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Editorial

This editorial must start with the sad news of the passing of our honorary member Bob Portielje, serving AMI for nearly thirty years, and our President from 1983-2000. We are tremendously grateful for all his work. Steve Huffman remembered him at the Annual General Meeting on 18 April. At Bob’s funeral on April 11, AMI was represented by former colleague Fred Kelpin, and various members of the current Executive Committee, office staff and AMI/USA.

Another Montessori tie has been severed with the death of Marilena Henny-Montessori (1919-2009), the eldest grandchild of Maria Montessori. She died in her home in France, surrounded by her children.

How past and future meet each other in the present is shown by a landmark on the Montessori Calendar. This year it is one hundred years since Maria Montessori first published *Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica applicato all’educazione infantile nelle Case dei Bambini*.



1909: first Montessori student group at Villa Montecasa

And, equally important, it is also exactly one hundred years ago that only two years after the first Casa started in San Lorenzo Maria Montessori heeded the appeals made to her to start training, so that others might also be able to apply her ideas and approach with young children. The first course was given in Città di Castello, in Umbria, Italy with a group of some 70 students.

Today’s students may look different, and not all wear the same elegant long dresses with laced cuffs, but what has remained is the same enthusiastic commitment of the students on our courses. The first group received six weeks of intensive training; compare that to our present curriculum and formats. But everything was new at the time. Also the students took a major plunge: they were the first ones to take Montessori training. We know



Dublin students holding the AMI diploma in “high” esteem.

Students from Washington, cherishing “the one and only” AMI diploma.



Students of the Munich course, from around the globe, looking forward to their international diploma.



our courses today require hard work and demand much. Intellectual, time and energy levels are taxed heavily—but there are magnificent rewards. An AMI course will change your outlook on human development, and your own. And no, we do not expect our newly qualified teachers to run smooth classes from day one—these are things that cannot be expected from any teacher. To offer support to young, and more advanced teachers, who would like to be able to test ideas, consult on issues both theoretical and practical, AMI has started to develop a mentorship programme. Some of our training centres and schools are already facilitating this type of support, or “after sales service,” but we would like to draft a programme that can be replicated and rolled out around the world.

At this point of the year many of our students are either gearing up for their final examinations, or settling into their new AMI course, depending on the format chosen, or the hemisphere that hosts the course. This presents an excellent opportunity to not only pay tribute to our trainers who keep the passion and the flame of Maria Montessori alive in—as some have described—an oral tradition of apprenticeship and learning; but also to thank our students for making such a life-determining choice. We wish all of you well in your new careers. We hope that your Montessori student time has been a genuinely enriching experience and that it will benefit your work with children in a variety of different ways. You are the ones that will keep on refreshing Montessori outreach in whichever way your life evolves. Remain part of our global Montessori network, and let us know how you get on!



Lynne Lawrence
Executive Director

FORMER AMI PRESIDENT BOB PORTIELJE DIES

Bob Portielje passed away at the age of ninety in his sleep the night of April 6th. Bob became the second Chair of AMI's Executive Committee in 1970 and, after Mario Montessori's death in 1982, he became Chairman of the same committee. He served in that capacity until 2000. Bob also served as the President of AMI from 1983 until 2000. Upon his retirement, he was made an honorary member of our association.

At his funeral, Fred Kelpin, former colleague on the Executive Committee, spoke on behalf of AMI, sharing some memories.

‘Bob and I were fellow board members for more than twenty-five years. Together we attended many AMI events and activities. Particularly the congresses in Karachi and Nara come to mind, and the study conferences in Washington, and Noordwijkerhout. Bob's “finest hour” probably was in 1982, when he managed to reconcile all the different schools of thought within AMI and have the new articles of association of AMI adopted. I will never forget his utter satisfaction. That was his true strength as an officer—his ability to bring people together, and iron out differences. He was a fine example of finding genuine consensus, developing the relationships among stakeholders, a very Dutch quality.’

Bob was not a Montessori pedagogue. He was interested in his son's school. Initially, he was asked to join the board of the Dutch Montessori society. His work on their material committee, which then monitored the quality of Netherlands-produced Montessori teaching aids, brought



Bob Portielje, together with his wife Djoeke.

him into contact with Mario Montessori. At that time it was not unusual that officers from the Dutch Montessori Society went on to serve AMI. Bob became vice-chair of AMI in 1970, working with Professor Lauwerijs from London, who represented AMI to the outside world. He worked quietly, away from the limelight. It was this type of modesty that characterized him, but public recognition came when he was elected to the presidency in 1983. Bob worked very closely with the AMI secretariat, and was always available for advice and consultation, particularly when AMI needed to find its feet again after



the death of Ada Montessori. He made good on his firm promise to Ada Montessori that he would keep AMI on course. Bob retired as President in 2000, which, however, did not signify the end of his involvement. He continued to work on our journal *Communications*, as a most reliable and knowledgeable proof reader. Also, he was the embodiment of true grace and courtesy. He would never fail to send a card or pick up the phone to wish someone “happy birthday” or a “speedy recovery.”

At the Annual General Meeting Steve Huffman remembered Bob, and his memories largely echoed those of Fred Kelpin. Steve recollected Bob’s commanding personality that he used to unify divergent views and opinions to move forward collectively in support of the standards of AMI. Bob cared deeply for AMI and its members. His comments about those members as he left AMI in 2000 are extremely appropriate at this time. ‘...regrettably, this is the finale to a stage of my life with Montessori which has been of huge importance to Djoeke

and me. Exactly forty years—nearly half of my life—it has been our good fortune to come into contact with countless great women and men, all over the world, many of whom have become close friends for life.’ Steve pointed out that many of the people at the AGM had become those close personal friends or developed close family friendships with Bob and Djoeke, and that ultimately, all of AMI and its members had lost a great friend.

