See IDEA web site listed below). From a young age, when children are ready for the primary Montessori classroom, you can offer children the right to be “in.” Provide access. Give them a colorful

opportunity to make friends and be in a classroom.

We need to ask ourselves the right questions about what we believe to be true and what may be possible. I know, having been involved in Montessori for a long time, Montessori teachers are well trained! Montessori teachers individualize lessons and work for every child. Every child in a Montessori classroom has a modified curriculum. All children in a Montessori classroom have different reasonable accommodations. I know it is not easy to teach all children. It takes a deep commitment, hard work, and humor, but Montessori teachers are just as capable as the special education teacher who has 12 children with disabilities in her self-contained classroom. In a Montessori classroom children have opportunities for a variety of friendships and true intrinsic motivation. I know Montessori defines itself as a community. I encourage you to be a true *inclusive* community. To be an inclusive community takes work. Challenge your assumptions and know that there are supports and resources available to help you teach every child.

I know some of us who are specialists in this community perpetuate this myth that we need to be the ones to teach the children. I also know from working in early childhood special education for almost 15 years that 30 minutes a week at a table in the hallway will not make the same difference as 15 to 30 hours a week in a Montessori classroom.

How does early childhood special education and the medical profession fit in? If we come to your school, open your doors, let us observe and invite the child we work with to make tea or “participate in that routine to the maximum extent possible” (another IDEA phrase). Maybe the child can invite us to a rug or a table to see his work. After a brief interaction with the child, we can call you at a convenient time. Let’s have conversations, form a relationship, and work together to help the children. Stop us from pulling the children out of the classroom



for their “specialized instruction.” We need to work together to make agreements, inform each other about what we know and believe. Montessori teachers have an in-depth understanding of child development and the importance of real, meaningful work. I understand that to raise a child it truly “takes a village.” Nobody can do it alone. Teachers need the support of parents, specialists, and other educators. I believe all children deserve the best. To give our children the best, we do need to challenge our fears about disability and turn fears into hopes and dreams. All children deserve to live life with many friends and enjoy a colorful journey. ■

Dave Andrews is a speech-language pathologist in the early intervention program at Multnomah Education Service District. He is a proud father of two children who have been in Montessori since the age of three – Julian (12) and Evan (8) – and co-founder of the Montessori Spouses Support Group (thanks to wife, Sarah). Dave can be reached by email at dandrew1@mesd.k12.or.us.

Resources for further learning and where many of the above ideas come from:

www.inclusion.com has many great articles
and information

www.disabilityisnatural.com is Kathy
Snow’s website

normemma.com is Norman Kunc’s website

rtc.umn.edu/main/ is Connie Lyle-O’
Brien’s website

www.capacityworks.com is a site about
“Person-Centered Planning”

www.include.com.au/index.html is an
Australian web site. It’s worldwide!

idea.ed.gov/ Go to part B and search for
“least restrictive environment”

www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr320.shtml A Doug Fisher article.

www.nwdsa.org

Inclusion names to know (search for):
Jeff Strully, Jack Pearpoint, Doug Fisher

Classroom Friends

By the staff and students of Odyssey Montessori School

Jeannine is a currently a student at Odyssey Montessori School, finishing her fourth year in the Trillium Room with Sarah Andrews. Jeannine came to Odyssey after four years of primary at West Hills Montessori working with Barbara Bennick. During Jeannine’s first year of elementary, her mother came in two mornings a week to assist her transition and work on reading skills. For a brief period during Jeannine’s second year, a speech-language pathologist visited her once a month, but Jeannine’s principle teachers have been her classmates, herself, and the adults in her environment (probably in that order!). Jeannine is looking forward to moving on to the upper elementary classroom in September and rejoining many of her former classmates and friends.

Jeannine Cleary

By Marie O’Berry

Jeannine is a friend of mine, she is 11 years old with Down Syndrome. She is in the third grade and I have been working with Jeannine and I’ve realized that she is just like everyone else. She is a great kid. I think that she is really nice and really sweet and a winner. Sometimes she kind of lacks confidence and just forgets everything, but with a little help, she snaps back. I think that if you were to know her, you would love just love her. Jeannine’s interests are in: Math, Art, Music, language, and T.V.!

The End

Marie O’Berry is an upper elementary student at Odyssey Montessori.

Here’s what other friends had to say about Jeannine:

“Jeannine is very, very kind and helpful. I would be so happy if she learned subtraction. I love Jeannine, and when I came to this school I was already liking her!”
– Emma, age 7

“I like Jeannine because sometimes she is really funny. When I first came to Odyssey Jeannine didn’t really like me and I didn’t really like her but now that I’ve been here longer she began to like me more and I began to like her

(continued next page)

more. Now I love Jeannine!" – *Mara, age 6*

"Well, what I like about Jeannine is that every day she starts the day with a hug. She always is kind, but she also likes to work. She has lots of friends and I think she is especially kind to everyone." – *Harper, age 7*

"Jeannine is a very nice person, but when she decides something, it is very hard to change her mind." – *Leo, age 8*

"Jeannine has been in our classroom with me since the first day I was here. She has been friendly, helpful, and comforting ever since then. She loves helping me and is always eager to make me feel better or give me a hug. Being in a classroom with her has been such a fun and happy experience. I'm so glad that we came to be in the same classroom." – *Sarajo, age 8* ■



WHERE ARE YOU LITTLE PINK TOWER CUBE?

By Cathy Dorner

*I'm ready now and know what to do.
My rug is waiting but where are you?
Last time I looked I saw you were there.
But, now, I can't find you anywhere.*

*Could you be hiding under the rug
By the missing marker - ladybug?
Are you crouched behind the marble rock;
Inside layers of the fabric box?*

*Are you peaking around a green leaf?
Keeping secrets with the golden beads?
Do you care if you are found at all?
Is your hiding place against the wall?*

*Little pink cube, so easy to lose
Never there when I'm ready to choose.
I could end this ridiculous game
If, you would only call out your name.*

*When you are found you will stand so tall
Topping my tower as small as you are
In my fingertips you sweetly fit
Come to my lips and give me a kiss.*

OMA Administrators' Group

By Jude Foster

Our Administrators' Group has met three times this year—fall, winter, and spring. In mid-April we gathered at a nice downtown restaurant for a dinner meeting. The later hour brought in some new and different administrators, including several from out of town. We found ourselves talking for 3 1/2 hours!

Although we have almost fifty heads of schools and assistant administrators on our group membership list, our actual meetings tend to include less than twenty, no matter when or where we gather together. Each meeting brings at least one new person into our circle, and we hope for even more next year. Of course, we stay connected, sharing vital information and support, through email.

This is the Centenary year, and it has been our consistent focus. From the January 6 event that Childpeace coordinated, to the Centenary banners that Peter Davidson initiated and many schools are displaying, to the grand Pioneer Square celebration being planned for next September, we have found meaningful projects to work on together.

It's the power of synergy—by combining our energies, it is possible to create results that are greater than the sum of our parts. From the smallest in-home Montessori to the largest multi-age school, and no matter our training or affiliation, we are all in this work together. We are co-creators! Where will we go from here? ■

Jude Foster is the Administrators' Group Liaison to the OMA Board. She can be contacted at office@harmony-montessori.com.

SCHOOL NEWS

All Roads Learning Community

All Roads has been in the throes of a remodel—adding eight hundred square feet in a dedicated space for our little infant and toddler community. We began this process in November, and anticipate that we'll be able to move in to our beautiful new room mid/late June.

The remodel process has been a learning experience, and balancing the excavating, hammering, working, plumbing, wiring, and general constructing with the day to day of the school has been, well, interesting is one word I guess. I have been continually amazed at our toddlers' ability to sleep through house shaking sawing.

All Roads will re-open in the fall with sixteen children between six months and three years old. We invite you to come in and visit with us, or observe in our unique little community.

Franciscan Montessori Earth School and St. Francis Academy

As Montessori students progress through their curriculum, one hopes that they come to view themselves as part of a far larger community. Beginning with their experiences in the Toddler and Children's House environments, our students gain insight into the nature of communal existence. As this experience is built during their multi-year tenures in their respective environments, they become members of a group in a way that is outside the experience of most students today. The Montessori

(continued next page)



method creates a social dynamic quite unlike that of the traditional school or classroom.

Beyond our own school community, however, the school itself is a member of a community, and as such must be part of the dynamic that is our “neighborhood.” Outer Southeast Portland is a rich tapestry of people, with a tremendous diversity among its members. In addition to wide-ranging ethnic and cultural diversity, there are also economic and social factors that make this area quite different from other parts of the metropolitan region.

The Franciscan Montessori Earth School and St. Francis Academy community play a part in a number of area groups. Students, staff, and parents have all learned the value of this “inclusiveness.” We work in unison with the neighborhood associations of East Portland, not only as a business member, but also as means of placing our students in the position to participate in activities that promote their academic and social growth. Our students also participate with area schools, as part of sports, robotics, chess, and other projects, while our staff and parents work within these outside groups to promote greater opportunities for our students to enjoy the benefits of these larger communities. As the community around our school grows and changes, our students and families participate in that growth.

No education is complete unless it is part of the “real world.” At the Franciscan Montessori Earth School and St. Francis Academy, this is a “built-in” part of our mission. Our community reaps the benefits of the Montessori philosophy, and the greater community benefits as well.

Montessori School of Beaverton

2007 marks the 30th anniversary of the Montessori School of Beaverton! It also marks the 20th year with the school for upper elementary teacher Kathleen Berry, and the 26th year for administrators Mary and Peter Davidson.

Mary and Peter have decided that after 26 years it's time to step aside and find others to lead the school. Mary will be moving to Arizona this June to live with daughter Rachel and help raise her four grandchildren. Carol Bennett, longtime MSB Office Manager who will complete the AMI Primary Training this summer, will

step into Mary's place as Assistant Administrator. Peter will follow Mary in a year, once a new Head of School has been found. Peter and Mary feel blessed to have been part of the creation of a school that will continue to serve children and make the world a better place for another 30 years at least. They are also grateful for their many friends within the Oregon Montessori community and will miss you all as they go forward to write a new chapter in their lives.

Two Rivers Montessori School

We are pleased to announce to the Montessori community what was recently announced to our school community: Two Rivers and Odyssey Montessori schools are intending to merge into one school, no later than summer 2008. Our boards have been working together on this and will continue to proceed to implement the plan. Meanwhile, we have also decided to combine our elementary programs beginning fall of 2007. The elementary program will be at Odyssey's site on Shattuck Road, with two lower and one large upper elementary class. Jennifer Dannenfelser from Two Rivers will join Annabeth Jensen in teaching the upper elementary class. We have many parents and staff with significant relationships at both schools already, and we are looking forward to becoming a united community over the upcoming months.

On April 21, Two Rivers held its annual auction-dinner event. This year was a bit different, in that the event was held in a very attractive restaurant location, at Kell's in Old Town. The following weekend, we had our Earth Day celebration and outdoor work party, with the majority of our parents and children participating. We're looking forward to good weather again and seeing the children enjoying outdoor work in our extensive garden areas. Summer class will again begin in late June under the guidance of Cicek Brigande.

Northwest Montessori Middle School Update

Nearly a year ago I wrote a letter to the Montessori community announcing our plans to open a Montessori Farm School in the Portland area. As many reading this already know, despite the hard work and deep commitment of everyone involved, and the generous support of Montessori families, friends, and institutions, Northwest Montessori Middle School will not be opening this September. We were unable to secure an adequate

site and attract a sufficient number of students to make the program feasible. Accordingly, the plans for such a school have been put on hold indefinitely. The Northwest Montessori Middle School board will be meeting later this month to determine the future of the nonprofit.

Even though we were not successful, Montessori's vision for adolescents was compelling enough to inspire contributions of money and time to what was at first little more than speculation. I cannot begin to adequately

express my gratitude for the hard work, dedication, and unprecedented support of everyone involved with this endeavor. I know that *erdkinder's* time will come to the Northwest, and our work will have been part of the preparation.

Questions, concerns, or condolences can be directed to me at my non-Montessori email address, daveayer@yahoo.com. Once again, thank you to all who supported us. ■



NEWS FROM THE MONTESSORI INSTITUTE NORTHWEST

The Institute is preparing for some exciting changes to our staff and for our next stages of growth. Corinne Burden, our dedicated Course Assistant of four years, will be returning to the Children's House with the new name of Corinne Stastny. She will be moving to the San Francisco area with her new husband, Ed. She is looking forward to returning to the classroom and will treasure the years she spent at MINW as Course Assistant. Sally Coulter will be our new Primary Course Assistant, beginning in the fall. Sally's background as an event and personal organizer, strong connection to the most current MINW course content and excellent Aussie attitude will be of great benefit to our community. Megan Mitchell, who trained with both Ginni and Shannon Helfrich through the summers of 2003-2005 and has spent many years with West Hills Montessori, will also be joining the MINW staff to support both the Pedagogical and Administrative aspects of the Institute.

Upcoming Events

Be sure you are on our mailing list and watch our website, www.montessori-nw.org, to get the most current information. We are about to publish our full workshop schedule for next year. It will include workshops for parents, A to I, Primary and Elementary levels. Here are some highlights, with more exciting updates coming soon.



Introduction to Montessori Education

August 20-31: Ginni Sackett will present the Introduction to Montessori Course (formerly known as the Assistants Course). This two-week course is designed for Montessori classroom assistants, parents, administrators, prospective teachers, and individuals simply interested in learning more about Montessori as an educational alternative.

Participants look at human development from birth to adulthood (with an emphasis on 0-6); adult-child relationships; and environments that support optimal development.

Saturday Seminar for School Communities

August 25, 10am to 3pm: Saturday Seminar on Parent Partnerships. This seminar, free for teachers and administrators who offer to host MINW Observers and Practice Teachers, will explore the many ways every staff member can build a productive partnership with every parent.

Teacher Education

September 5, 2007 – June 8, 2008 is the 30th Primary Teacher Training Course offered through the Montessori Institute Northwest. There are some spaces still available in the course.

The first MINW Assistants to Infancy course will be reconvening and concluding during the summer of 2007. We look forward to hosting Patricia Wallner again during the summers of 2008-2009 for another wonderful Assistants to Infancy Course. ■

CLASSIFIEDS

Check www.oregonmontessori.org for the most up-to-date listings.

All School Support Position

Come join our team at West Hills Montessori! West Hills Schools was founded over 40 years ago with the mission to provide a quality Montessori educational environment to primary age children (ages 3-6). Today, West Hills Schools has 13 classrooms at four different campuses serving children ages 3-12. West Hills Schools is committed to the growth and development of each individual child. This commitment to the "whole child" and his/her well being remains the foundation for our community.

West Hills Montessori is seeking an enthusiastic candidate to work in an all school support position from 8:30am-1:30pm, Monday-Friday. Position begins Monday, August 20.

Duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting children and families in school drop-off lane.
- Assisting or substituting in the classroom as necessary.
- Scheduling and assisting with parent observations.
- Responsible for assigning and notifying teachers of classroom observations.
- Coordinating and conducting campus tours.
- Assisting office staff, including answering telephones.
- Preparing, maintaining, and distributing information packets.
- Assisting with classroom material making.
- Helping with workroom maintenance and upkeep.
- Assisting children with lunch in the classroom and on the playground.

Candidate must have, or be willing to obtain, First Aid/CPR certification, Food Handlers card and Criminal History registry.

Job location is West Hills Montessori School, SW Portland. Interested applicants may fax cover letter and resume to 503-246-5496 or email to westhillspdx@comcast.net.

Classroom material making service available in Portland! Consider outsourcing your language materials, sewing projects and/or refurbish work. I specialize in the primary classroom and am an AMI-trained guide. Contact: Monica Motsko, M.Ed. at 503-244-5155. Hourly rate or project bids available. FREE local pick-up and delivery for your convenience.