Steve closed with another statement of Bob’s that speaks to the question of why he gave so much of his time and energy to AMI. ‘Of course, he was not a teacher trainer. But, he also was not a teacher, not involved in schools or education at all. He said, “What kept me in Montessori all those years? Briefly it is, I believe, a mixture of loyalty, love and the feeling of a Montessori parent who wished to do something in return, grateful for Montessori education.” He was grateful for and honoured the work that you do. Today, we are grateful for and honour the work and memory of Bob.’

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MARILENA HENNY-MONTESSORI (1919-2009)

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.*
“Burnt Norton”, T.S. Eliot

On Sunday March 29, Marilena Henny-Montessori died at her home in France, surrounded by her children Pieter, Alexander and Helen Henny.

Marilena was the oldest daughter of Mario Montessori, and eldest grandchild of Maria Montessori. Although she did not hold a specific position within AMI, she always maintained a lively interest in Montessori education. Her very roots and marriage to Jan Henny (treasurer of AMI 1956-1979) and the later involvement with AMI of her son Alexander would ensure a close connection with the movement throughout her life. Helen, her daughter remembers her here.

In many ways our mother Marilena resembled her grandmother Maria. Just like her she loved beautiful clothes and jewellery, was an avid reader of detective novels, loved to cook and go to the movies, and above all loved surprises and receiving presents. She was also an enthusiastic and convincing narrator, albeit for a smaller audience. But unlike her grandmother, she was no visionary, no seeker of scientific or religious truths, did not have a contemplative mind or spiritual inclinations. As she explains in her personal memoirs: ‘... Theoretically, I would have loved to be like (the biblical) Mary: to have been able to give up everything, be contemplative, develop metaphysical thoughts. But I have always been a Martha, a doer, active,

able, and very capable. Doing my best to fulfil my cosmic duty in this world, to the best of my potential, the best of my abilities.’ And she considered it her cosmic task to create a stable and “normal” family life for her husband and her children—although anyone who visited us would not experience it as very ordinary—and opening her home to others, especially young people who were less fortunate.

Although Marilena made the conscious decision not to play an active role in the Montessori movement, she has always embraced and advocated the ideas of her grand-



mother. No wonder. Her absorbent mind had absorbed it all! Being the eldest daughter of Mario and eldest granddaughter of Maria Montessori she was literally and figuratively surrounded by these ideas and concepts. 'Listening to father and Mammolina was fascinating and colourful, and certainly far more personal than watching television nowadays. Over sixty years ago, we heard more, saw more, absorbed more than children do today,' remembers Marilena in her seventies. In this way her sharp intellect was nurtured from a very young age. She and her brother Mario were expected to partake in the discussions with the adults at the dinner table, with the politicians, scientists and philosophers who came to visit Dottorressa Montessori. They were expected to sit in the front row of Mammolina's lectures, form and formulate their own opinions. When little Marilena went to her grandmother with the great questions young people have, she not seldom received the reply: '...Well, your father thinks this, your mother thinks that, I wouldn't be surprised if it were such, but it is usually accepted that it is so. Make up your mind.' And she did. Thus she developed into a woman with a keen and eager interest, her own opinions and distinct views. Anyone who knew her will remember lively discussions and dynamic conversations with her on an enormous range of subjects. She herself often complained that there was so little new under the sun. As the granddaughter of the innovative scientist that her grandmother was, she was introduced to the great insights, discoveries and developments of the twentieth century when she was quite young. That people would land on the moon excited but hardly surprised her when it happened, nor the concept of a Global World, a Mondo Unico, or of a humanity at risk of falling prey to technology "like a four-year-old playing with a machinegun."

'Mammolina was the pivot, the axis of our existence: the person on whom everything hinged. Her state of mind conditioned her environment...' writes Marilena about her youth. As a consequence her life was interesting, adventurous and most certainly different, but also turbulent and uncertain. Living with a genius and being part of a family where nothing was "normal" and which, because of the political developments in Europe at the time,

led a nomadic existence, moving from country to country depending on the changing regimes, she lived permanently with a "packed suitcase", symbol of her uprooted existence. Eventually she and her brothers and sister landed in the Netherlands, where they were received hospitably by the Pierson family. Later Mario senior remarried Ada Pierson, the youngest daughter of the family, who was more like a sister to Marilena than a stepmother. Within their family circle, in their house Intimis, Marilena found temporarily a home away from home where she could develop herself further as a young adult. Here she also found safety during the second World War. Yet it was only when she met and fell in love with our father, Jan Henny, who at last was able to offer her the stable and loving safe haven she had longed for, that she eventually unpacked her symbolic suitcase.

She had always thought herself fortunate and privileged. She writes: '...I didn't need to escape in dreams. Most of my dreams became reality. And, if my realities were more restricted than my dreams, they were still so much richer and deeper than my hopes or expectations that my being was filled with wonder and thankfulness. The luck-element written in my stars has determined my destiny.' And she wanted others to partake of that happiness.

She opened her home to people from all corners of the world and shared with them the concepts and ideas that had shaped her life. Not seldom were we with at least twelve at table. Guests who came for a few days stayed for months. And Marilena loved it! Until they were quite advanced in age, Marilena and Jan's home was a place where people from any age group found a listening ear, amusing stories, received advice and were treated to a delicious meal, into which Marilena poured all of her creativity. Always elegantly dressed like her grandmother and in search of food for her eager mind.

Many, with us, will miss her vigorous, vivacious and warm personality.

Helen Henny

Next Congress? Congratulations to Portland!

Congratulations to the Montessori Community in Portland, Oregon, USA. They will be hosting the next international Montessori Congress. The exact dates will be announced at a later date. We wish them a rewarding period ahead. We are sure they have already started preparations, as these events demand a lot of planning and organizing.



2009 – a Vintage Year

Il Metodo

One hundred years ago Maria Montessori published her first book on pedagogy, generally known in the English world as *The Method*. To mark the occasion, the Opera Nazionale Montessori organized a commemorative conference in Città di Castello, Italy. It was an inspiring event, full of history, but also of looking forward, and taking stock where Montessori is today and where we would like to go.



It was an occasion from which AMI could not possibly have been absent! Both André Roberfroid and Lynne Lawrence were invited speakers. The picture shows André and Lynne together with Professor Luciano Mazzetti, the new president of Opera Nazionale Montessori.

AMI – 80 years!

And AMI is quietly remembering its own anniversary. With 1929 down as the year of our founding, we have cause to be grateful for our own history—which wouldn't have evolved the way it has without all those remarkable Montessorians. It is down to all of you to keep our heritage alive, promote the philosophy, and take it further afield. We rely on you!

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MONTESSORI PARENTS

The Parent Support Initiative (PSI)

The Parent Support Initiative is an international initiative to bring Montessori principles into the lives of more families; the project partners are the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), Montessori Australia Foundation/Montessori Children's Foundation (MAF/MCF), the Maria Montessori Institute (London), and NAMTA, who will be the creative force behind this programme. AMI will be responsible for pedagogical content.

The project hopes to bring new parents or parents-to-be into a deeper level of awareness through brief but thought-provoking presentations, whetting their appetite for more life-changing information.

The programme is based around eight foundational Montessori principles: Movement, Independence, Communication, Taking Time, Environment, Activity, Self-Discipline, and Love.

Each topic is introduced by a thirty-second PSA (public service announcement), which can be placed on websites for viewing, sent to television stations to air as public service announcements, or shown at a school information session to initiate a discussion.

Watch the AMI and NAMTA websites for prototype PSAs, which will be posted soon: www.montessori-ami.org and www.montessori-namta.org. Once the programme is complete, all eight PSAs will be available as free downloads. A special website will be created.

Each PSA will be followed up by a flyer, developing one of the eight key Montessori principles, identifying simple, inexpensive actions parents can take at home to support their child's development. The initial set of PSAs and flyers will target children from birth to thirty-six months, but the project aims eventually to develop materials applicable all the way through adolescence. The flyers will also be made available as free downloads on the participating websites.

Also, a 10 to 15-minute DVD will be developed for each key principle, illustrating the principle and the supporting actions introduced in the PSA and flyer. An accompanying booklet will offer a more detailed examination of Montessori in the home and school environments.

Accompanying materials for school-based parent meetings will include PowerPoint presentations, posters, photos, and other promotional materials. The DVDs, booklets, and supporting materials will be available for purchase through the partners (AMI, NAMTA, MAF/MCF, and MMI).

Training for the use of all these parent education materials will be available throughout 2010.





The project is now seeking foundation and school support. Already primed with a total of \$24,000 in grants and another \$24,000 services in kind, this project has to double this amount to complete the planned packages.

The need to support development of these groundbreaking materials presents schools with a unique opportunity. For a gift of \$225, you can become a supporting school and receive the first four packages (Movement, Independence, Communication, and Taking Time), shipped to your school free of charge.

Or, for a gift of \$525, you can be a sponsoring school and receive all eight packages as well as international recognition of your sponsorship on all eight sets of materials.

Donations can be made either to AMI or to NAMTA, as follows:

To AMI

- Secure payment online
<<https://www.montessori-ami.org/cgi/PaymentApply.cgi>> indicating that the donation is designated for the PSI.
- You may send a cheque in U.S. dollars or the equivalent in another currency. Please send the cheque to AMI, Koninginneweg 161, 1075 CN, the Netherlands, and include reference to the PSI.
- You can also make a bank transfer. For more information, please contact the AMI office by e-mail: info@montessori-ami.org or by phone: +31 20 6798932.

To NAMTA

- Secure payment online
<<http://www.montessori-namta.org/NAMTA/NAMServs/PSIdonation.html>>
- You may send a cheque, international money order, or draft in U.S. dollars. It must be drawn to a U.S. bank and made out to the North American Montessori Teachers' Association or NAMTA. Please send the order form and payment to: NAMTA, 13693 Butternut Road, Burton, OH 44021, USA.
- You may transfer funds by wire. For more information on wire transfers, please contact the NAMTA office by e-mail: staff@montessori-namta.org or by phone: +1 440834-4011.

Montessori parents “manifest” themselves in all sorts of ways: what about this Blue Whale Mother?

The *National Geographic* recently brought a fascinating feature on the blue whales, where its author noted a particular Montessori parenting style.

Here we join the text about a young whale calf. ‘The [parent] pair were moving slowly, spending a lot of time at the surface. The mother surprised us by allowing her calf to turn toward *Pacific Storm*. A mother whale often interposes herself between her calf and potential danger, but this mother was an easygoing, Montessori sort of parent, and she let her baby explore.

... On nearing the whales, they pulled on their fins and slipped overboard. At first they saw nothing through their dive masks but blue. Then Kovacs, looking for the youngster, was startled to see it pass, maybe five feet below his fins. This whale was just a baby, yet its blue back seemed to pass under him endlessly. The calf, gliding by Nicklin, rolled slightly to bring an eye to bear on him. It peered into the glass orb of the camera housing, and Nicklin’s shutter winked back.’

Interested in reading more?

Go to the site of the *National Geographic*.
<<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2009/03/blue-whales/brower-text/8>>



Peace Gathering

Erik Rivas-Rivas

Our Peace Gathering began six years ago and new elements have been added by the classroom community each year. It is an opportunity to reflect on the idea of peace and what that means to us. The children show us a glimpse of what peace means to them by what they decide to share with us at the Peace Gathering.

Six years ago the classroom had a very cosy and quiet area that also served as a place to support mediation among the children and a peaceful place where they could go to resolve their conflicts. We decided that we should have a Peace Table there. The children decided what our Peace Table would look like.