Executive Director Needed

Anchorage Montessori School, an American Montessori Society affiliate, is accepting applications for Executive Director. Previous administrator/head of school experience and/or American Montessori Society teacher certification is desired but not mandatory. The ED is responsible for the day-to-day operation and leadership of the School in connection with the Director of Education.

Experience and Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in child development, education, business or public administration or related area required.
- Experience running a non-profit organization and successfully managing competing priorities, ideally in a school setting.
- Communication and advocacy skills, as well as the ability to build and maintain strong relationships with staff, families and community.
- Skill in overseeing and balancing educational, financial and business objectives.
- College credits in early childhood development, educational practices, child psychology or equivalent desired.

If you are interested in applying for this opportunity, please send a resume and cover letter to:

Anchorage Montessori School
Attention: Sally Mead
5001 Northwood Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99517
Fax: (907) 243-9963

Application review will begin May 11, 2007. For information on the school, visit www.anchoragemontessorischool.org.

Greenstone Montessori School for children ages 3-12 is opening a search for:

- Substitute Guides and Assistants needed in both Primary and Elementary available immediately for on-call, as needed
- Part-time shift work for our Childcare Program. Current shifts available: 6-9am, 11:50-1:30, 1:30-3pm, and 3-6pm, M-F
- AMI Primary Guide starting 2007
- AMI Children's House materials – we are starting a new classroom in 2007

To apply, please send resume to: admissions@greenstonemontessori.com.

For more information go to: www.greenstonemontessori.com, or call 503-759-3212.

Corvallis Montessori School Seeks 2 AMI Elementary Guides Beginning Fall 2007

One is for lower elementary, in a classroom that is very well-established and completely equipped. The other is for upper elementary, in a developing program. Spanish language and experience preferred. Compensation includes benefits package and professional development.

View our website at www.corvallismontessori.org. Interested applicants please send resume and references to Trish Miller, CMS, 2730 NW Greeley Avenue, Corvallis, OR 97330-2400 or email trish@corvallismontessori.org.

Part Time Team Teaching Position Available

Come join our team at West Hills Montessori! West Hills Schools was founded over 40 years ago with the mission to provide a quality Montessori educational environment to primary age children (ages 3-6). Today, West Hills Schools has 13 classrooms at four different campuses serving children ages 3-12. West Hills Schools is committed to the growth and development of each individual child. This commitment to the "whole child" and his/her well being remains the foundation for our community.

West Hills Montessori is seeking an enthusiastic candidate to work as a team teacher in a Montessori classroom from 12:30-3:30pm, Monday-Friday. Position begins Monday, August 20.

Team teaching position boasts the following:

- Working in cooperation with AMI trained Montessori guide to create lesson plans, work daily with children, communicate with parents, and maintain environment.
- Established classroom with experienced assistant.
- Fully equipped classroom of Montessori materials.
- Campus nestled in the heart of Lake Oswego on 3 acres.
- Access to workroom staff for material making projects.
- Professional development/In-Service days scheduled throughout the year.
- Scheduled weekly time to meet with and dialogue with co-team teacher regarding classroom development, lesson plans and projects.

Candidate must have AMI Primary Teacher Training certificate. Candidate must have, or be willing to obtain, First Aid/CPR certification, Food Handlers card and Criminal History registry.

Job location is West Hills Montessori School, Lake Oswego.

Interested applicants may fax cover letter and resume to 503-246-5496 or email to westhillspdx@comcast.net.

Full-Time Support Staff Position

All Roads Learning Community, a Montessori community for infants and toddlers, is seeking a full-time support staff to begin late summer. Please see our website – www.allroads.org – for more information about our program, and direct your interest to Mercedes Castle at info@allroads.org.

Providence Montessori School: Managing Director Opportunity Available

The Sisters of Providence opened the doors for students over 40 years ago establishing the first Montessori School in the Pacific Northwest. Over the years it has grown to be one of the largest and highly regarded Montessori schools in the area. In the pursuit of excellence, we continue to work together, with creativity and enthusiasm, implementing the Montessori method of education in classroom communities of children 3-6 years of age.

Our Managing Director is under the general direction and supervision of Providence Child Center's Operations Administrator, this position is responsible for the overall operation of the Providence Montessori School and its before and after-school child care programs. Responsibilities include general program management, staffing & personnel, staff development, budget management, and interface with children, parents, visitors, and the Parent Advisory Board.

Requirements include a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in early childhood education or closely related field AND hold a Montessori teaching credential in a nationally recognized Montessori teacher-training program. Two years of teaching classroom experience preferably in preschool or K-3, with a minimum of two years successful management experience with proven ability to organize and direct educational programs and activities.

For more information, please email Fiona.Gladden@Providence.org, call 503-215-4163 (toll free: 877-JOIN PHS), or apply online at www.providence.org/careers (job #8440)

AMI Employment Listings: The Montessori Institute Northwest regularly receives Job Announcements from schools around the world. Positions are usually for AMI Primary Guides, but also often include different levels and positions as well. Come by the Institute and browse our Employment Opportunities Binder. Also, keep us in mind as a means for advertising your positions to the AMI community. 4506 SE Belmont, Portland, FAX: 503-963-8994. ■



OMA Centenary Celebration in Pioneer Courthouse Square

Mark your calendars and plan to attend and support one of the biggest and best Centenary Celebrations in the country! We have reserved Pioneer Courthouse Square for the afternoon of Sunday, September 30, to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Dr. Montessori's first classroom with children's activities, an active display classroom, information booths, and a huge community sing-along featuring beloved Montessori teacher and songwriter Sanford Jones! Let's get every possible Montessori family past and present to come to Portland's Living Room and show the city what a large and powerful and positive group we really are!

To make this dream a reality we need everyone's participation. What can you do to help?

Be a sponsor. Already five schools have stepped up to be major \$500 sponsors but we need more! We also need additional sponsors at the \$250 level.

Join the Task Force. If you have ideas and energy, send an email to peter@msb.org and let us know!

Get your school organized. Many schools will offer information at booths on the square. There will also be larger children's activity booths which will need community participation and staffing to be successful. Think of an activity your school could provide. Walking on the line? Great Lessons? Consider contributing furniture, materials, and supervision to the "living classroom." Perhaps one of your classrooms would like to present a song or dance on the stage? Dust off your old Sanford Jones song books and start this spring re-introducing the old favorites and teaching new ones so that by September, the sing-along feels like the truest expression of our community's spirit.

FORZA VITALE!

Vol. 27, No. 1

A Newsletter for People Active in Montessori Education

Fall 2007

Greetings!

As I left my house early Sunday morning, arms full of materials and displays for the Montessori 100 gathering, my husband looked at me dubiously. He suggested that there wouldn't be 'much going on' down at Pioneer Courthouse Square that day. Boy, was he wrong! What a party we had for ourselves. Although it was wet and cold, it was a Montessori peace, love and music jamboree.

Despite the rain, the regional Montessori community came together in an effort that surely made the Mamolina proud. The planning and preparation for this uplifting event took place during a very busy back to school month. I cannot think of a better way to set the intention for the 2007/08 year. It was so inspiring to see so many Montessorians make their way through the rain and construction to visit and connect with their colleagues. More than once I heard folks remark how we should do this more often, rather than waiting for another century to pass.

How fitting that in this issue of the *Forza Vitale!* we reflect on music and movement in the Montessori classroom. Our classroom echoes with the singing and rhythm making of the children. We hope that you, too, will be inspired to dance and sing in your classroom and beyond.

In peace,

Mercedes Castle
Annie Noonan
OMA Board Co-Chairs

In This Issue . . .

Baric Tablets as an Indirect
Preparation for Music?

Music and Movement

The Language of Music



Forza Vitale!

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Forza Vitale!, published three times a year, is the official newsletter of the Oregon Montessori Association. Submissions of articles, reviews, school news, anecdotes and the like are encouraged. Address all correspondence to the Newsletter representatives of the OMA Board, listed below.



The Oregon Montessori Association was founded in 1979 to support the community of Montessori professionals, schools, parents, students, and all others interested in Montessori and early childhood education.

Oregon Montessori Association is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.

OMA Website: www.oregonmontessori.org

OMA Contact Information:

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P.O. Box 80151, Portland, OR 97280
503-939-8235

E-mail: oregonmontessori@yahoo.com

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Elaina Wolff Lena Wood
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Jude Foster Donna Hargrave
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Board Members

Julie DiLorenzo Cathy Dörner
Sue Ann Gillingham Vesna Kostur

Layout: Donna Andrews
donna.andrews@yahoo.com



CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

2-4 Public Montessori School Conference
Hartford, Connecticut
Association Montessori Internationale (USA)
<http://www.montessori-ami.org/>

7 Free Information Session: Learn about Montessori
6:30pm - 8:30pm
Montessori Institute Northwest
www.montessori-nw.org

10 LanguageArea Review: Spoken Language
10:00am - 12:00pm
Montessori Institute Northwest
www.montessori-nw.org

JANUARY

18 Celebration of Light
5:00 - 7:00pm
Montessori Institute Northwest
www.montessori-nw.org

19-20 American Montessori Society Head of Schools Retreat
Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
http://www.amshq.org/events_Retreats.htm

26 Mathematics Area Review: Effortless Memorization
10:00am - 12:00pm
Montessori Institute Northwest
www.montessori-nw.org

31-Feb. 3 Montessori and Special Education: A Contemporary Assessment
Austin, TX (Venue TBA)
North American Montessori Teacher's Association
<http://www.montessori-namta.org/NAMTA/NAMServs/confsched.html>

FEBRUARY

2 ¿Cómo Se Dice? Easy Spanish Extensions for the Elementary
Presented by Elise Huneke-Stone
10:00am - 3:00 pm
Montessori Institute Northwest
www.montessori-nw.org

6 Primary Workshop: "The Montessori Day: Creating Flow for each Stage of the Child's Day"
6:30pm - 8:30 pm
Montessori Institute Northwest
www.montessori-nw.org

13, 20, 27 Positive Parenting: What You Can Do As a Parent
Presented by Venus Zaron (series of three workshops)
6:30 - 8:30 pm
Montessori Institute Northwest
www.montessori-nw.org

6-9 A Montessori Orientation to the Psychological and Social Development Roles of the Disciplines
Portland, OR
North American Montessori Teacher's Association ■

Meet the OMA Board

Mercedes Castle is a guide and founder of All Roads Learning Community, an infant and toddler Montessori community in Southwest Portland. Mercedes is currently serving her fourth and final term as the OMA Co-Chair. She is a mama and a wife and in her spare time enjoys singing, playing the guitar, and plotting for world peace.

Julie DiLorenzo is a fourth generation educator whose family is deeply rooted in Eastern Oregon. She is currently enjoying her fifth year of teaching at the Montessori School of Beaverton alongside colleagues who continue to inspire and support her. Julie is a happy resident of St. John's in North Portland who spends her time sewing and gardening. She was introduced to Montessori education through her husband, Lucius, a former Montessori student and is looking forward to serving our community with OMA members.

Cathy Dörner has been a primary guide at Childpeace Montessori School for the last 16 years. The last 9 of those years she started a satellite classroom in an assisted living facility and created and implemented an intergenerational program with the residents and the children. She enjoys hiking and archaeology in her free time. She also enjoys spending time in her vegetable garden and is fond of rutabagas.

Jude Foster is the founder and Head of Harmony Montessori School. For the last three years, she has served as the coordinator of the OMA Administrators' Group, encouraging communication and connections within our Montessori community; she is happy to be sharing that role with Donna Hargrave this year. This informal liaison position led her into a second cycle of service on the OMA Board. Jude has three children who are no longer children – with her youngest son a freshman at the University of Oregon this fall, she is entering a new phase in her life, after many years of single parenting. In addition to building community at Harmony, and in the OMA, Jude is now an active resident and member of a co-housing community in northwest Portland. Her great joy is that her granddaughter lives there too!

Sue Anne Gillingham is a primary trained guide currently working in the infant/toddler community at All Roads Learning Community. The perk to this placement is that

she gets to spend the day with her 2-year-old daughter!

Donna Hargrave has been a teaching administrator for 20 years and an AMI primary teacher for 25 years. Her school, Camas Montessori School, is a non-profit. She has served on the OMA board in years past, and now serves as a liaison between the OMA Administrators group and the OMA board. She has been married for 32 years and has a son, Adam and a daughter, Danae, both of whom were Montessori primary children.

Annie Noonan is currently serving her third year as a member of the Board of OMA, and is continually impressed by the diversity and passion of the Montessori community in Portland and surrounding area. When not checking email or planning OMA events, she enjoys kayaking with her eight-year-old son, Evan, meandering with her three-year-old son, Ryan, and escaping to the ocean as much as possible.

Anna Varnelius is a trained Montessori guide and has been working in a Children's House for the past 5 years. Her family consists of Clif, her husband, Tarquin, her Montessori elementary child, Sanchez the iguana, Toby the golden retriever, Theo the African Spur-Thighed Tortoise and of course we can not forget their tank full of fish. She enjoys yoga, art, mountain biking and fresh blueberries.

Lena Wood came to Montessori as a child, having attended a public K-8 Montessori school in Minneapolis. She is currently serving as an elementary assistant at Greenstone Montessori and has just finished her first summer of AMI elementary training in MN. She is thrilled to be delving more deeply into the work of cosmic education. When she is not in the classroom she can be found knitting, reading, gardening, escaping to the coast, cooking for friends, exploring Portland...and working on all of her charts and timelines!

Elaina Wolff is thoroughly enjoying her first year as a directress at Cascade Summit Montessori. She is also loving becoming more and more involved in the wonderful Montessori community that surrounds her. Besides perusing Goodwill to build her Practical Life area, she tries to take advantage of the joys and beauty of every single day. ■

A message from Sanford and Judy Jones:

Dear Friends,

We were truly inspired by our shoulder-to-shoulder work with members of your Montessori community during the Centenary Celebration. Children and adults alike came out of the woodwork to put together an uplifting weekend of singing and dancing! Thanks to all of you for your generosity of spirit to us and to each other. We wish all of you a productive and prosperous year ahead, year #101!

Best wishes, Judy and Sanford Jones

Centenary Message

By Peter Davidson

Dr. Montessori is credited with declaring that “There is no such thing as bad weather; only inappropriate clothing.” This adage was proven by the smiles on the faces of the hundreds of families who participated in *Montessori 100* (www.montessori100.com to see a gallery of photos), our celebration of 100 years of Montessori education on a rainy Sunday, September 30th in Pioneer Courthouse Square. Despite the weather there was a good turnout of Montessori families in a mood to celebrate as well as the general public curious to know more about “education for life.” For many the rain was part of the charm and made the event “so Portland.” This was truly a community-wide effort sponsored financially by seventeen schools and three corporations, and involving schools from throughout Northern Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Press coverage included a nice article in the 9/28 Metro section of *The Oregonian*, and an interview with Jennifer Davidson of Montessori Institute Northwest on Oregon Public Broadcasting. In addition the event was listed on community calendars of the network television stations, *Portland Parent*, and *The Oregonian's* A&E section.

Special thanks to the staff of Providence Montessori School for adapting when their Children’s House demonstration classroom transformed into an open house as spectators ducked in under the canopy to escape the rain. It became an unplanned demonstration of both the graciousness of the Providence staff and the power of Montessori materials

to evoke concentration and engagement under less-than-ideal conditions.

Students from two elementary programs, Odyssey Montessori and the Montessori School of Beaverton, presented lessons on activities ranging from the Calculation of Volume to the Pin Maps, from Checkerboard Multiplication to the Theorem of Pythagoras in an “Elementary Open House.” Adolescent students from Saint Francis Academy of the Franciscan Montessori Earth School donned colorful costumes to present activities designed for that age group in the “Adolescent Open House.” Some planned activities such as walking on the line and the gathering space were rained out but many families took advantage of the theater to watch Montessori films and get warm and dry.