It consisted of a small vase with flowers from our school garden, a community member's home, or from a parent education meeting where flowers are brought. We also had a few books for different reading abilities on the topic of peace.



Soon after we added a piece of material called the Peace Flower to the table. The Peace Flower was comprised of several petals. Each one of the petals either read: Self, Family, Community, and Environment. Each of these notions was examined for a week. Some children were initially more involved and others joined in later.

In one of the books a peace parade was mentioned as a possible activity and we decided to try it. Initially, we made signs from some cut-up cardboard boxes applying various art techniques such as negative space and using various materials: yarn scraps, craft sticks and paper from the recycling bin. We also would create different percussive instruments from various recycled containers and learn some songs to sing. We would pass out a single daisy or carnation flower to staff members and students and then return to our room where we would have songs, poems, or words prepared to share with each other.

We also decorated the sidewalk with chalk writing down terms or phrases from peace poems or songs. The children can write down on paper what they want to write on the sidewalk, get it conventionally spelled, then go outside and choose a rectangle of sidewalk that is available.

For the gathering the children can choose to write a poem, choreograph a dance, write a blessing, sing/play a song, etc., using peace as a theme.

We then move on to creating what we will hold or play during the march and whether we will do this alone or with others.

We recruit the parents to help us prepare the space for the gathering, providing refreshments/flowers, help keep the march safe and restore the community centre.

Erik Rivas-Rivas is an elementary guide at Austin Montessori School

Peace Pole “Expansion”

Last time we featured an item on the Peace Pole. Post Oak Montessori School of Houston was quick to send in a photo of some of their children with the Post Oak Peace Pole. Thank you very much to Shannon Neufeld for arranging this.



If your school feels inspired to set up your own Peace Pole project, please keep us informed.

Peace Boat

In our last issue (p. 19), Takako Fukatsu and Ai Onodera reported on their preparations and expectations of the 66th journey of the Peace Boat. Not only exciting because this Japanese initiative hopes to foster a better understanding between various countries in the world, but also because this would be the first time that a Montessori environment would be created on board for the children of the staff and passengers.

In our September issue Dinny Rebild will bring us up to date with how the Peace Boat “fared” in Denmark, especially since visits to Montessori schools and projects are scheduled in the Nordic countries.



Here is the Peace Boat docking into Copenhagen harbour. In the meantime, if you would like more background and a sneak preview <<http://www.peaceboat.org/english/voyg/66/lob/090508/index.html>>

Non-Violence in Education

Non-violence in education was chosen as the main theme for this issue, following on from the theme of peace, which proved to be very close to the hearts of many of our readers. Again, thank you for sending in all your contributions, which were appreciated by many of our readers, if we are to go by the enthusiastic reactions received.

Non-violence requires a lot of action, activities and activism. We are therefore delighted to present you with an excerpt from an inspiring presentation that Eduardo Cuevas gave to the National Montessori Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: March 13–15, 2009.

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The Montessori Activist: Impacting Education beyond the Classroom

Eduardo J. Cuevas G.

Activist: Someone who, perceiving a need, consciously takes affirmative steps to respond to it, in order to effect a change for the better.

In the biographies about Dr Montessori, she is always referred to as a social reformer. As of late, it has dawned on me that if this is so, then she must also be considered an activist ... she was a reformer because she was an activist.

The word activist connotes many images in our minds—we would rather think of our work as a silent revolution, one that quietly takes place in our prepared environments. And this may be so, but my frequent observation has told me otherwise—many of our schools have become, well..., just that: ‘schools’, rather than the centres of transformation they are meant to be.

To mostly focus our attention on the academic side of Montessori—as marvellous as it is—is to lose sight of the magnitude of her proposal: to liberate the regenerative power of the human spirit. We all have an impact on society: each and every one of us is either a social conformer, a social deformer, or a social reformer—mostly a combination of all three. We all contribute to society, in one way or the other...but I’m afraid, most of the times we do so with little awareness. I say this because, in my mind, it is the conscious contribution of the individual that makes one an activist: a clear goal, and the conscious strategies and tactics in achieving the goal. We’re referring to the Montessori vision, its mission and the means to achieve it. And that is what makes an activist: the full awareness and consciousness of the goal at hand.

I dare say that in Montessori’s life, this moment of truth, this activism for the child, came to fruition the moment she became fully aware of the secret held within the soul of the child.

This was the turning point of her life; the moment when she decided to set aside her medical practice, and many other commitments, so as to continue to serve humanity. But this through the child, whom she realized is the very source of social transformation. Thus the rest of her life was dedicated to this endeavour, actively pursuing the benefits of her discoveries for all children.

Never losing sight of the bigger picture, she went so far as to propose the creation of a political party of the child. This movement was not intended to reform education, but actually transform society, through education! Education was to be the means of a much bigger picture.

Yet, I’m afraid that this macroscopic view of the mission has been lost in our Montessori efforts today. Our daily focus on the details entailed in the preparation of the perfect environments, the minute observations of each child’s evolution, and the energy and effort that it requires, seems to have somehow confined us to a microscopic view of our task. This is not to say that these aspects of our work are unimportant—much on the contrary—they are vital in the achievement of our greater aspirations. But while taking hold of the essential truths of our educational approach, we must yet strive to see the bigger picture at all times: how everything we do in the micro-cosmos of the class impacts the macro-cosmos of society; to keep the bigger picture in mind when presenting washing a table, and the red rods, as well as division with bows, and the function of words.

You become a Montessori activist when you become fully aware of this relation between what’s taking place in your environment and the world—the micro and the macro perception.

My call is for us to go beyond our classrooms, extending the common sense principles of our pedagogy to other facets of society. We need to make our task known, in a much wider scale, so as to benefit other social institutions. It is a call to activism, peaceful, but unequivocally to take an active role in the solution of the social problems that presently assail us. We have much to offer—we have but to think outside the box, and creatively enact the natural approach to human development—and social development by extension, proposed by Dr Montessori. The Montessori movement is greater than its founder, and in my mind, the best is yet to come!

My most urgent call now is to realize that we are also activists. Our present situation beckons us to go beyond the silent revolution in our classrooms, to a more overt and dynamic intervention outside our classes.



Maria Montessori was a social reformer, and to her, education was not the end but the means to the reform. To reform you have to be active ... to be a reformer you must therefore be an activist.

Let us move beyond the confines of our prepared environments, and consciously extend our efforts to the desperate needs around us.

What types of activism are open to us?

A random selection:

Community building / Cooperative movement / Craftivism / Voluntary simplicity / Economic activism / Lobbying / Media activism / Culture jamming / Theatre for Social Change / Protest songs / Youth-led media

For a full transcript of this presentation, write to:

publications@montessori-ami.org

For a fuller definition of “activism” from Wikipedia:

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Activism>>

Further recommended reading: David Kahn, “Montessori: Pathways to Education Reform 1907 – 2007” (NAMTA Journal, Winter 2008 edition).

Toys Are Us

Donna Bryant Goertz

This is an old but true story. The children in it are not specific children but archetypal children who have cast themselves in the roles our culture offers through the world of children’s play with its theme of violence as a necessary solution to problems and its roles of “good guys” and “bad guys.”



Statuettes by Hans Hoekstra

His first year, Thomas entered our classroom community as a self-assigned “bad guy.” Thomas had internalized that role from his good guy/bad guy toys, games, and entertainment featuring violence as necessary. The first year he was sullen and self-hating. He hurt as many children as he could, destroying their work, the all-too-solid evidence that they loved school and one another. He jerked subtly around the classroom like a robot, emitting quiet, high-pitched electronic sounds. Readily and often, Thomas dropped his chin and muttered how much he hated himself and school. He was ashamed of how he saw himself as being “bad.”

The next year, partially transformed by his experiences in the community, Thomas switched roles and became “good.” He worked hard and showed his work to whoever would admire it. His once incomprehensible, jerky scribbles became beautifully formed words. He wrote and illustrated reports with colourful charts. But for Thomas, an important part of seeing himself as a “good guy” was juxtaposing himself to a “bad guy,” so he could do what good guys do, mete out necessary violence, and so Thomas identified the bad guy, the new boy Marco.

Most of the children with years of experience in our community have absolute clarity about the sickness of the “good guy/ bad guy” dyad and can live within the new paradigm most of the time, but Thomas hadn’t come that far yet. In his mind, he was definitely “good” now, and Marco was “bad.” Thomas became the secret self-appointed community defender and avenger, always on the lookout for wrongs in need of righting through necessary violence. He found them—often—thanks to Marco.

The following year, we saw signs that Thomas could become just a boy, neither bad nor good but in process, who loved school, himself, and his companions, who were neither good nor bad but also in process. Some days Thomas helped Marco find work and gave him big hugs; on other days he was oblivious to him. But when Marco, or another child, bothered people and their belongings, called names or shoved when things didn’t go their way, and had to be called aside for a little centring comfort, Thomas could still be electrified into regression. And, so, slotted in between Thomas’s spectacular work and the natural rhythm of his life would be a day of a good guy’s sneak attacks on Marco or another child, a bad guy, to set him straight with necessary violence.

Thomas was in fact a kind and sensitive boy, generous and solicitous of others. But Thomas, with his natural temperament of the hero, had been deeply socialized to identify bad guys and to act swiftly to eliminate them when they triggered him back to the old play-culture of necessary violence. After all, it was not for naught that Thomas had spent six good years playing with games and toys that promote—even celebrate—the good guy/bad guy opposition. Now that he was in his third year with us, and had practised living a new paradigm, he could still be sucked back into the old one, whereupon he would let loose his fury. Because Thomas was a person of passion and integrity, what he learned from his toys and games, he applied to everyday life with earnestness and energy. So, even though he was now living his third year within a community that practised mediation and reconciliation, saw one another in process, and worked for transformation, Thomas could be triggered back to his old life.

We were sensitive and cautious while dispossessing Thomas, now the good guy, of his well-integrated culture of necessary violence and good guy/bad guy archetypes. For the sake of his well-being we had to affirm Thomas’s core goodness sufficiently first, so that he would not find himself abjectly vacant and bankrupt through losing the clarity of his old paradigm and its themes and roles too



abruptly. Slowly we examined with him the competing principles by which his play life had required him to live. Slowly we helped Thomas integrate a new, higher set of principles, because, make no mistake, Thomas's passionate nature demanded that he live by his principles.

Our next step was weaning Thomas from the joys and thrills of violence as the solution in playing and entertainment so that he could look at the community within the classroom and the world of humanity without in a way that corresponded. We saw the beginning of this stage one day when Thomas put his arm around Marco several times and invited him to work just at the moments he saw him out of sorts and looking for conflict. Then, at times when conflict was in progress, instead of taking sides with the good guy against the bad guy, Thomas stepped in and led a mediation between Marco and another child, treating both with love and respect. He was beginning to invest in transforming a distressed child and integrating him into our community, instead of attacking him to save the community. Thomas began to develop new skills that allowed him to see himself and others in a different way than that created by years of "good guy fights bad guy" entertainment, games, and toys. Now he was ready to support other children to do the same.

All children are happier when they are helped to live by cohesive sets of principles. They thrive on cognitive consonance and struggle under cognitive dissonance, which breeds depression, hyperactivity, and cynicism. Communities of children cannot assimilate struggling or distressed members when they themselves are already sapped by the demands of compartmentalizing their own lives—their interior lives of seeing in terms of good guys who must punish and bad guys who must be punished and exterior lives in the Montessori classroom of a range of children who work together to transform themselves and one another. This asks too much of young children.