Twenty schools created exhibits providing both information for adults and hands-on activities for children. Activities included the cylinder blocks, the binomial and trinomial cubes, and planting seeds. There was also an exhibit of ways to adapt Montessori materials for children with physical handicaps. The staff of the Montessori Institute Northwest answered questions about Montessori education and teacher training from an eager public.

At 2:00 the crowd found itself irresistibly drawn to the stage by the rhythms of the Cascadia Montessori Marimba

(continued next page)

Band. This was followed by a musical production composed especially in recognition of the centenary year by beloved Montessori teacher/composer Sanford Jones and wife Judy. *A Centenary Celebration of Dr. Maria Montessori* featured student performers from four local Montessori schools: Cascadia, Childpeace Montessori School, the Montessori School of Beaverton and West Hills Montessori School. The production included 10 original songs composed by Sanford and the building of a 100 square out of 10 bars of "golden beads" (Chinese lanterns). After the performance, families gathered for a huge "Sing Along with Sanford" including songs familiar

to Children's House students such as "This Is My School" and folk songs familiar to everyone including "Waltzing Matilda," "Down in the Valley" and "I've Got Peace like a River." For a brief moment the rain even stopped and if Dr. Montessori was looking down on Portland she would have been pleased with the sight of so many families singing together, celebrating peace and the wonder of childhood. ■

Peter Davidson is the administrator of the Montessori School of Beaverton.

Reflection on a Day with Sanford Jones

By Diana Zegers

Sanford and Judy Jones gave us a wonderful day of inspirations and techniques in the area of music and movement. We began with vocal and physical warm-ups, preparing us to focus, to balance and to use both sides of our brains. The vocal warm-ups were specifically arranged to help us to hear and experience vocally: high, middle and low sounds. The physical warm-ups helped us to 'open and lengthen' our bodies. We were taught to add beautiful, simple gestures to our songs after the children were comfortable with knowing the tune and the words.

Judy gave us demonstrations of each of the Elements of Dance. In addition to giving children opportunities to increase body and spatial awareness, giving them the language and opportunity to practice these basic skills will give them successful experiences in moving their bodies, making them more comfortable and receptive to dance in later years. We also learned valuable tips, such as; if you have a child that has trouble keeping the beat while 'swinging' – put him with a partner that can keep a beat – they join hands and swing together!

Sanford followed with a sweet demonstration of teaching music appreciation I say 'sweet' because it reminded me of my mother's family, singing around the piano. He taught us how to use the 3 period lesson approach by choosing 3 differing styles of music. Play (or listen on a CD?) to

each piece of music and discuss elements of that piece with the children. (It was high, loud, fast, etc.) Then, perhaps another day, play one of those 3 pieces and give them a choice of answers. "Was that the German Dance by Haydn or the Sonata by Mozart?" Eventually, you can ask them, "What piece is this?" Include stories of the composers' lives with each piece of music. Their stories are interesting to children and help with the understanding of how, when or why the piece was composed.



After lunch, we learned simple, fun movements and games to songs that we knew from our childhoods. Let's never forget that singing and movement brings people together and makes everyone receptive to the moment. In addition, and maybe more importantly, makes us all happy!

Our last hour was spent in singing and learning about singing. We sang solos, duets, had conductors, and processors. We sang in unison, in a round, sang ostinatos and sang in 2 parts (harmony). Sanford and Judy Jones helped us to see that it is important to keep your classroom singing and movement activities basic and simple. Give opportunities for repetition of these basic activities to give lots of chances for successful experiences. There should be no pressure on us to be flashy or grand! PHEW!! ■

Diana Zegers is the Administrator and teacher at the Montessori Schools of Central Kitsap.

Music And Movement Workshop With Sanford And Judy Jones

By Lydia Sears

As a child when I sung with Sanford and Judy Jones I did not know then that the experience was much more than just learning songs and gestures. Now as an adult I realize that Sanford and Judy's influence is what helps me to strive to be better at singing and not let insecurities inhibit me from practicing. Mr. Jones has helped me become a listener. He has helped me listen to myself in a constructively critical way. He expects everyone to succeed not just in hitting the right note or singing the correct lyric but to succeed in pushing ourselves past our own barriers. I always have felt as though he has a way of looking past the insecurities that we sometimes don't even know exist and speaks to the part of us that can sing and move our bodies.

When I attended the music and movement workshop that Mr. and Mrs. Jones presented this last Saturday I came to realize another aspect of their influence on me. This workshop was the first one that I had attended as a teacher in training. I knew most of the songs already from my participation in several of the children's operas in which I had performed. Before I arrived for the workshop I was nervous that Mr. Jones would call on me to perform in front of the group as an example. As the workshop began though I found myself jumping up to participate in as many activities as I could. I sang the songs, I followed the movements, and I made mistakes.

I realized though that the Jones's work is not about perfecting a song as soon as you hear it. They both perform with such grace and such ease that it is easy to believe that you must sound and look just as refined as they are. What it is really about though is bringing your own dignity and joy to the music and movements. That is what needs to come before there is any chance of perfecting a song or a gesture.

I have connected this realization to our work with children as well. In integrating music and movement in to the classroom we must first be comfortable and confident in our own relationship to music. The Jones's give us the tools to present music in a way that is integral to our own development as well as to that of children. Children do not usually feel insecure or shy to sing and dance when they have been given the opportunities to sing and dance regularly. It is the adults who serve as their models who influence the feelings of insecurity or inferiority. With this in mind I am so thankful for the continual opportunities that I have had to sing and dance with Mr. and Mrs. Jones. Their work has helped strengthen my own confidence so that I may support children in having confidence in their own abilities. ■

Lydia Sears is a current MINW student.

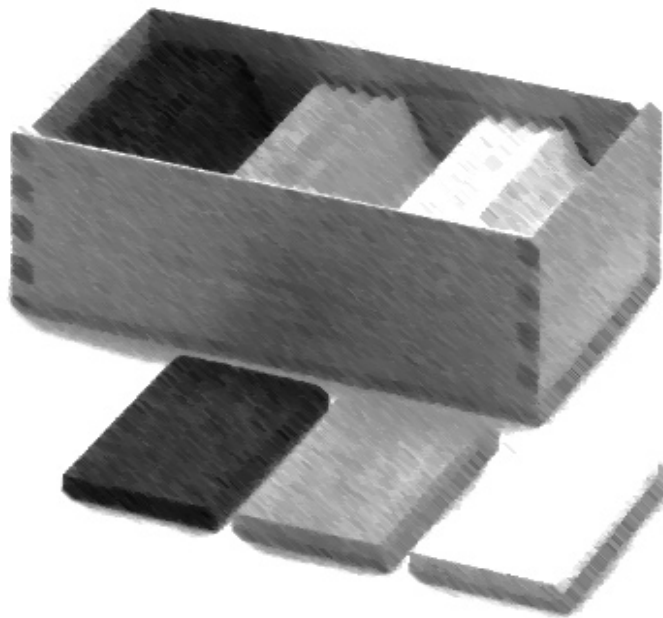


An Exploration into the Possibilities of the Baric Tablets as an Indirect Preparation for Music Making

by Laura Pilkington

In my new, and brief, experience with the Baric Tablets of the Sensorial Area, it crossed my mind that the tablets could serve as an indirect preparation for a child's enjoyment of music making. This is because of the way the tablets are designed, as well as the technique with which we use the tablets. The tablets are weighed on the tips of the fingers, which are the parts of the hand that are most often engaged in music-making.¹ Due to the very small degree of difference in the weight between the three sets of Baric Tablets, the child becomes exposed to the concept that weights can be different but not be extreme in their difference. The slight degree of weight difference also assists the child in developing the tendency towards exactness.

The Baric Tablets are made from different types of wood, but besides the slight visual difference, their temperature, texture and size are basically the same. This sameness isolates the quality of weight, and allows the child to begin to experience what it is like to have slight, but different weight put on their fingertips. Through the experience of holding different degrees of weight on their fingertips, a child can begin to classify and categorize different weights through the sorting process that occurs with this material. Through the sorting process, the child begins to develop the abstraction for weight. The slight color differentiation in the tablets helps guide the child while they seek to develop accurate and discriminate recall of what each tablet feels like while blindfolded. Tying all of these developmental purposes together allows the child to develop a very heightened sense of weight via touch.



It seems that the heightened sensitivity to weight could be a wonderful indirect preparation for developing the sensitivity of touch required for playing music. An instrumentalist is often required to minutely adjust their touch, sometimes without much preparation, to achieve the sound quality they desire. Or, a keyboardist may have limited experience with the instrument they are going to play for a performance and may need to adjust their touch to a particular instrument in the warm-up period before a performance.²

When one plays different instruments, one must be extremely conscious of the weight of the fingers pressing against the keys or the strings so as to either produce (or not produce) appropriate sounds. "...to learn a craft, especially if it is of an artistic or refined nature, means that one must develop his senses and the movements of his hands, and these movements are assisted by a consequent refinement of the sense of touch."³ This component of music-making links to the technique of holding the Baric Tablets on the

finger tips.

For the almost spontaneous adjustments that need to be made on the part of the musician to happen, the foundation for order and classification of weight must be laid. The Baric Tablets provide the opportunity for a child to put in place an ordered foundation that will enable her/him to make the slightest adjustments when it comes to playing different types of instruments.

The slight difference of weight not only applies to the

physical intelligence a musician carries in themselves, but also the mental intelligence needed to respond to what they are hearing and seeing in their music "...as a sensitive scale will show the slightest variation in weight, so the sensitive brain will respond to the slightest appeal."⁴ Refining the sense of touch heightens intelligence because it opens the child up (unconsciously) to make connections between how the manner of touching a musical instrument affects the type of music the instrument will produce.

The sense of touch in music is a studied exactness that takes years, if not a lifetime, to develop.⁵ The groundwork for that desire for precision and exactness can be assisted in what may seem to be a non-music related material in the Sensorial Area of a Montessori classroom. "A modifying action that increases one's powers of discrimination is a true and proper function of education."⁶ When learning a musical activity the first step is the physical step of getting the hands, voice, and mouth under management in order to allow the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual components of music-making to flow from a person.⁷ The Baric Tablets support this physical component.

Placing the Baric Tablets in the context described above, it could be suggested that they are a preparation for active engagement with the Auditory materials. "The senses are organs for the apprehension of images of the external world necessary for the mind, just as the hand is the organ for grasping material needed by the body."⁸ A heightened sense of touch is necessary to get consistent sounds when one shakes the Sound Cylinders. A heightened sense of touch also contributes to a satisfactory experience of playing the Bells. One must have a certain feel for the weight of the mallet in order to exert the degree of control required to swing the mallet so as not to make the Bells play overly loudly or to tap them in such a forceful manner that the sound becomes distorted. If a child's sense of touch is heightened to the degree that is it with the Baric Tablets, could it not be argued that her/his hands could come to serve her/him in such a way as to take the musical images from her/his mind and have them transmitted in a controlled and purposeful manner?

This topic could be further researched in a classroom environment over time with a control group. It would be interesting to see how or if the use of the Baric Tablets by young children do, in actuality, assist children in developing a heightened sense of musical technique. Exploration of this topic would offer another positive aspect of Montessori education to the general public as

well as contribute to early childhood music education. It could be a very simple, yet important, way for music teachers to assist children (and in the future, adult musicians of all levels) in gaining more control over their physical bodies, as well as the physical bodies of their instruments, which would enable them to express themselves to a greater level of exactness intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually through music. "We do not create observers merely by saying 'Observe,' but by supplying individuals with the means for making observations, and the means is the education of the senses."⁹ If a child's sense of touch is heightened enough, s/he will be capable of continuing to bring themselves to heightened physical and mental awareness through the means of observation of all the components of the self that are engaged in music-making. ■

¹ I realize there are lots of percussive ways to make music that engage the entire hand, but my perspective in the paper comes from being a keyboardist who has been trained in the Classical, Western Art tradition.

² There are differences in the weight of the keys of different pianos. There are differences in the weight of the keys between a piano and a harpsichord. The difference of weight of the arm required to play softly or loudly. There are all kinds of physical adjustments a musician goes through that have to do with a sensitivity to touch and weight.

³ Maria Montessori. *The Discovery of the Child* (Oxford, England: Clio Press), 147.

⁴ Maria Montessori. *The Advanced Montessori Method – I* (1918; Oxford, England: Clio Press, 2004), 154.

⁵ In his memoirs, *Chronicles Volume I*, Bob Dylan elaborates on the lengths musicians go to develop their technique on an instruments, and for many the elusiveness of the precision is what keeps them engaged.

⁶ Maria Montessori. *The Discovery of the Child*, 183.

⁷ Stewart Gordon. *Etudes for Piano Teachers: Reflections on the Teacher's Art* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 140 – 150.

⁸ Maria Montessori. *The Discovery of the Child*, 149.

⁹ Maria Montessori. *The Discovery of the Child*, 170.

Laura Pilkington, M.A. in music from the University of Oregon, M.Ed. from Loyola College in Baltimore, MD, also holds an AMI Primary diploma. She maintains a small piano studio in Portland, OR where she lives with her husband, daughter, and rambunctious border collie.

The Language of Music

By Sarah Werner Andrews

Imagine your classroom for a moment. Picture each of the areas in your room, and all of the shelves. Now, imagine that you have no pencils or papers. Now imagine that all of the books are gone. Now, imagine that you tell no stories, there is no speech and no conversation (except perhaps once a day or so during transitions). Imagine how difficult it would be to teach in an environment like that. Imagine how limiting and joyless it would be for the children to learn in an environment without written or spoken language. We would never have a classroom such as that, because we know that language is essential to human development. But Dr. Montessori said, *"No one language is rich enough to give expression to the gushing life within"*. Many teachers forget that music is also a language.

Music is the language of the human spirit. As human cultures developed, language and music both became a function of society; a function of cooperation and agreement; the agreement of sounds and order. Music, like language, can inspire and enthrall, can lift humans to new heights and achievements, and can move human beings to greater love and understanding. Music gives voice to our sense of justice, compassion, and joy.

Music is one of the fundamental needs of humans. Every culture, in every part of the world, that has ever been discovered, has music. As Mario Montessori writes, *"Who has not seen a weeping baby become calm when music is played to him? Who has not been amused to see a child of two - or even younger - attempt dance steps hearing rhythmic music?"* Within music we find the human tendencies operating: order, adaptation to culture, exploration, repetition, exactness, self-perfection, and of course, communication. But in music, ideas are not communicated in the sounds of the human speech, but in tones and pitch.

Without music included as an integral part of our daily life with the children, we are depriving or limiting our students of the essential expression of their spiritual lives. They need music to be normalized. It is a fundamental need of humans.

Language and music are forms of communication and expression. We know from our study of the development of language that there are four discoveries that children make when exploring language. When we offer the language of music, we parallel those same four discoveries.



There are more words than I already know. Enrichment of vocabulary. Just as the child needs exposure to all forms of language to develop spoken and written language, so does the child need to hear music in all forms before she can create it. Sing songs with the children, make up little impromptu pieces on the tone bars or bells, listen to instrumental music, read and listen to stories about composers or instruments, listen to different musical styles and forms such as folk, jazz, opera, and ballet.

The child can make her words visible. The child can write music and make it visible to others,

through the use of the staff and placement of the notes. Just like the magic of the sandpaper letters, this lesson should be an exciting discovery, not a dry lesson in reading and writing. Tell a little story to introduce this... *"Remember in the story of Communication in Signs, how people use to think that writing was a form of magic? One possessing that magic could make a few little marks on a paper, and another could tell what he was thinking! Music is like that too!"* You can demonstrate this with the children. Writing music comes before learning to read music, just like the pattern in language of writing with the moveable alphabet before reading words.

The child can interpret the thoughts of others. In learning to read music, to attach the sound to the little symbols he sees, the child is able to read and play music composed by those from other parts of the world and other times in history. This connects the child with history and geography, and makes all music personal, because the child can share the thoughts and feelings of another, even though the composer may have lived hundreds of years ago and in another part of the world. Reading music comes after learning to write music. This interpretation can also come through listening.

Words carry out a function and are grouped together in a certain order. The function and order allow words to have meaning and convey thought and emotion. It is the same with music. The tones of music are arranged into phrases and then in turn into passages. Music has a form, many forms, actually. This is like all of the word study, grammar boxes, and sentence analysis work in our language area. This can be thought of as the scale exercises and transposition exercises with the tone bars.

It is important that the children have plenty of experiences with the “enrichment of vocabulary” or listening exercises, and plenty of opportunities for composition and singing before presenting any of the lessons in writing and reading music. But if we stop there, it would be like presenting many vocabulary cards, telling lots of stories, and encouraging the children to speak freely, but never giving any lessons on the sandpaper letters or moveable alphabet!

In traditional classrooms as well as in many Montessori classrooms, music has been confined to the “specialist”. Teachers have thought themselves illiterate, or incapable of teaching music. In the world of art, Eric Gill has encountered this same prejudice of artistic expression. He writes, “*The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist.*” We can also apply this to music. Everyone is a musician. This must be true if we believe music is the language of the spirit, just as poetry, literature, and drama are the language of the mind. When we make music a daily part of the child’s life, each child can become a special kind of musician. And each teacher can too. ■

Sarah Werner Andrews is an AMI primary and elementary trained teacher currently working with a 6-9 class at Odyssey Montessori School.

Music Resources for the “Enrichment of Vocabulary”

Compiled by Sarah Werner Andrews

Books:

- The Kingfisher Young People’s Book of Music
- Eyewitness Books – Music
- The Usborn World of Ballet
- The Random House Book of Opera Stories
- Rookie Biography: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart–Musical Genius; by Carol Greene (there are many other composer titles in this series)
- Famous Children: Beethoven; by Ann Rachlin
- The Philharmonic Gets Dressed; by Karla Kuskin
- Mole Music; story by David McPhail

Books with CD

- The Story of the Orchestra; by Robert Levine
- The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra; by Anita Ganeri
- The Young Person’s Guide to the Opera; by Anita Ganeri and Nicola Barber
- The Magic Flute; by Anne Gatti
- Peter and the Wolf; by Prokofiev
- The Carnival of the Animals; by Camille Saint-Saëns

Song Books

- Rise Up Singing
- Go In and Out the Window: An Illustrated Songbook for Young People

CDs - Composers

- Beethoven Lives Upstairs, Mozart’s Magic Fantasy, Hallelujah Handel, Mozart’s Magnificent Voyage; Mr. Bach Comes to Call
- The Story of Chopin in Words and Music (there are several different composers in this series)

CDs - Opera, and collections

- Aida – told by Leotyne Price
- My Favorite Opera for Children (Pavarotti’s

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Opera Made Easy)

The World's Very Best Opera (for kids...in English)

The Love for Three Oranges (Ann Rachlin's Classical Music and Stories)

CDs – Assorted

Lewis and Clark: Songs of the Journey; by Bobby Horton

A Child's Garden of Songs; by Ted Jacobs

Spin, Spider, Spin; by Patty and David Zeitlin and Marcia Berman

Music of the Ancient Greeks; French Music of the 14th Century; Music of the Ancient Sumerians, Egyptians & Greeks; Carnevale! (16th century Italy); by the Ensemble De Organographia

Singing Science (Tickle Tune Typhoon – Music for Little People) ■

SCHOOL NEWS

All Roads Learning Community is finally in our new space. After almost a year of construction, we moved into our new classroom in July. We are still settling in with our community of sixteen children between six months and three years.

It has been a busy fall, welcoming new friends and their families and settling into the new routine. We've been observing the changes in the light outside, as well as the fall rain, and the color-changing landscape outside our windows and in our play yard. We've been scrubbing squash and reading 'Autumn' by Gerda Miller. We would love to have you over for a visit or an observation.

SunGarden Montessori Children's House

We joyously welcome the beginning of this new year together after having made several changes over the

summer, including the "suspension of operations" of our Oregon City classroom, the Ivy Room. After 13 great years in the Eastham Community Center, the beautiful indoor and outdoor environments have been passed on to Cascade Academic, a private middle and high school with a strong emphasis on science.

We have made several staffing changes as well. Mary Mueller, our administrator last year, and her husband have moved back to the Oregon coast. Her daughter, Ligia Sekayouma, and Ann Messick are our new co-administrators. Ligia joined SunGarden last February as the assistant administrator after 8 years as administrator at both Bethany Village and Mayflower Montessori Schools, and 1 year as education and resource leader for La Petite Montessori. Ann has been a guide in the Garden Room for the past 13 years.

Jessie Hanna returns as the Sun Room guide, assisted by Melinda Alexander. Melinda has worked at the Children's Art Institute, a children's gym, and 2 years at Mayflower Montessori School. With an arts background, she brings a wealth of creativity and enthusiasm to our community. Lea Wheeler, who assisted in the Sun Room last year, will be guiding the Garden Room, assisted by Jacqueline McCarville, in her 10th year at SunGarden. In addition to thoroughly embracing Montessori, loving children, and being an experienced Mom, Lea is a professional photography. She, too, brings her creative, joy-filled spirit to this new role.

With an extremely supportive group of parents, we are looking forward to imbuing every aspect of SunGarden with the Montessori spirit.

The Ivy School — A Montessori Public Bi-lingual School, 1st-8th Grade

A group of parents, educators, and community members have received an incentive grant from the state board of education and is in the process of planning the first Montessori Public School for Portland Public Schools. The Ivy School is a 1st-8th grade tuition free Elementary School. The school plans to be located in Northeast Portland providing an educational opportunity not currently available in the Public Schools. The school has submitted a proposal to Portland Public Schools and if approved will open in September 2008 with 60 1st-3rd graders, growing to 240 students with 1st-8th grade by 2010.

The mission of the Ivy School is to enable children of

diverse backgrounds to learn and grow at their own pace by offering a developmentally challenging academic Montessori environment that models grace and courtesy and fosters a peaceful community of lifelong learners.

The Ivy School is looking for support from the Montessori community. Please log onto our website to find out how you can help bring Montessori Public Education to Portland. www.theivyschool.com or e-mail info@theivyschool.com for more information.

Thanks for helping,

Tammy Kennedy
Founder, The Ivy School

Franciscan Montessori Earth School *St. Francis Academy*

Michael Winning, attention any questions: mwinning@gmail.com

The beginning of the school year has been filled with more than the average "newness". After purchasing our current school site in 1994, the Earth School has been waiting for a fresh, new look. Thanks to the diligent efforts of our dedicated parents, the "Earth School" has received a much-needed facelift. New paint has made our buildings reflect our new motto, "The Earth Experience". Stop by sometime soon, and see the dramatic difference!

It was also a time to celebrate with the rest of the community, and the Earth School enjoyed being a sponsor of Montessori 100. For those of you that had an opportunity to view the Montessori 100 website (www.montessori100.com), you were looking at the efforts of many of our alum and their families, who own and operate Wolfpk.com. Thanks again for helping to make this community wide event possible!

Whole Child Montessori Center

As I enjoy the beautiful display of autumn color I am reminded of how this is reflected in our adult community at Whole Child and the word vibrant comes to mind. There is the shimmering vibrancy of Brianna Weber who just graduated from MINW in the spring and brings with her the excitement of putting into practice all that she learned during her training. Then there is the deep resonating vibrancy from her mentor, Shirley Harmon, who returns to Whole Child for her 23rd year of guiding a class here. Then there is the soft but sure vibrancy

that Monica Sievertsen brings as a Guide new to Whole Child but not new to Montessori. After guiding primary classes for six years, Monica took a year off to provide Montessori in the home for her son Will and a few of his pals while his big sister Maeve started Children's House. Monica returns to the primary class with that wonderful perspective that comes with being a mom and having time away from the classroom. Then we have the vibrancy that strong returning assistants and support staff bring and for that we are thankful to have Cindy Keast and Laurel Simmons once again as a part of our community. Add to the phenomenal vibrancy of our staff, the staggering vibrancy of our community of children and families and this place is a spectacular feast for the soul! Long Live Montessori! ■



NEWS FROM MINW

It has already been a very exciting year at the Montessori Institute Northwest. This summer our first Assistants to Infancy course graduated under the direction of Patricia Wallner, our visiting trainer from the Netherlands. This was the first time this level of training has been offered in the Pacific Northwest and it was a great success. We will continue to offer this level of training in a two summer format until an A to I Director of Training is permanently located in Portland. At that time we might explore other course formats.

In September our Primary Course kicked off with one of our largest groups ever! They are enthusiastically finishing their Practical Life albums and preparing for classroom observations. It's been a pleasure to watch our community grow every year.

Our board is embarking on ambitious strategic planning process to expand our programs and space in order to meet our growing needs. Offering regular Elementary training in Portland is an essential component of this plan. If you are interested in taking Elementary training in Portland please let us know and we will keep you informed of our progress.

To reflect the growth and changes MINW is experiencing, we have updated our logo. The three triangles of the

(continued next page)

original logo represent the mountains of the Pacific Northwest and the blue for the nearby ocean. The circle in the middle was a reference to AMI's logo and its global presence. Our new logo is a fresh new take on these same elements. Our intention was to get out of the box, so to speak, and open ourselves up for growth. We saw that changing the scale of the triangles could represent the three levels of AMI teacher education that the MINW intends to offer on a regular basis: Assistants to Infancy, Primary and Elementary.



You might also notice some new faces around the Institute this year. We are excited to welcome Elise Arevalo to our Administrative Assistant position, Sally Coulter to our Course Assistant position, and Megan Mitchell as a new role in Communications and Course Aide. Jennifer and Ginni feel very fortunate to have found such a motivated and capable team.

MINW has community education workshops for everyone this year! If you have not visited our website recently check out our calendar of events at www.montessori-nw.org to see what we're got for you. There are workshops for guides and support staff at both the Primary and Elementary level. And this year there is Parent Education offered in several different formats to suit your interests and needs.

Keep in touch and let us know if you have any questions: office@montessori-nw.org, 503.963.8992.

*Warm Regards,
The Staff of the Montessori Institute Northwest*



Forza Vitale!

CLASSIFIEDS

Great Mystery Montessori School needs Montessori Teacher for Expansion

Located in the beautiful Rogue Valley of Southern Oregon Great Mystery Montessori School is looking for a Montessori Teacher for this September, who loves working with the 3 year old children, understands the spiritual essence of the child and wants a solid future with a growing school. This position will start as a part time position and grow into a head teaching position as we expand our school and possible into an Assistant Director in the future.

Initial duties for part time position will include but not be limited to:

1. Working with 3-year-old children
2. Assisting the head teachers with lesson plans, peace curriculum, assessments and circle time activities
3. Nurturing the children as needed
4. Open-minded attitude toward all cultural and spiritual beliefs

Requirements for the position:

1. Preferred Montessori Certification, or working towards certification
2. Patience with young children
3. First aid and CPR card
4. Food Handler card
5. Criminal Clearance Record required by Oregon State Law

Please contact Danella Shea, www.gm-montessori.com, phone: 541-857-8888

Music Teacher Seeks Job in Montessori School – Portland, Oregon

Highly skilled musician recently relocated from Tucson, Arizona. Taught general music and strings from 1998-2006 at Khalsa Montessori School in Tucson. Loves working with young students, especially ages 4 to 10. Bachelors in Education from Indiana University (1980), Masters in Performance from the University of North Texas (1987). Montessori Music training in 2003, Suzuki Certified from Matsumoto, Japan, Orff and Kodaly Level 1 Certification. Professional orchestra musician for 20 years. Many years private and group teaching experience with all ages. Looking for part time general music and/or strings position in a Montessori School. Contact Margot Parlette at mtparlette@yahoo.com or at 503-760-3785 for information, resume, and references.

Corvallis Montessori School is seeking candidates for **Head of School**. For the past forty years, Corvallis Montessori has been known for providing a quality, AMI-recognized Montessori education to children, a welcoming community for families, and an ideal teaching situation for faculty. Our school currently serves 85 families with 3 primary classrooms and 1 elementary classroom, as well as extended-care and summer programs. Our talented staff and administrator carry out the daily operations of the school, while the Board of Trustees functions in a strategic role. We own the property on which our beautiful campus is situated. Large classrooms, mature gardens, a natural rock-climbing area and expansive playpark create an inviting atmosphere.

Located in Oregon's scenic Willamette Valley, Corvallis is noted for being family-friendly and bicycle-friendly and has been recognized as one of the best places to live in the U.S. We are one hour from the Pacific coast, two hours from mountain skiing, and over an hour to Portland.

The ideal candidate for Head of School will hold a bachelor's degree, AMI diploma, and Montessori teaching experience, as well as strong communication, finance, fundraising, and management skills.

For more information regarding the school, the position, or the application process, please contact Board Vice President, Karen Keon, at adminsearch@corvallismontessori.org or 541.760.4536.

Bethany Village Montessori

From time to time we are in need of an experienced Montessori certified primary (3-6 yrs old) teachers and assistants, both FT and PT because of emergencies and maternity leaves, court dates, etc. Do you have a resource for this need? Please advise. Beverly B. Spiller, Administrative Director 503-533-5626.

Bethany Village Montessori
15188 NW Central Dr.
Portland, OR 97229

AMI Employment Listings: The Montessori Institute Northwest regularly receives Job Announcements from schools around the world. Positions are usually for AMI Primary Guides, but also often include different levels and positions as well. Come by the Institute and browse our Employment Opportunities Binder. Also, keep us in mind as a means for advertising your positions to the AMI community. 4506 SE Belmont, Portland, FAX: 503-963-8994.

Classroom material making service available in Portland! Consider outsourcing your language materials, sewing projects and/or refurbish work. I specialize in the primary classroom and am an AMI-trained guide. Contact: Monica Motsko, M.Ed. at 503-244-5155. Hourly rate or project bids available. FREE local pick-up and delivery for your convenience.

New One-Room Pre-School in Eugene Area – Seeking Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is a guide who helps direct his/her students' activities academically, spiritually, emotionally, and physically in a prepared learning environment that challenges each child to reach his/her fullest potential in these developmental areas, generally in accordance with Montessori philosophy and procedures for the preschool age group.

Professional Qualifications

1. BA or BS minimum
2. Minimum of 2 years teaching experience in preschool education, preferably in Montessori environment
3. Montessori certification required
4. First Aid/Infant CPR Card
5. Current Food Handler's card
6. A clean Criminal record (as required by Oregon Law)
7. Submit necessary documents to complete personnel file, including 3 references, diplomas, transcripts, [and Criminal History Registry proof]

Duties and Responsibilities

The general duties and responsibilities of the Head Teacher shall include, but shall not necessarily be limited to, the following:

1. Be responsible for designing the classroom curriculum so that it integrates Montessori principles and applications. This pertains to Montessori philosophy of which the teacher must have more than passing understanding.
2. Set up the furniture (shelving, desks and chairs) to create a learning environment for young children that are developmentally appropriate, safe and attractive. This involves lifting and carrying weights up to 60 pounds.
3. Be responsible for displaying and maintaining the equipment in use in the classroom. All Montessori equipment should be checked DAILY for missing pieces. The teacher is expected to search thoroughly for the missing piece. Montessori apparatus is not to be put out for the children if it is missing any pieces. The teacher is to notify the Director as soon as a material is found to be incomplete.
4. Be responsible for keeping the materials and their shelves dusted, sponged and clean. Check shelves and works daily and maintain as needed. This is every teacher's

(CLASSIFIEDS continued from previous page)

responsibility. The Montessori environment is part of the educational process: it must be at its very best all the time.