When we are young, we imagine and play at what we will be when we grow up, and when we do grow up we take on those roles. Because as children we play at solving problems with violence, that is how we as a society solve our problems. Rather than acting violently ourselves, though, we find proxies.

As adults we cannot yet see how to preserve a peaceful and orderly society without turning to violence as a necessary solution. Try as we may, we cannot yet seem to establish justice by non-violent means alone. How can we ever hope to reach that stage if we don't begin from our earliest years in our earliest play to envision it, to enjoy it?

In our homes and in school we counsel the children to use their words not their fists, yet we give them toys to play at hurting and killing—videos, computer games, and movies where violence is ultimately "necessary." Indeed, we train our children to visualize human beings as "good guys" and "bad guys" and make sure our children take satisfaction in seeing violence used against the "bad guys."

With our background of playing at violence in childhood, some of our children grow up to be our "bad guys" and some our "avengers." They have prepared for it all their lives. Our children have both withheld and unleashed the violence they have watched and played at, through cruel words, rejection, hitting, and shoving. We strongly censure them for this while continuing to provide them with stories, pictures, toys, and games to practise what we forbid them to do in "real life." A few of our children grow up to act as proxies, carrying out the murderous acts others only dream of. They provide us with the opportunity to hate them and wish them a violent end. Other proxies carry out the violent revenge for us.

When they become adults, our children cannot wait to experience the violence to which they have become acculturated and conditioned—through news stories, movies, and books of crime and war. We crave stories of "good guys" killing "bad guys," news of violence pitted against violence. We were fed on violence for so long as children that we now have a powerful appetite for it.

Though we cannot yet see how to solve our problems without violence, we can begin to practise from earliest childhood playing with nonviolent toys and games. We can explore themes and roles of transformation and healing instead of killing and destroying.

Transforming, not killing, is a game to play. Can we make it exciting enough?

Creating, not destroying, is a game to play. Can we make it compelling enough?

Tools, not weapons, are toys. Can we make them satisfying enough?

Inventing, not attacking, is a game to play. Can we make it thrilling enough?

Rescuers, pathfinders, supporters, coaches, valiant leaders with wise, strong, and brave followers are role models—not "good guys" and "bad guys."

As a society we become what we play. Toys are us. If we seek peace and justice in our world, we must practise peace from our children's earliest years.

We need new games and toys that provide compelling but nonviolent action and conflict—peace force, soul force, peace action. Whoever has the imagination and skill to design these must think beyond the culture of cruelty and the myth of redemptive violence. Our children crave action and adventure. They want to make a difference, to effect changes. They long for heroes to emulate and admire. How will we provide for our children's needs outside of as well as in school?

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Montessori and the International Decade

Donna's plea resounds strongly in the International Coalition of the International Decade of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World's goals. Its proposed text aims for UN member countries to support a new international declaration in a common voice, stating clearly:

- that all children have a right to be educated peacefully, and
- that all children have a right to education on peace and non-violence.

Mary Caroline Parker drafted a simplified version about the UN and peace education and used it in her school, East Dallas Community School, to help the 6-9 year-old children understand the UN and its work for peace. Some excerpts include:

- Children should have homes and schools without violence—no hitting, no yelling, and no hurting other people.
- If a child is hurt or threatened, he or she should be able to go to a friendly and understanding adult for help.
- Teachers should learn about peace and non-violence, so they can teach children about peace.
- Schools should help children learn how to resolve conflicts peacefully, by talking, not fighting.
- Schools should help children learn how to protect and take care of the Earth's environment.
- TV, videos, movies, and the Internet should help everyone learn about peace...and how to resolve conflicts peacefully.



Other versions will be put on AMI's web site, including: French, German, Norwegian, Japanese, Swedish, and Vietnamese, among others. Children are encouraged to explain what peace means for them in a brief caption.

What is The United Nations?

The United Nations is an organization for people in all countries, all over the world. Today 192 nations are members of the United Nations, and they want:

- to keep peace all over the world
- to help people live better lives, be healthy, and learn to read and write



- to protect the Earth's environment
- people to respect each other's rights and freedoms
- to help children all over the world

Representatives from these 192 nations meet at the UN to talk about the world's problems. First one person talks, and all the others listen. Then a person from another country talks, and everyone listens. They search together for peaceful solutions to problems.

The UN has its own flag. It shows all the continents, united in peace. Astronauts have carried this flag in orbit around the Earth, and even to the moon!

United Nations' Montessori Model United Nations 2009

Victoria Barrès

In April 2009, 600 students from 60 Montessori schools gathered in New York City for the third Montessori Model United Nations programme (MMUN 2009). They learn they can have a voice on world issues of peace, non-violence and social justice. This programme is a fascinating 'going out' exercise for Montessori children, aged 9 years to 15 years. Introduced twenty-five years ago, many Model UN programmes for high school and university students are held annually. Three years ago, Ambassador Francis Lorenzo, the Dominican Republic Ambassador to the UN, asked Judith Cunningham if a Montessori Model UN existed. When she said no, he suggested she do it. The MMUN, the first Model UN programme for younger children, is based on Montessori principles that encourage collaboration rather than competition.

The children learn about the UN and its sixty-year evolution towards greater dialogue and cooperation among the 192 member countries. Each class represents one country. They spend several months learning about 'their country' and its official positions on key issues at the UN. Montessori children from Canada, Haiti, Mexico, United States and Virgin Islands represented 'their countries' at the MMUN 2009 UN committees: General Assembly, Security Council, FAO, ILO, UNICEF and other specialized agencies. The last day, they all met in the UN General Assembly chamber and voted their resolutions, which have been given to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

This Montessori Model UN programme hosted almost a thousand Montessori children, parents and teachers.