5. Be responsible for providing library books or age appropriate reading materials for the class. Must put up and change bulletin/display boards. This may involve standing on a ladder to reach the higher bulletin boards.

6. Be responsible for assisting children in toileting skills. This may involve helping children change their clothes.

7. Teachers may have to hold children and carry them in case of injury so must be able to lift and carry weights up to 60 pounds.

8. Be responsible for checking with the director before adding any alterations to the program, such as parties or art shows, for example. Only the director can authorize policy changes.

9. Be responsible for acting as Substitute Director as needed.

10. Be responsible for reporting to CCD any suspected

child abuse.

11. Be responsible for miscellaneous duties and details as needed.

Contact Information: Heather Karr, 1264 Lorne Loop, Springfield, OR 97477, 541-747-1731.

Two Positions Available – A to I Teacher and Summer Children's House Substitute.

Gresham Montessori Center is located in Gresham, Oregon (10 miles east of Portland on the way to Mt. Hood). Please send resume to: Gresham Montessori Center, 2188 SW Binford Lake Parkway, Gresham, OR, 97080, 503-491-0151.

SunGarden Montessori offers the following materials for sale. Please call us at 503-655-2609 if you are interested.

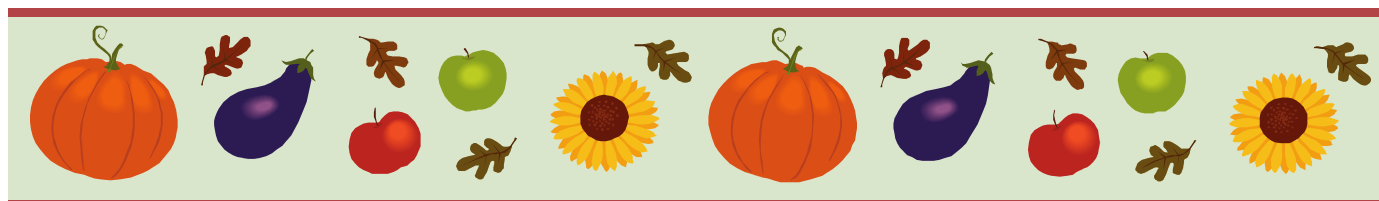
Price	Code	Description	Condition	Add'l comments
GEOGRAPHY				
\$5	G6	Map of North America	P	no pcs, frame only
\$20	G8	Map of Asia	P	
\$5	G10	Map of Europe	P	no pcs, frame only
\$10	G12	Globe of Continents	P	cracked, includes stand
\$20	G13	Flag stand (for 21 flags-21 5/8x5 1/2")	G	
\$20	G14	Flag stand (for 21 flags-21 5/8x5 1/2")	G	
\$20	G15	Flag stand (for 21 flags-21 5/8x5 1/2")	F	
SENSORIAL				
\$20	S1	Brown stair	F	
\$5	S5	Pink tower	F	
\$10	S7	Pink tower	P	missing #2 and "Tiny Tim"
\$20	S8	Pink tower	F	
\$20	S9	Pink tower	F	most easily repaired, not quite a G
\$20	S11	Binomial cube	P	one side is off hinge
\$2.50	S15	Geometric solid-triangle base pyramid	F	
\$5	S17	Color box 1	P	no box
\$5	S18	Color box 2	P	no green or grey

E=excellent. New or like new

G=good. Useable, but obviously used.

F=fair. Useable with extensive wear (chips, worn edges, rounded corners, cracks, scratches, previous repairs)

P=poor. Not useable without repair or new parts (missing parts, broken) ■



FORZA VITALE!

Vol. 26, No. 2

A Newsletter for People Active in Montessori Education

Winter 2007

Greetings

What a wonderful year! In the fall OMA hosted the Assistants Workshop at Montessori School of Beaverton and the Board Governance Workshop at Childpeace Montessori. In January, OMA offered a workshop on Music and Movement at Child's View Montessori with Diane Zegers: "Discover Music!" In addition, we publish three issues of the *Forza Vitale!* for the 2006-2007 school year. We are also in the process of planning for the Spring Tea—a very special event this year as we celebrate the Centenary.

OMA continues to grow and meet the needs of our community. We are in the process of filing for non-profit status, and we continue to refine our website. We also strive to support school administrators in our community by meeting once a month with the OMA Administrators' Group Liaison. Our goal is to promote effective communication within the Montessori community through workshops, *Forza Vitale!*, and supporting the needs of the Administrators' group.

The OMA has big dreams and we value your input! Please consider joining the OMA as a board member. We need members to join our newsletter committee, our workshop committee and our administration. This is a wonderful opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the OMA. Please contact us if you are interested in

In This Issue . . .

A Memoir and Appreciation

Centenary Celebration
in Rome

Birthplace of
Maria Montessori

serving on the board.

As you pause and reflect during this Centenary, we hope that this issue of *Forza Vitale!* will offer you inspiration. Thank you for offering peace to the children each and every day as you guide them with love. May we all give thanks to the children as they inspire us.

Warm regards,

Carrie Brown
OMA President

Forza Vitale!

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Forza Vitale!, published three times a year, is the official newsletter of the Oregon Montessori Association. Submissions of articles, reviews, school news, anecdotes and the like are encouraged. Address all correspondence to the Newsletter representatives of the OMA Board, listed below.



The Oregon Montessori Association was founded in 1979 to support the community of Montessori professionals, schools, parents, students, and all others interested in Montessori and early childhood education.

Oregon Montessori Association is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin.

OMA Website: www.oregonmontessori.org

OMA Contact Information:

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7740 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland, OR 97219
503-768-3847
E-mail: oregonmontessori@yahoo.com
P.O. Box 80151, Portland, OR 97280

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OMA Administrators' Group Liaison

Jude Foster
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Layout: Donna Andrews
donna.andrews@yahoo.com
971-645-5459

CALENDAR

MARCH

- 1-4 **AMS Celebrates 100 Years of Montessori Education**
New York, NY
212-358-1250
www.amshq.org
- 6 **Parent Series Class: Discipline and Independence**
Montessori Institute Northwest
Portland, OR
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org
- 7 **Primary Workshop: Cultivating a Vital Community**
Montessori Institute Northwest
Portland, OR
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org
- 13 **Parent Series Class: Discipline and Social Life**
Montessori Institute Northwest
Portland, OR
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org
- 15 **Priority Application Deadline 2007-2008 AMI Primary Teacher Training**
Montessori Institute Northwest
Portland, OR
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org
- 29-Apr.1 **Great Work/Great Ideas: Celebrating the Century of the Child**
North American Montessori Teachers Association
Houston, TX
440-834-4011
www.montessori-namta.org

- 31 **Pacific Northwest Montessori Association Winter Forum**
PNMA & Seattle University present internationally acclaimed author and child advocate Jonathan Kozol
800-550-7662
www.pnma.org

APRIL

April 2007 — Opening of Reflective Garden at Providence

- 14 **Parent Seminar Session 1: Using Montessori in the Home**
Montessori Institute Northwest
Portland, OR
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org
- 14 **Annual General Meeting**
Association Montessori Internationale
Dam Square, Amsterdam
800-872-2643
www.montessori-ami.org
- 18 **OMA Administrators' Group**
Location and time TBA
- 19-22 **The Optimist, Optimal Montessori Adolescent**
Annual NAMTA Professional Development Conference for Montessori Teachers of Adolescents
North American Montessori Teachers Association
Chicago, IL
440-834-4011
www.montessori-namta.org
- 21 **Parent Seminar Session 2: Using Montessori in the Home**
Montessori Institute Northwest
Portland, OR
503-963-8992
www.montessori-nw.org

(continued next page)

(Calendar continued)

- 21 **Montessori Touring Symposium
“M.A.P.S.”: A Recipe for Reading
Success**
Dana Point, CA
212-358-1250
www.amshq.org

MAY

- 5 **Montessori Touring Symposium
Brain Research and the Montessori
Method of Teaching Reading**
Woodstock, IL
212-358-1250
www.amshq.org
- 19 **OMA Annual Spring Tea**
Kennedy School, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Check www.oregonmontessori.org for
details. ■



Play a Larger Role in the OMA – Join us on the Board!

Exchange ideas and work with a wonderful group of dedicated Montessorians from all walks of life. Each board position requires a two-year commitment, beginning in June. Each committee retains at least one experienced member to help guide the newer committee and board members. Board meetings traditionally take place once a month (except July and August) and have been in Portland for the last several years. Hours of involvement vary from month to month, depending on board activities, community support, and specific goals of the committee and the board as a whole.

Interested? Know someone who might be a good candidate? Contact Carrie Brown at officers@oregonmontessori.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Administrative Committee

Vice President/Secretary – Works with the president to conduct meetings, set goals for the OMA, and delegate tasks. The secretary records and distributes the minutes. This board member will take on the presidential duties during his/her second year. Please

note that OMA outsources general administrative and secretarial functions, so that this position can focus on management.

Workshop Committee

Share the challenge of planning and organizing OMA workshops and events. Arranging speakers, venues, catering, announcements, and organizing supplies for events are among the tasks the workshop folks undertake.

Newsletter Committee

Work together to create the OMA newsletter, *Forza Vitale*! Good writing and editorial skills are helpful, but as in all other board positions, love for Montessori and a collaborative spirit are the most significant requirements for this position. A community member does the layout for the newsletter; the newsletter committee members choose issue themes, and they solicit and edit contributions. ■

OMA Administrators' Group

By Jude Foster

Our group of Montessori administrators is 46 strong this year—or at least that's how many heads/administrators have requested to get the emails—lots of us! We communicate mostly online throughout the year, and then we meet quarterly. Many of us have found this informal connection to be a worthwhile vehicle for good sharing, mutual support, and constructive action.

Plus it's great to sit together once in a while! In the last three years we have met at a different school each time, schools both new and established, small and large; it's always good to see what others are doing and to offer our support and praise. In January, Brooke Klouda of West Hills/Lake Oswego Montessori hosted a strong circle of us at their lovely new facility; in November we met at Harmony Montessori in east Portland.

The focus of our meetings this year is the 100th-year celebration of Montessori education. Notice how I avoided the use of the word “Centenary”? We emailed about this question of vocabulary in December. It turns out that “centenary” is the British form of the

word, while the American form is “centennial.” AMI, being the international organization that it is, has embraced the word “centenary,” while AMS and other Montessori organizations and vendors in this country (even Nienhuis!) are using “centennial.” Just a point of interest....

Our next Administrators’ Meeting will be in April, location and time still to be decided. We invite new administrators to join us, on-line or in person. All are welcome here, and all for the sake of the Child. ■

Jude Foster is the Head of School at Harmony Montessori School and sits on the OMA Board as the Administrators’ Group liaison. She can be contacted at: office@harmony-montessori.com.



OMA Winter Workshop: Music and Movement Two REVIEWS

The OMA workshop on Music and Movement presented by Diana Zeger was not only interesting and informative, it was also entertaining. Diana shared several great ideas from her book “Discover Music” on how to introduce musical concepts such as high and low to children in a concrete and engaging way. She also made the basics of reading music and sharing that with children seem simple, even for those of us who are not so musically inclined.

It was encouraging to see how easy it can be to enrich the musical experience of the child in the classroom. The work with the bells can be extended and enhanced in so many ways. The highlight of the workshop seemed to be the handout of numerous “Copycat Songs,” compiled by Diana. These are creative songs about rolling a rug, walking in the classroom, or the parts of the insect sung to familiar tunes. The possibilities are endless with just a little creative thought.

It was so inspiring to see how easy and fun it can be to bring music and song to the child. Thank you Diana for sharing your time and insight. ■

–Submitted by Sue Ann, an AMI Primary-trained Guide

Music can be a difficult subject to approach at any age. Diana made it possible to relax around this belief. The class was well attended and had a good mix of Guides and Administrators.

Diana offered many simple and easy to apply presentations for the 3-6 year olds. Much of the material she presented was available in the book she authored, “Discover Music”.

A very useful morning to get you to move towards getting music as a something you do everyday in the classroom. ■

–Submitted by George Cartner, Providence Montessori School

For those interested,
Diana’s book can be ordered
by contacting her at diana@montessorischoolsofck.com.

Board Governance Workshop

By David Smith

I attended the October 14th presentation by Dr. Marc Frankel entitled “Exceptional Board Governance,” put on by the OMA and generously hosted by Childpeace Montessori School. It was an excellent program that was well worth the investment of my Saturday.

Dr. Frankel presented a lot of information based on his many years working with boards of trustees of many different independent schools around the world. While his experience isn’t primarily with Montessori institutions, it quickly became clear that most of the challenges faced by boards at Montessori schools are exactly the same challenges faced by boards at other independent schools; his experience and anecdotes were immediately apropos. Because he shared so many things with the group I cannot hope to provide a complete summary of his talk, so instead I’ll highlight three of the topics that I found useful—all of which have since appeared on the agenda at board meetings here at Two Rivers Montessori School.

The School’s Mission Statement

Almost every school has a published mission statement, about which you can generally say two things: nobody on the board can recite it or even summarize it, and after having read it you cannot make a definitive statement about what the school does or why. Mission statements tend to be written by committee and are often a collection of generic statements awkwardly joined together.

The mission statement is critical to the long-term health of the school for at least two reasons. First, it acts as the compass that points the way for the board and brings clarity to strategic decisions. As the board considers program direction, facilities improvements, and other strategic matters, the mission statement serves as an excellent tool to confirm or reject proposals. With a clear mission statement in hand, the board can easily determine, for example, whether growing one aspect of the program at the expense of another is in keeping with the mission statement. The degree of fit between various proposals and the mission statement should be one key determinant in the board’s consideration.

The second reason that a clear mission statement benefits the school is that it plants a stake in ground

for prospective families, making clear what the school is about and, equally as important, what the school is not about. Some portion of the prospective families should select not to enroll because they don’t agree with the mission statement, but those who do will be active supporters of the school and its clear mission. That kind of motivated, engaged parent body is the source of volunteers, committee members, and donations.

Dr. Frankel’s advice on mission statements: your school needs one, make it concise, make it clear, and make it something that not everyone will agree with. Your board, your parent community, and your staff should be familiar with it and be able to summarize it.

Responsibilities of the Board

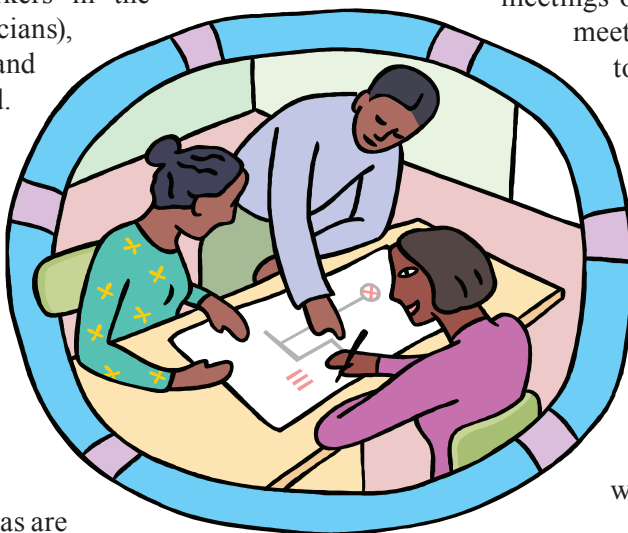
Boards of trustees have three areas of responsibility, which can be described as fiduciary, strategic, and generative. Most of us know and understand the fiduciary role of the board in which the board occupies a position of trust to ensure the tuition money is spent for the benefit of the students and their education, and that the institution of the school acts in the best interests of the students and their families. The board fulfills the fiduciary duty through oversight and assessment of the school’s mission and finances. Tools that can help in this process are: annual evaluations of the head of school, constituent surveys, school benchmarks, and budget reports.

The board’s strategic responsibility is rooted in the mission statement. The board is the body charged with ensuring the school’s long term viability and quality and should have a view of what the school should be like in ten years. The comparison between that ten-year vision and the current state of the school will identify specific actions and directions that the administration should take in order to ensure that the ten-year goal will be achieved. Boards can be more strategic when they think of succession planning, when they set the budget (including financial aid), and assume a strategic posture with annual strategy sessions.

The generative level of trusteeship is rarer in boards of independent schools. The generative involves shared leadership, imagining and experimentation of what

the school could be, and for lack of a better name, research and development. The generative is the board's opportunity (and responsibility) to think outside the box and imagine how the school could be different and better. Towards that end, the board should encourage research and development, imagine the future, and continuously raise capital.

Dr. Frankel provided the following example to illustrate one generative role of the board. A recent article in American Demographics magazine presented the idea that future graduates of American schools will have three potential futures: workers in the skilled trades (plumbers, electricians), innovators (business leaders and owners), or as the unemployed. If the board agrees with this view of the future, what can your school do to position itself to better serve its future graduates? Is there one branch of this triad that your school should elect to serve, and if so, how? Does the current form of your school allow you to do that?



The strategic and generative areas are frequently not given as much focus from boards; as we can all attest the urgent often wins out over the important. Dr. Frankel encourages boards to make time to plan and act in all three arenas.

Board Operation

Throughout the day, Dr. Frankel made comments and recommendations about board operation. Here are a few of the ones I jotted down:

Board openness and communication with community

Board meetings should be closed. There was emphatic advice that the business of the board be done behind closed

doors, but that the board has a duty to share as much of the detail of each meeting with its community as it can in the form of meeting minutes. The community should see the results of the board's work, know its decisions, but should not be party to the frank discussions that the board must be able to have. The board should also publish an annual report relating the state of the school (including finances) and its direction.

Meeting Frequency and workload

The work of the board should be done largely by committees that meet between regularly scheduled meetings of the board. The board should meet five to ten times each year to confirm the work done in committees. At other times Dr. Frankel suggested six to eight meetings per year; the point is that boards should not be meeting monthly and that fewer meetings are generally better than more meetings. Also, involving outside parties in committee work is an excellent way to evaluate prospective board members without jeopardizing the board.

There is help available

Dr. Frankel showed us a number of resources, but one that stands out is the website for the National Association of Independent Schools, which offers a number of documents on best practices (navigate to www.nais.org then select the "About NAIS" menu, and then the item called "Principles of Good Practice"). There are some great topics here, they're free, and they make wonderful items to send out to board members as attachments to the next meeting agenda. ■

David Smith is Board President at Two Rivers Montessori School.

To change a generation or a nation, we must look to the child, who is omnipotent.

— Maria Montessori

You Are Invited To the OMA Annual Spring Tea

WHO: All Montessorians and the 2006-2007 students of the Montessori Institute Northwest

WHAT: An annual OMA tradition

WHERE: The Kennedy School, 5736 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland

WHEN: Saturday, May 19th, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

WHY: Meet your Montessori friends, new and old. OMA members past and present as well as the current teachers-in-training at MINW, come celebrate 100 years of Montessori education, delight in the work of Oregon's Montessori community, congratulate the MINW graduates, and join us as we present the Susie Huston Award and the award for Outstanding Dedication. Enjoy time together reflecting upon and celebrating this year's work!

HOW: The OMA Board is pleased to host this event. We welcome anyone wishing to help with set-up or clean-up. Please contact us at workshops@oregonmontessori.org to volunteer.

RSVP: OMA members whose email address is on file will receive an electronic invitation. Reply online to the invitation, or send your name and the number in your party to workshops@oregonmontessori.org. Kindly reply by Friday, May 18, so we are able to provide refreshments for everyone.

We look forward to seeing you!

OMA Award Nominations

Susie Huston Award

The Susie Huston Award is given to a guide who shares the wonder of Montessori in the classroom and is named for a local Montessori guide whose work made a distinct and inspiring impact on our local community. Who would you like to see recognized for the inspiring work they do?

Outstanding Dedication Award

The Outstanding Dedication Award is given to someone whose dedication to enlightening others of the benefits of Montessori education has made a profound impact on the community. Who do you admire for the promotion of Montessori education?

Nominate your candidate today! Let us know who you have in mind, along with a description of why your nominee deserves the honor. You can send your vote—along with your contact information—to officers@oregonmontessori.org, or look for a nomination card included in this newsletter. Past recipients are listed in the OMA Member Directory, and former recipients are eligible for additional nominations. Nominations must be received by April 15. Winners will be announced at the OMA Spring Tea.

VOTE BY MAIL

OMA
PO Box 80151
Portland, OR 97280

VOTE BY EMAIL

officers@oregonmontessori.org

A Memoir and Appreciation

By Amelia MacRae

A recent college graduate gives her answer to the question that every Montessori teacher and school head is frequently asked. The answer: The kids do just fine and they are grateful.

Last year I graduated from Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota. It has been over fourteen years since my last Montessori class, but I still think of myself as a Montessori kid.

I have carried the lessons that I learned at such a young age with me throughout my academic life, and now I am learning to apply those lessons to my adult life as well. I see myself as an environmentalist, a feminist, and someone who cares about and takes part in politics; I have this insatiable desire to do something that will change the world for the better. I also care about traveling, experiencing new cultures, and peace, and I recently discovered that these traits are not unique to me alone, but are shared by Montessorians across the globe.

A special bond still exists between the people I met at Montessori school, and many of them share similar ideals. For this and other reasons, I continue to ponder the lasting effects of my time in Montessori school.

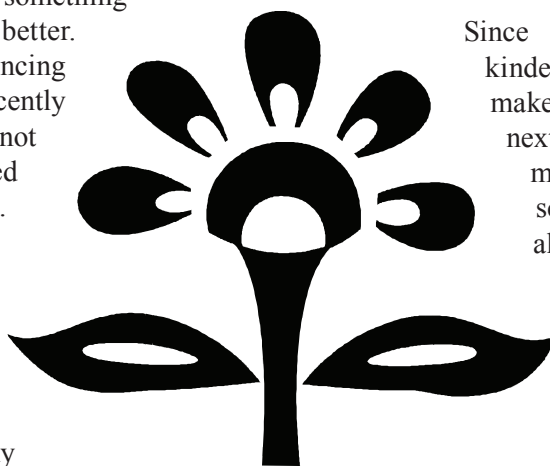
I know my experiences helped shape my basic values about my place in the world, my ability to make it better, and my responsibility to keep it healthy. In this way I was taught to interact as a productive member of society. I have always believed that I can thank Montessori for my academic success as well.

Part of my struggle has been trying to remember what exactly it was about my years in Montessori that served me so well. I had always questioned whether or not I could truly credit my achievements in high school and my character as a person to my Montessori education alone, or whether it was more to do with the kind of parents I had and their influence on me. Surely, as in most cases, it was due to a mixture of those values

learned in school and values placed in me by my parents, who were members of the 1960's generation. However, I doubt that I would have accepted my parents' ways alone without the reinforcement of my teachers and peers at school.

My Story

I began Montessori preschool at age two and a half, shortly before the birth of my sister. At first I went just two or three half-days a week, then half-days all week, and then up to full days by my third year (officially this was kindergarten). I also attended my school's summer programs. The school that I went to was in a college neighborhood in Portland, Oregon near where my family lived.



Since this first school ended after kindergarten it was time for my family to make a decision about where to send me next. At this point many of my friends moved into neighborhood public schools. In fact, some parents had already pulled their children out of Montessori after only two years because they wanted them to start public school in kindergarten. I think that the main reasons for this decision were either because it improved their chances of getting

the child into a certain magnet program, or because they believed, and with some good reason, that it would be an easier social transition for the child to start a new school when most of his peers were starting, rather than entering a year later after friendships had already developed.

The transition to regular school turned out not to be an issue for me yet, because I moved on to another Montessori school; this one first through third grade. This was a great school and many strong and lasting friendships were formed there that continue today, just as with the preschool I attended—friendships between former students, parents, and teachers all together. My younger sister ended up continuing on here as well.

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After third grade I was again at a transition point. Would I stay in Montessori? Or was it time to begin the traditional public school track? My parents and I visited several schools, both Montessori and traditional public, and there were many factors that ultimately influenced our decision that I would leave Montessori.

One was financial, for we did not find any public Montessori programs in our area. Another was the commute that all the Montessori options required, as opposed to our local public school's nearby location. Another was that some of my best friends were attending the same public school near my house. These were girls who I had been in Montessori preschool with, but who had not gone to my elementary school. It was also the school that a close friend from my third grade Montessori class was planning to switch to, and so we made the transition together, our parents requesting that we be placed in the same fourth grade class.

Finally, the transition decision was ultimately made by my parents because of their commitment to public schools. They felt that my sister and I needed to be involved in public education and that I needed be friends with kids whose parents could not afford to place them in private school.

This decision did not come easily. My parents had a lot of conversations about it, both with each other and with other parents, and it was something we struggled with. Of course, most of the issues were lost on me at the time, but looking back it is one of the things I am most thankful to them for, and I ended up being very proud of my public school roots when I returned to a private school for college. I also know that my parents had to think long and hard about the trade-offs of providing me with a high quality education that put me in a kind of educational and social elite (but at the same time put them in financial stress) versus offering me what would be a possibly mediocre educational experience, but that would broaden my exposure to other kinds of people and life issues and bring less financial worry. If we had access to a public Montessori program it would have provided the best of both worlds for us, being both affordable

and socially diverse, while remaining educationally advanced. Unfortunately, no such program existed for me.

In the end, clearly I think my parents made the right decision, but I am not positive that the decision was made at the right time. However, because the three-year Montessori cycle has transitions at different times than the public schools, children are forced to either leave one program early or start the new one late, so it's almost impossible to find the "right time" to transition.

Transitions

In my transition to public school, some doors closed; others opened. The transition itself, however, was not easy.



The difference between the education styles was exemplified in one of my first days in fourth grade. I went to the lunchroom for lunch, looking for my friend who was in another class and I saw a girl sitting at a table who I knew was friends with my friend. I sat down next to her and started unpacking my bagged lunch. She looked at me like I was crazy! She told me I wasn't allowed to sit by her, that classes had to eat together

and I had to go find the table for my class. I was already so nervous I wanted to cry. What was this silly rule for anyway? From across the lunchroom I could see the girl laughing as she told my friend what I had done.

This was only the beginning of many things about the new school that I didn't understand: Bells, grades, lockers, lines, waiting to move on until everyone understood, all working on the same easy worksheets, only being allowed in certain areas at certain times. After a while things got easier and started making sense. I had a solid group of friends and I learned how to work within the system, but I never quite "fit in." I did, however, learn to be one of the best at following the rules.

By the time I reached high school I was on the honors track. I was placed in a math class with only three freshmen, and two of us were Montessori grads. Not only were we the youngest, but we were among the top

students in the class, along with a sophomore who we had also gone to Montessori preschool with. In my other classes it was the same; you could always see the connection between who was doing well in class and where they had come from. Although I went to a school of nearly 1,300 kids, my classes were always made up of the same group of about 150 honors students, and every Montessori baby was in that group. There were maybe ten of us, and for each one excelling clearly seemed to come naturally. It's not that we didn't work hard, but more that we liked working hard, liked participating in discussions and liked talking to the teachers after class. My experience was not unique. Montessori students I knew were more motivated to learn, and therefore ended up being more encouraged to take it to the next level.

Yes, in high school some people might have called us nerds or suck-ups behind our backs. But I never saw it that way. We didn't understand why the other students didn't want to read *Oliver Twist* or learn physics. I always figured it was their loss. Of the students who graduated that I had been in preschool with, all were honor students (GPA over 3.5) and four were valedictorians. More importantly, all went on to good colleges, while the majority of students from my high school did not attend four-year institutions. But the academic success was in some ways bittersweet. Most of my friends were people who existed a little outside of conventional high school life, and it wasn't until I was almost done with high school that I finally felt like I was really a part of the average student world.

Reflections

My Montessori roots made me predisposed to enjoy learning. More than fellow students without the Montessori experiences, I was receptive to the public school teachers' creative techniques and strategies, while being less likely to learn from being lectured at or given worksheets and tests.

Yet when I try to place my finger on what it was exactly that we did as activities in Montessori that led to the overall outcome of me being good at school, I can't quite get there. Although I remember many things quite vividly—there was the timeline of life on earth, the pop bottle science experiment demonstration in second grade, the fragrant tea tray that we would offer to guests—I have trouble putting these memories together into one experience. As a toddler I can remember cutting along straight lines on colored pieces of paper. I can recall tracing sandpaper letters and playing I Spy

on a rectangular carpet. Yet none of this explains why Montessori worked so well for me.

I can, however, look back now and point to a few key areas that strongly affected my academic future, one of which was teacher/student interaction.

I saw teachers more as friends than as authority figures. I knew that I had to respect them, listen to what they were telling me to do and look to them for guidance, but I don't think anyone ever told me to think those things. I just believed them, because it fit in with how I was treated. I wanted them to like me, I wanted to please them, and the incredible things they helped me discover always amazed me. At the same time, I called them by their first names, my parents were friendly with them, I knew about their personal lives, I had been to many of their houses. In many respects they treated me like a peer; they spoke to me like I was an intelligent human being. They were not force-feeding knowledge to me, and that in itself is enough to make the learning we did more fun and lasting. Although the level of closeness changed when I went to public school, my past experience had already shaped my attitude toward thinking about teachers as people. To me, they were resources for me to take advantage of both emotionally and academically.

I do not want to give the impression that my public school teachers could never live up to my early Montessori teachers. On the contrary, I got to know many amazing educators who helped shape my ideas and my motivations for my future. At the same time, there were teachers who only warmed up to students who showed an extra interest in their classes. This worked out well for myself and other motivated kids, but for the average public school pupil this desire was not innate in them, and so they missed out even more when a teacher was not willing to go the extra mile until the student was.

I spoke to friends from Montessori background about this, and one friend's parent noted that in general, her kids have become more self-directed than most other students in their classes: they didn't let the assignments define the parameters of what they learn, and if they want to push ahead, they went for it. She believed that a reason for this was that they didn't see their teachers as authoritarians who were burdening them with work. As a result, they naturally worked in cooperation with their non-Montessori teachers, and they often saw them after class or called them on the phone. This was my experience

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too, that the teacher/student relationship should be a respectful relationship in both directions, where students can expect their teachers to help them with what they themselves want to achieve and understand.

Perhaps the area of Montessori that resulted in the most tangible result was an accelerated understanding of mathematics.

When I was in my third year of Montessori, age five, I started doing an activity that I remember being called the “stamp board.” I can remember the way the box looked, the colored tiles, the set up of the problems, but I cannot for the life of me remember how to use it. I do remember that I loved doing it. My teacher would write a list of problems on graph paper and I would spend hours working them through with the “game,” filling in the numbers until each one was done. I don’t think I ever really knew what the real-world purpose was, I just knew that I liked playing with the pieces, finishing the tasks and getting the right answers.

It was only when I entered fourth grade and began learning long division along with the rest of the nine-year-olds that I realized I already knew how to do it, and that I had been doing it for years! This was an amazing feeling. Not only did it set me ahead of the class, but, more importantly, it gave me the feeling that I had an advantage, that here was a place that I already was excelling, and I wanted to keep it that way.