With concern, dedication, and concentration, the children listened to presentations, prepared resolutions and caucused to garner support. Many realized, some excitedly for the first time, that they aren't isolated because they belong to a large international Montessori movement.

One student from Santa Barbara Montessori School has shared her thoughts with us.

My Montessori Model United Nations' Experience

Caroline Montgomery

After a long day of travel from the beautiful beaches of Santa Barbara to the incredible cityscape of Manhattan, my class and I embarked on our first ever Montessori Model UN conference. We'd worked for five months. I was excited, scared and still felt unprepared. Leina King, my classmate, and I walked to our Security Council room. We represented France... Promptly at nine o'clock our president Raymond Ratti Beato walked in. He's a tall Dominican Republican man, who works at the UN on behalf of his country. We began our routine for the next three days. We took roll. When the president called our country's name, we'd stand up holding our placard and say: 'France (or each country's name) is present and voting' and then set the day's agenda and topic. We worked hard for 6-7 hour days, but every time I talked to someone about what France wanted or was willing to do about the Sudan or the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, I felt I'd found my calling. When I read my speech, I got this rush that I haven't felt before, like I was important and doing something in this world.



At the end of our hard two days, the Security Council presented two resolutions. One on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and one on the Situation in Sudan. Our class has definitely decided to support the proposal for the International Declaration on Children's Right to Non-Violent Education and the ILO programme to raise awareness on child labour. One of the more shocking images was the movie shown on the opening night about what so many millions of children throughout the world have to endure. We all felt so helpless and spoiled, and realized that there's so much work to be done.

I'm so happy I got to experience the Montessori Model United Nations. It's inspired me to look more into the UN. I hope I'll have a future in being a UN delegate. Helping

the world is something I plan to do, and this was a definite starting point for me... The MMUN is the best thing that's ever happened to me.

Read and see more on <<http://www.montessori-mun.org/>>

MMUN 2010 registration begins June 22nd, 2009!

Did you know ... ? that the first stone of The Peace Palace, The Hague, Netherlands was laid the same year Montessori started the first Children's House?

Charlotte Elliott

A late 19th century social reformer, Maria Montessori grew up during an era when the concept of world peace swept across Europe and America, supported by hundreds of active peace organizations, with millions of members. The word "pacifism" was coined then by the Swiss organization, "La Société de la Paix".



This international peace movement was fuelled by many leading activists, notably Leo Tolstoy who inspired the Russian Tsar, Nicolas II. In August 1898, he invited all major nations to join an international conference on peace and disarmament. However, it took the US President Theodore Roosevelt's acceptance to create momentum. The results of this first World Peace Conference in 1899 were immense: "a Convention with 61 articles for curbing the arms race, humanizing the conduct of war and founding the Permanent Court of Arbitration," based on principles of non-violent mediation and arbitration to prevent or end future international disputes.

The Peace Palace was designed to give the new Court a suitable setting, and an outstanding library on international law. Decorated by artwork, textiles, stained glass windows and marble-work donated by member organizations, the Palace is a fascinating architectural symbol of "Peace through Justice."

For more information, visit: <<http://www.vredespaleis.nl>>

Sing Peace around the World

Shelley Murley

On 21 September 2009, the United Nations is hosting its annual International Day of Peace. Montessori schools from all over the globe will be joining together for a special project "Sing Peace around the World." Children from Montessori schools will sing the song "Light a Candle for Peace" one by one, country by country, time zone by time zone until it has travelled all the way around

the earth. The song will start in New Zealand and finish 24 hours later in the Hawaiian Islands! It will be sung in over 20 languages and in all 24 time zones. It is completely free and only requires that your students sing one song at a designated time during the September 21st celebration. Everyone is invited to join. To sign up your school for this international event please go to:

<<http://www.shelleymurley.com/SingPeace.htm>>

To download the song "Light a Candle for Peace" for free go to:

<<http://www.shelleymurley.com/samples-3.htm#01>>

Celebrate peace together as a global Montessori community!

AMI IN MOTION

The weekend of April 18 and 19 was packed with AMI activities: the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Societies Meeting and the Open Forum. Here are some of the highlights.

AGM

Although the agenda of the Annual General Meeting was quite full, the main items were dealt with swiftly and efficiently. Lynne Lawrence gave a detailed account of last year's developments and provided updates on current and new projects.



Isa and Mariella, our "regular" AGM volunteers looking after the registration desk.

Board Matters

We are grateful that André Roberfroid, who has been such an inspirational President these past three years, agreed to embark on a second term, and are delighted that AMI can continue to benefit from his ability to build bridges in the Montessori world, initiate new projects and promote the importance of child development.

After 15 years of service as our treasurer, Pieter van der Linden, who was due to retire, has agreed to continue until a suitable candidate for this post has been found. We thank Pieter for this more than generous offer.

AMI would also like to thank outgoing board members Sue Birdsall, Victoria Barrès, Sally Connellan, Judi Orion and Patricia Spinelli. They have devoted much of their time in helping to implement the many changes that have evolved in the past years; although their terms on the board have come to a conclusion, we know that their commitment will continue undiminished and they will still donate much of their time to the welfare of AMI.

In order to reduce the size of the Board in line with the objectives of the Strategic Plan, no vacancies were filled.

Anyone interested in the full minutes of the meeting can send off to the AMI secretariat requesting a copy. Contact Lucie Meijer at: lucie@montessori-ami.org.

Societies' Meeting

AMI has a long history of working together with national groups or societies. The AMI-affiliated status is one enjoyed by many groups and sought by many more new ones in countries and regions where Montessori is still relatively new.

To encourage a closer and more professional relationship between AMI and the societies, and amongst the societies themselves, we have set out on a path of more involved cooperation, offering more services, and promoting greater opportunities for the societies to share resources, expertise and experience.