I was motivated to continue doing well in math, and in 6th grade I was back in class with a friend who had also started in Montessori and who shared my passion for numbers. We challenged each other, and when the rest of the class was learning about fractions, our teacher gave us a pre-calculus book and let us work together in the corner. Not an ideal situation, but the best that my public school could offer that year. At the same time, I had another Montessori friend who switched back to Montessori for middle school because, after two years in our public elementary school, he had not learned anything new yet in math since leaving Montessori in third grade. Overall, almost all of our other Montessori friends did exceedingly well in math all through middle school and college.

I often think about how my life would have been different if I had stayed in Montessori longer. Sometimes I think I would be better off because I might have learned more and had a better understanding of how to use my passions

to make an impact on the world. At the same time, I feel that I would never have had the broad view of society that I have now.

In the end, Montessori seems to have given me more than I ever realized. Though the transition was difficult, I am glad I had both a Montessori and a public school education. Having spent influential time in a Montessori environment was constructive for my future ability to learn by teaching me how to investigate and think independently. The small concrete tasks allowed me to see the whole picture early on, and understand the key concepts even before I realized their purpose. Looking at concepts comprehensively at an early age made it possible for me to learn that everything is related and connected, that there are common threads that link different subject areas, different areas of life, and different kinds of people.

At the same time, switching to public school helped me realize the importance of these connections. I know that some of my most educational and intense friendships in middle school and high school were with people I never would have met in a private school. There were also a few opportunities that a large public school could offer that a small private school could not, such as large art departments and sports teams.

It was hard to fit in socially in regular public school for a while, and I think that if I had started in sixth grade, when I would not have been the only new kid, the transition would have gone much more smoothly. At the same time, I know it is possible I would have not perfectly “fit in” in high school even if I had always been in public school.

This goes back to the issue of my academic achievements and philosophical ideals being partly based on Montessori but also on having parents who are educated and came from similar families, along with my natural talents. Having never been a part of a public Montessori program, I cannot attest to its comparison with either of my experiences. However, it is my hope that such schools might offer a solution to some of the problems I had with each system, while maintaining the best aspects of both. ■

Amelia MacRae is a former student of several Portland Montessorians. This article is reprinted with permission from the Fall 2006 issue of “Public School Montessorian.”

Chiaravalle – Birthplace of Maria Montessori

By Cathryn Casper

My friends and family jokingly called this trip my “Holy Grail of Montessori Pilgrimage” when I enthusiastically announced that I was going to Chiaravalle on January 8, the day after the Centenary celebration in Rome. They were right. After two exciting, exhausting days of celebration, renewing friendships with seldom-seen Montessori friends, and visiting the original Casa dei Bambini on Via Marsi in the San Lorenzo District, I still felt a surge of eagerness when the bus pulled out of Rome with its palm trees and houses of rusty orange stucco with dark green shutters. Travel, celebration fatigue, and three days of great Italian meals were swept away by anticipation for this new adventure. We were on our way to the very place where the source of my life’s inspiration had emerged into the warm Italian light of day.

Fellow pilgrims came from the USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, the UK, and other parts of Europe. I had the good fortune to meet and become acquainted with Lynn Woodward, from the Primary course in Toronto, Canada, and Riza and Lyle Weinstein from Vancouver, B.C. Our spirits high, the voices inside the bus intermittently swelled, grew raucous, then quieted. “Andiamo!” – let’s go! – sang our hearts!

Outside the windows, the Italian countryside rolled by in gentle hills. Every house of stone, every

apartment building, every row house had its own little giardino filled with rows of leeks, spinach, broccoli, cardoon, radicchio, endive, rosemary, and sage, often bordered by olive trees. Botticelli frescoes came to life with Corsican pines like tall umbrellas along the ridge lines and flowing down into the valleys. The

stark geometry of boxy, earth-colored stuccoed houses was in harmony with formal rows of tall junipers along driveways. Sheep grazed like white clouds on the hillsides, and chalky white stones were plentiful in the fall-plowed fields.

Our bus went into the tunnels that took us directly through the Apennines Mountain Range and deposited us on the eastern side where the steep gray mountains had recently received a dusting of snow. We proceeded north along the Abruzzi coast to the port town of Ancona, directly on the Adriatic Sea. Looking out from the terrace of the “Vista del Mare” café where we had stopped to rest and

enjoy the local panini and other deli treats, the sea was beautiful blue with a few small boats. After nosing around through the dry goods of the little store, buying nougats and cartoline (postcards), and checking out the many kinds of pasta, we proceeded inland again toward Chiaravalle. There were signs of modern suburban life along the way—a new Ikea store, automobile dealerships with shiny new Smart



*At the door to the home-museum of
Maria Montessori*

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cars and Fiats, and lots of new road construction.

We arrived at our hotel, a cute little four story white stucco building set off by a blue mosaic fountain out front and tiny yellow bubble awnings over tiny balconies. Entering my single room, I was enchanted: everything was just my size, a tiny bed, a tiny bathroom, a tiny desk, TV, luggage rack, armoire, a tiny light, and a tiny sliding glass door out to my tiny balcony! I felt as snug as a bug in a rug, for one half-hour, then at last we were off to see the downtown of Chiaravalle!

Squeezing through the teeny cobblestone streets into a small piazza (town square) bordered by old buildings of brick and stone with small shops at street level and shuttered apartments above, our bus finally pulled up in front of a plain building with a large arch and wooden door with an intriguing sign with Geometric Cabinet shapes in red, and a marble plaque declaring it to be the birthplace of Maria Montessori. Then a crush of excited people poured out the doors and into the street, cameras flashing, rushing through the doors and tripping up the stairs to the first floor

where the Montessori Museum is.

After a short biography of Dr. Montessori in Italian, translated into English by one of our friends from Tijuana, Mexico, we were allowed to explore this little museum. The original apartment where Maria Montessori lived with her family has had some walls removed to make the rooms large enough to accommodate the library of books, displays of photographs of her family, her life and travels, and a few news articles, all neatly framed. Some of her original materials, Color Tablets wrapped with silk thread, Blue Rods, and various math charts were displayed in cabinets. A worn Brown Stair and Geometric Cabinet were displayed on a carpet. I had a curious feeling of having expected something amazing—some thrilling feeling at being on the very spot where she had been, but actually, apart from interest in all the artifacts, it was difficult to really appreciate this experience in the midst of such a swarm of people.

I tried looking at the garden out the back window of the stairwell. It was tiny—less than ten feet square.



The Church of Maria de Castagnola where Maria was baptized

I wondered if successive building had encroached on what had once been a pleasant space to sit and reflect. What did the child Maria experience here? Maria Montessori had begun her life in this little apartment, looking out over the town square, walking with her family to the nearby church of Santa Maria in Castagnola, with its large piazza. On this day the piazza still had strings of Christmas lights—long strings of tiny white lights in the shapes of stars and snowflakes suspended between rows of trees that led up to the church. Going through the enormous black doors, we were in a different world: one created to make you look up along the high barrel-vaulted ceiling toward the altar. A cheerful priest was explaining in animated Italian how the Cistercian monks had contributed to the well-being of life over the past two hundred years with their inventions, artistry, and hard work. He took us into a small fresco-decorated room where the hometown of Maria Montessori's mother, Renilde, had been born.

Chiaravalle is still a very small town, the main street still lined with green grocers, delicatessens, fish markets, butcher stores, dry goods stores, and pasticcerias, those essential pastry shops where everyone stops at 4 pm daily for that tiny cup of espresso and a sweet to sustain them until the 8 pm dinner hour. We followed tradition and enjoyed some flaky, cream-filled delicacies with our tasso de cafe. Then we were loaded back into our buses and returned to our hotel, where the downstairs turned out to be a large restaurant. After an amazingly long and deliciously Italian dinner, we turned in for the night.

The next morning we headed out of town to a Casa dei Bambini. We were able to walk anywhere we liked in the three adjoining rooms filled with busy children. I was astonished to see that despite 30-some adults wandering about in large coats carrying cameras and taking pictures, the children barely seemed to take notice! They continued on with their work with an air of interest and determination as if the onlookers were hardly visible. It was as if we had walked into one of Dr. Montessori's books of long ago.



Variation on Pink Tower and Brown Stair in the Casa dei Bambini

Next we were taken to a Nido with 60 children from ages six months to two-and-one-half years. The two-and-one-half-year-olds were all at lunch as we arrived, and proceeded in Italian fashion through courses of pasta soup, carrots, and hard-boiled eggs, and a fruit course, all seated around tables gaily decorated with yellow gingham tablecloths and vases of flowers. Each of the six tables had its own waiter (with a folded paper hat) or waitress (wearing a little ruffled

eyelet headband), who carried large tureens of soup with only a little adult help, and went back and forth removing and distributing the appropriate serving dishes for each course! They sat at lunch together for nearly an hour, and seemed quite happy—the Italian custom of long, companionable meals.

We then wandered among the tiny environments, all clean, light, and spacious, with large bathrooms with everything from tiny toilets to small bathtubs, until we came to the next level of toddlers, and finally to the infants. There we were asked to remove our shoes as the children were still crawling about on the floor.

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Children serving lunch at the Nido

Everywhere the children were happy, being hugged and held and talked to in a loving and respectful way. It had the emotional atmosphere of a big loving home.

Our tour ended back in downtown Chiaravalle at an elegant restaurant just off the main street that had been reserved for a long, wonderful meal. At the end, feeling full and restless, I excused myself and took a short walk through the town. Now it was completely and utterly closed. The shops were shuttered, lights out, completely quiet. It was deserted except for a few workers repairing a street corner. Everyone had gone home to be with their families until the afternoon. How Italian! How lovely! Ciao, Chiaravalle! ■

Cathryn Casper is currently an AMI/USA primary consultant. She is enjoying being semi-retired after 32 years in the classroom, and thus able to expand her adventures in Montessori education. She is a Course Assistant in the first AMI Primary Training Course in Thailand, planning to return to Thailand in April.

What Montessori Means to Children

By Elaina Wolff

Who better to comment on the first wonderful 100 years of Montessori than those benefiting from the lessons? I talked to some children about their thoughts on Montessori, and honestly, their reviews were quite glowing.

What is it they like about Montessori school? A 5-year-old from Portland says, "It feels good to be in Montessori school! It's fun!" Others followed with, "I love to work!" Another extended-day child explained "I go to Montessori school because you can choose your own work and because you don't get yelled at like my Tae-Kwon-Do teacher!" (Montessori—a safe haven from mean Tae-Kwon-Do teachers!) They love the choices; "There is so much to do. There are so many choices from the areas that teach you reading, writing, and math and I love reading, writing, and math! I also love my lovely friends and snack." She pretty much covered all the bases!

Talking nice about their teachers was a big part of the conversation too; they all LOVE their teachers (although we all know that some days that is totally not true!). As for the first Montessori teacher, Maria herself, the children understand that Montessori was named for "the first person that started it" and that Montessori is "a kind of school."

But perhaps the most succinct quote of that day; "I like to work. Learning makes you stronger, makes you think better, and makes you grow up faster." Sometimes, I think there are actually adults in those little bodies. ■

Elaina Wolff—a Montessori child herself—completed her AMI primary training in 2006 and works as a children's house assistant in the Sunflower Cottage at Two Rivers Montessori School.

Centenary Celebration in Rome: Inspiration and a Call to Action

By Peter Davidson

Sometimes being reminded of the most basic, profound and elemental truths of Montessori turns out to be the most inspiring and re-affirming experience one can have. That was my experience in Rome.

It is one thing to know intellectually that we are part of an international movement in education. It's quite a different and more profound realization that comes over you surrounded by 1200 Montessorians from six continents representing some 35 countries. Similarly, seeing the archival photos, hearing the early days of our movement described by a history professor from the University of Rome and, above all, being in the place where it all began, brought home the fact that our movement is 100 years old and just as valid today as on Epiphany of 1907!

We were addressed by professors from the University of Rome, by the mayors of Rome and Naples, by the Minister of Education of the Ukraine, by author and University of Virginia professor Angeline Lillard, by AMI trainers Annette Haines, Baiba Grazzini, and Silvana Montanaro, by Renilde Montessori, and by the Presidents of AMI and Opera Nazionale Andre Roberfroid and Pietro De Santis. The speakers were almost uniformly good, but a few were simply marvelous, having an effect on myself and the rest of the audience that was profound and transformative.

Like most of you, I spend most of my time focused on the important but rather narrow world of my own school. There were moments during the Centenary weekend, though, that gave me a much broader and more powerful vision of what our movement is and can become. Let me give you a few examples.

Annette Haines referred back to an international address in 1943 in which Dr. Montessori lamented "how strange it is that there is as yet no science or study of peace." Dr. Haines reminded us that we are, in fact, those "specialists in the science of peace." In our classrooms through concentration, normalization, social cohesion, and the valorization of the personality, the peaceful world citizens of tomorrow are constructing themselves. "Peace cannot be brought about by treaties or by marches, or taught as curriculum. A peaceful society cannot be built without an integration of mind, body, and spirit." In other words, the best hope for peace is the work that each of us carries out in

our classrooms every day.

Equally inspiring were the stories from South Africa of schools sponsoring and supporting the development of Montessori environments in the most impoverished areas. An Ursuline sister described her efforts on behalf of the poorest migrant worker communities here in the United States. Montessorians from Korea, Japan, and China described opportunities to bring Montessori to countless children in those countries. The Education Minister from the Ukraine passionately described Montessori as the key to liberating the minds and souls of his countrymen after generations of totalitarian control.

AMI President Andre Roberfroid concluded the conference by exhorting us to accept the huge responsibility that is laid upon us to spread Dr. Montessori's message of a new child and the world's best hope for a better and more peaceful future. He outlined three conditions without which we will fail in our mission. First, we must never compromise on excellence. Second, we must have unity – this task is too important to allow for division. Third, though we must have unity, we must not have uniformity. We must support each other since in our diversity is our strength.

During breaks in the conference, or in the evenings at the hotel, I asked every person I encountered, "What are the three most critical issues facing the Montessori movement over the next ten years, and what should we be doing about it?" The answers were pretty consistent. We need more teachers, which means we need more teacher-trainers, which means we need to better support our training centers. I think we should each call MINW, or whatever other training center we choose and ask, "What can I do to help you today?"

The world needs what Montessori offers more, not less, every day. Granted, the work we do in our schools and classrooms is the most important contribution we make. But is it not enough? That's the question I've been asking myself and everyone in my community since I returned. In the answer to that question may rest the future of our movement and, in a very real sense, the future of mankind. ■

Peter Davidson is the administrator of Montessori School of Beaverton.

Season of Non-Violence: Educating for Peace

By Grace Musumerci

This year marks the tenth-annual "Season for Nonviolence." Inaugurated in 1998, the "Season for Nonviolence" was established to honor the 50th- and 30th- memorial anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. From January 30 to April 4, we will be celebrating the season here at Child's View by discussing ways to be peaceful and incorporating methods of maintaining peace in our everyday life.

Family Pledge of Nonviolence

Making peace must start within ourselves and within our family. Each of us, members of the _____ family, commits ourselves as best we can to become nonviolent and peaceable people:

To Respect Self and Others

To respect myself, to affirm others, and to avoid uncaring criticism, hateful words, physical attacks, and self-destructive behavior.

To Communicate Better

To share my feelings honestly, to look for safe ways to express my anger, and to work at solving problems peacefully.

To Listen

To listen carefully to one another, especially those who disagree with me, and to consider others' feelings and needs rather than insist on having my own way.

To Forgive

To apologize and make amends when I have hurt another, to forgive others, and to keep from holding grudges.

To Respect Nature

To treat the environment and all living things, including our pets, with respect and care.

To Play Creatively

To select entertainment and toys that support our family's values and to avoid entertainment that makes violence look exciting, funny, or acceptable.

To Be Courageous

To challenge violence in all its forms whenever I encounter it, whether at home, at school, at work, or in the community, and to stand with others who are treated unfairly.

This is our pledge. These are our goals. We will check ourselves on what we have pledged once a month on _____ for the next twelve months so that we can help each other become more peaceable people.

Pledging family members sign below:

"Eliminating violence, one family at a time, starting with our own."

Institute for Peace and Justice
475 E Lockwood Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63119
314-918-2630
www.ipj-ppj.org

Montessori Centenary Declaration: Champion the Cause of all Children

From www.montessoricentenary.org

In 2007 the world Montessori community celebrates the 100th anniversary of a revolution in education.

100 years ago Dr. Maria Montessori began to explore the true nature of childhood through extensive scientific observation. We proudly recognize a century of great work, inspired by these discoveries:

- The purpose of education is to nurture the energies of childhood – intellectual, physical, emotional, moral and spiritual – so that every member of the human race can make a constructive contribution to the world.
- All children deserve the best possible conditions at every stage of their development.
- All children, in the best educational conditions develop creative and flexible minds easily adapted to the complexities of human society.
- All children, in the best educational conditions demonstrate innate discipline, joyful and focused work and empathy with others. They are tireless and selfless in their work.

■ All children possess inner directives to guide their own development.

■ All children fully developed become individuals committed to human solidarity, social progress and peace.

We declare our commitment now and in the future:

- To participate in a universal social movement that places children at the centre of society, recognizing them as citizens of the world.
- To promote knowledge and understanding of the conditions necessary for the full development of the human being from conception to maturity both at home and in society.
- To create a climate of opinion and opportunities for the full development of the potential of all young people so that humanity may work in harmony for a higher and more peaceful civilization.
- To reform education as a reciprocal, lifelong process in which every member of the human race is profoundly engaged. ■



An Act of Kindness

Grace Musumerci, a student of the AML training course in Chennai, India, is setting up a classroom for the poorest of the poor near the Gandhi Ashram in Maharashtra, India. She desperately needs Sensorial Materials, Metal Insets, and the beginning exercises of Mathematics. If you or your school would be so kind as to donate used materials to this worthy effort, it will be very much appreciated! Cathryn Kasper of Corvallis is coordinating the collection and sending of these material donations. Please contact her at 541-745-5143 or email at cathryndmk@nwlinc.com if you would like to donate materials or would like to make donations toward shipping them to India. Namaste!



SCHOOL NEWS

All Roads Learning Community Open House

Saturday, May 12, 11 am to 2 pm
3230 SW Vermont St, Portland 97219
503-939-8235

Franciscan Montessori Earth School and St. Francis Academy

Celebrations of the Centenary got underway at the Earth School in earnest on January 8, with the entire Earth school gathering in the gym to mark both 100 years of Montessori education and the 30th anniversary of the Franciscan Montessori Earth School and St. Francis Academy. Students gathered in the gym, in the company of timelines and other displays that focus on the Montessori Method, to share prayers, the school song, and to walk 100 steps around the gym to commemorate 100 years of Montessori, and then an additional 30 steps to commemorate the 30 years of Earth School history.

Events marking the Centenary will continue throughout the coming year, as will events marking the 30th anniversary of the Earth School. It is a wonderful opportunity for the Earth School community to celebrate not only our own history, but also our part of the greater Montessori legacy. We invite any former student, staff, board, or advisory council member to call or stop by during this year, or log on to our website and leave a message. We are grateful to all of the members of the local Montessori community who were part of our history! We would really like to hear from you.

Child's View Montessori School

On Friday the 5th of January we gathered up in Parker Hall with all the children. Our banner was a beautiful backdrop for a story/picture presentation Tammy shared with the children. We also lit 100 candles as we counted aloud together. After the celebration we took our banner

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outside and attached it to our sign. We also took the pictures from the story presentation, plus others that Tammy had gleaned off the internet, and created a beautiful bulletin board with the "One people One planet" poster in the center surrounded by pictures of Montessori children working from around the world. Then the historical pictures of Dr. Montessori and children with their work comprised the border for the bulletin board. We will be adding to the bulletin board with pictures of the children working here at Child's View. The children periodically stop and gaze at the pictures and often ask questions about them!

Today we began our observance of the "A Season for Nonviolence". We published our newsletter today with a family pledge. This internet site has some good info: www.agnt.org/snv64ways.htm. We are going to write a "Daily Way" up on our white board for the 64 days. The period runs from January 30th through April 4th and was inspired by the 50th- and 30th- memorial anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Barker Creek Montessori, Kitsap County

Barker Creek Montessori is located in Kitsap County, which is directly west, across Puget Sound, from Seattle. A salmon spawning creek runs through the school property—20 feet from the school door! Every November, Chum salmon make their run up this creek. Our children go out daily to check on them, count them, encourage them, etc. We spend a lot of time talking about their life cycle and the importance of the health of the creek. We find that this easily extends to caring for the earth. Some of the classroom works that we have to support this study are: "salmon life cycle" three-part cards, "types of salmon" matching cards and a "build a stream" environment from which the children learn about fencing farm animals, where to put garbage, and that the stream bed should be covered in stones and gravel, etc. If you are ever in Seattle in November, please come on by! ■



Workshops

Our final Primary Workshop of the school year is March 7 with a focus on Cultivating a Vital Community. Ginni Sackett continues this year's Primary Workshop Series theme of Observe, Interpret, Respond by exploring real-life scenarios as a basis for interpreting children's behaviors and responding with positive strategies that support individual and social success.

Parent Education

Our annual Parent Education Series, with Ginni Sackett, will be presented on Tuesday evenings, February 27, March 6, and March 13. The series, entitled "Principles into Practice: Real Life Discipline," will be applicable to parents of children of all ages. This series will focus on real-life family situations and explore practical ways to support children in becoming self-disciplined, independent and socially responsible.

We are also pleased to offer a new Parent Seminar for parents and future parents of children ages birth to three. Over the course of two Saturdays, April 14 and 21, Venus Zaron will present on Using Montessori in the Home. These sessions focus on preparing the home environment for life-long learning and in support of the development of self-esteem, concentration and independence.

Enrolling Teacher Education Courses: Primary

We are currently accepting applications to our Primary Course 2007-2008. The Priority Application Deadline for this course is March 15. This year the Montessori Institute Northwest will waive the application fee for anyone referred to the training course by an alumna of the Institute or for any applicants who are being sponsored for the training by a school. Contact the Institute for more information!

Assistant to Infancy

We are also very excited to announce an Assistants to Infancy Summer Course 2008-2009 in Portland. The Assistants to Infancy course is an in-depth study of Montessori theory and practice with an emphasis on children birth to three years old. The course includes lectures on child development such as exploring gross

(continued next page)

and fine movement, spoken language, the development of the personality, as well as obstetrics, nutrition, and hygiene. Students also study the Montessori prepared environment and the role of the adult in education for children birth to age three. Let us know if you are interested in receiving more information about this course! Enrollment will begin shortly.

Centenary Celebrations, Looking Forward to the Next 100 Years

Although MINW's formal mission is to serve our community by offering teacher, parent, and continuing education, we are only a small part of a much larger movement. This fact is felt deeply by the members of the staff and Board of the Montessori Institute Northwest as we reach out to adults who affect the lives of so many children.

Only a few years before her death Dr. Montessori said, "I assure you that were I not absolutely certain that mankind can be bettered, I should not have had the strength to battle for fifty years, having so frequently had to begin again when my work was destroyed by others. I would not have had the strength, at my age, to travel the world, proclaiming this truth." Our vision for the future of Montessori education is vast and we humbly ask for your assistance in this endeavor. Montessori is more than a mode of education it is a means by which to better community. Our recent Celebration of Light was a celebration of not only what is currently thriving in our community, but also a look toward what could be. We have a vision of Training at all levels and of ongoing outreach to share our knowledge of human development with its implications for peaceful interactions.

The Montessori Institute Northwest offers you best wishes for this Centenary year and would like to thank you for supporting the Institute throughout the past 28 years. The Institute is funded entirely by program fees and by donations from our community and does not receive financial support from any other institutions. In fact, a percentage of our income is paid to AMI to support their work.

The Montessori Institute Northwest will continue to raise funds in order to advance the Montessori movement in the Pacific Northwest. You can still send your contribution to the Institute for any of these three programs:

The Capital Fund of the Montessori Institute Northwest
The Capital Fund supports our vision of offering permanent AMI teacher education courses at all levels,

and to expand and develop programs for parents, classroom assistants, guides, and administrators.

Tuition Assistance Fund

This fund will provide tuition assistance to students who find themselves in need of financial assistance during training. This fund will also become a scholarship for teachers in training and for participants in the AMI Training of Trainers program who are committed to work in Portland.

Advancing the Peaceful Revolution

This fund will be used to promote the Montessori movement and generate a Montessori outreach program to the public with events, books, and publicity.

Thank you for all of your support!

The Montessori Institute Northwest
4506 SE Belmont St. Suite 100
Portland, OR 97215 ■

CLASSIFIEDS

Check www.oregonmontessori.org for the most up-to-date listings.

Whole Child Montessori seeks an AMI Primary Guide for Fall 2007. Whole Child Montessori Center, located in SE Portland close to Reed College, celebrates its 25th anniversary in the fall of 2007. The school has two well-established primary communities in a beautifully designed facility. The school enjoys a strong staff, supportive Board of Trustees, and a committed, involved parent group. Our compensation and benefits package is competitive. We are currently accepting inquiries and resumes from AMI trained primary guides interested in joining our Montessori community. Interested individuals please send resume and letters of reference to: Whole Child Montessori Center, 5909 SE 40th Avenue, Portland, OR 97202 or email to np4wcmc@comcast.net.

Corvallis Montessori School seeks an AMI Primary Guide beginning Fall 2007.

The classroom is very well established and completely equipped. Spanish language and experience preferred. Compensation includes benefits package and professional development. View our website at www.corvallismontessori.org.

Interested applicants please send resume and references to Trish Miller, CMS, 2730 NW Greeley Avenue, Corvallis, OR 97330-2400 or email trish@corvallismontessori.org.

Providence Child Center - Montessori School.

This full-time exempt Montessori teacher position is covered with an annual teaching contract. The work days for this position include instructional school days and other in-service work days. A comprehensive and competitive compensation package includes a generous number of paid holidays.

Required: High school graduate and Montessori certification from a nationally recognized training program for ages three to six years. Preferred: AMI certificate and college degree, at least two years of successful teaching in a Montessori program with children ages three to six years old.

The Montessori Teacher is a Guide who helps direct the children's activities academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically in a prepared environment that challenges each child to reach his/her fullest potential in each area, in accordance with Montessori philosophy. This position supervises at least one classroom assistant in conjunction with the Enrichment Coordinator. Performs all duties in a manner that demonstrates our core values: Respect, Compassion, Justice, Excellence, and Stewardship.

Classroom material making service available in Portland!

Consider outsourcing your language materials, sewing projects and/or refurbish work. I specialize in the primary classroom and am an AMI-trained guide. Contact: Monica Motsko, M.Ed. at 503-244-5155. Hourly rate or project bids available. FREE local pick-up and delivery for your convenience.

Greenstone Montessori School for children ages 3-12 is opening a search for:

- Substitute Guides and Assistants needed in both Primary and Elementary; available immediately for on-call, as needed
- Part-time, shift work for our Childcare Program. Current shifts available: 6-9am, 11:50-1:30, 1:30-3pm, and 3-6pm, M-F
- AMI Primary Guide starting 2007
- AMI Children's House materials – we are starting a new classroom in 2007

To apply, please send resume to: admissions@greenstonemontessori.com. For more information go to: www.greenstonemontessori.com, or call 503-759-3212.

Greenstone Montessori School has an immediate opening

for a dynamic, dedicated AMI Children's House Teacher (ages 3-6) who is interested in working in a newer school (opened fall 2005) that is located in a highly supportive rural community, 30 minutes south of Portland. A studio apartment is available ten minutes from the school located on two beautiful old growth, fern covered acres.

The successful candidate will be taking over a fully equipped second-year class of 25 children. With current interest, an additional Children's House is being considered for fall of 2007. Our 6-12 Elementary classroom is located on-site and staffed by an AMI Teacher. We are currently in the process of acquiring AMI recognition. For more information visit our website at: www.greenstonemontessori.com.

To apply call 503-759-3212 or email: admissions@greenstonemontessori.com.

AMI Employment Listings

The Montessori Institute Northwest regularly receives Job Announcements from schools around the world. Positions are usually for AMI Primary Guides, but also often include different levels and positions as well. Come by the Institute and browse our Employment Opportunities Binder. Also, keep us in mind as a means for advertising your positions to the AMI community. 4506 SE Belmont, Portland, FAX: 503-963-8994. ■

Montessori in the Northwest

Alaska:

Anchorage Montessori School (0-12)
907-276-2240

Longview:

Montessori Children's House of Longview (3-6)
360-578-9885

Vancouver:

Cascadia Montessori School (6-12)
360-944-8096
Good Shepherd Montessori School (3-6)
360-892-7770
Vancouver Montessori School (3-6)
360-256-0872

Yakima:

Montessori School of Yakima (3-6)
509-966-0680

Wenatchee:

Montessori Children's School (3-6)
509-663-5687

Camas:

Camas Montessori School (3-6)
360-834-7434

Columbia River

NW Portland - Beaverton - Forest Grove:

Cedar Montessori School (3-6)
503-548-7280
Childpeace Montessori School (0-12)
503-222-1197
Elizabeth Perry Montessori School (3-9)
503-357-9740
Little Fruit Farm Montessori (3-6)
503-521-8603
Montessori School of Beaverton (3-12)
503-439-1597
Smockville Montessori School (3-6)
503-625-1610

SW Portland Area:

All Roads Learning Community (0-3)
503-939-8235
Child's View Montessori School (3-6, summer elementary)
503-293-9422
Odyssey Montessori School (6-12)
503-892-6366
Sherwood Christian Montessori (3-6)
503-625-7758
Two Rivers Montessori School (3-12)
503-768-3847
West Hills Montessori School (3-9)
503-246-5495
West Hills Montessori II - Garden Home & Multnomah (3-6)
503-246-5495

N & NE Portland:

Lily Garden Montessori School (3-6)
503-380-4528
Montessori of Alameda (0-9)
503-335-3321
Mercy Corps Northwest
503-236-1580
Providence Montessori School (3-6)
503-215-2409

Willamette River

SE Portland - Gresham - Sandy:

Franciscan Montessori Earth School (3-14)
503-760-8220
Gresham Montessori Center (0-6)
503-491-0151
Harmony Montessori School (3-6)
503-255-5337
Montessori Institute NW (Teacher Training)
503-963-8992
Morningstar Montessori House of Children (3-6)
503-661-1457
Puddletown School (3-6)
503-539-6385
Whole Child Montessori Center (3-6)
503-771-6366

Milwaukie:

Milwaukie Montessori School and Daycare (3-6)
503-786-4256

Molalla:

Greenstone Montessori School (3-12)
503-759-3212

Lake Oswego:

West Hills Montessori - Lake Oswego (3-6)
503-636-1408

West Linn - Oregon City:

Fine Art Starts
503-723-9661
SunGarden Montessori Center (3-6)
503-655-2609

Willamette Valley

McMinnville:

McMinnville Montessori School (3-9)
503-434-5081

Salem - Albany - Corvallis:

Corvallis Montessori School (3-12)
541-753-2513
Montessori Discovery Center (3-6)
503-371-3415
Philomath Montessori School (3-6)
541-929-2672
Salem Montessori School (3-6)
541-364-6615
Sundborn Children's House (3-6)
541-924-9480

Eugene:

Eugene Montessori School (3-6)
541-345-7124
Far Horizons Montessori School (3-12)
541-485-0521
Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School (3-14)
541-681-9662