Societies' meeting



At the special societies meeting on the morning of April 18, the delegates of the societies were briefly introduced to two new documents that had been drafted to formalize the affiliation and licence agreement that allows the societies to make use of the AMI logo in publicity material. The documents are now being studied and new affiliation agreements will be phased in as of this year.

The societies are a pivotal element in our worldwide Montessori network. They are the ones best placed to promote and explain Montessori to parents and other interested parties in their country, in addition to being able to represent Montessori at a national level. The educational professional is keeping up equal pace with the globalization

of the economy: more and more Montessori teachers take advantage of the opportunities of international job mobility and enjoy the challenge of working in a new country.

AMI has created an intranet site for the societies, and hopes this functionality will stimulate the exchange of knowledge and ideas. Last year's appointment of a special societies liaison, Megan Tyne, is helping to facilitate and improve mutual communication.

If you wish to learn more about the activities undertaken by the various societies, please go to the AMI website where we have uploaded their activity reports for 2008.

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETIES

Australia

David Kahn Honoured

At the Australian National Montessori Conference of 5 June, David Kahn was honoured for his "Outstanding Contribution to Montessori in Australia" to mark his pivotal role in the development of Montessori in Australia, which has spanned 23 years. He has been instrumental in the establishment of the national association, the Masterman Montessori Indigenous Children's Trust, and adolescent programmes in Australia. His generosity in providing ongoing professional resources was especially acknowledged. He was presented the Outstanding Contribution award and gift by long-term member of the Australia Montessori community Barry Hilson, and Montessori Australia Foundation President, Christine Harrison and Executive Director, Megan Tyne.



New Zealand

New Montessori website for New Zealand Aotearoa: www.montessori.org.nz. Well worth a visit.

Pakistan

The Pakistan Montessori Association (PMA) organized an Earth Day workshop. One of the focal points was the preciousness of water, worldwide—but some interesting facts relating to Pakistan are:

- the country has a population of 151 million
- 54 million do not have access to safe drinking water
- 76 million have no sanitation

An eye opener was the fact that "our" desire and demand for bottled water depletes many of the Earth's Resources. Just consider how plastic bottles are made, and also how much waste that yields.

Earth Day consisted of two parts. Sabah Quadir, a committee member of PMA, gave a talk on how to bring awareness to the children on how to save our earth including showing methods of recycling. She had some older children from her school talk about how to develop environmentally friendly habits. For instance, word scramble games had proved to be great fun and informative at the same time.

A member of the Karachi water partnership, an initiative of the Hisaar foundation gave an interesting talk on Karachi's water. She touched on water and water supply, waste water, crosscutting issues and water conservation and saving measures.

A special PowerPoint on water and our world is available. If you are interested, please contact Masooma Alibhai of the Pakistan Montessori Association at taqwa@ymail.com. Masooma will be happy to send you a copy.



United Kingdom

The Montessori Society U.K. are delighted to introduce their new President Sue Palmer. Sue is a writer, broadcaster and consultant on the education of young children. She is well-known to UK teachers as a specialist in literacy, especially the teaching of writing, but concern about children's lifestyles led her to research and publish a best-selling book *Toxic Childhood: how modern life is damaging our children... and what we can do about it*, followed in 2007 by a practical handbook for parents, *Detoxing Childhood*. Her new book *21st Century Boys* looks specifically at the effects of modern life on boys, from birth to the teenage years.



Sue Palmer

OPEN FORUM

On Sunday April 19 a great number of participants came away uplifted and humbled from the all-day Open Forum, which was devoted to humanitarian outreach projects and Montessori-inspired initiatives throughout the world. Justice cannot be done in this short space to the impact of the six presentations, but we hope you will be able to catch a glimpse of some of the exceptional work that is being done around the world.

Haiti

Peter Hesse talked about his Montessori initiative, starting from the wish 'to do something to give children a better chance for life.' Montessori preschool looked like the best way to reach that goal. So far, the Foundation has trained over 700 teachers and helped Haitian initiatives to create over 50 schools. <www.solidarity.org>

India

Mr Vijayakumar, former State Project Director, Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan, explained the implementation of Activity Based Learning (ABL) in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Montessori-inspired, ABL is a child centric model of education that promotes understanding by converting abstract facts into concrete ones and breaking the information down into multiple steps that build on each other. This methodology lends itself naturally and easily to cooperative learning. ABL classrooms are typically mixed age classrooms where each child grows at his or her own pace without being expected to conform to an artificial norm. Just before his presentation, news broke that Mr Vijayakumar had been honoured with the Award for Excellence in Public Administration. "This award is for the hard work put in by over 200,000 teachers across the State. They have made all the difference," in Mr Vijaykumar's words.

For press coverage

<<http://www.thehindu.com/2009/04/24/stories/2009042457940200.htm>>



Mr Vijayakumar



from l to r: Annette Haines, Peter Hesse, Mary Caroline Parker and Lynne Lawrence.



Cheryl Ferreira



USA, Kansas City

Annette Haines discussed the Montessori Whole Public School Conversion and Training, at the Cook Montessori Lab School in Kansas City. This public school converted to Montessori en masse and overnight, utilizing a pilot AMI training course that enabled staff to train on site and on the job. Annette frankly and unreservedly, shared all the trials and tribulations, and the conquests.

Australia

Several Montessori projects are underway in indigenous communities in Australia under the auspices of the Montessori Children's Foundation. Cheryl Ferreira updated participants on the work in the Torres Strait Island where Montessori is seen as a pathway to self-determination and a means for sustaining indigenous culture and language.

USA, Dallas

A five-year programme is being developed in Dallas to

serve low-income families in an area with many recent immigrants. Mary Caroline Parker and Maria Teresa Vidales outlined the set-up of the project, which would include workshops in Spanish for parents and caregivers, home visits from bilingual parent educators, and English language "play groups," possibly leading to the establishment of a primary classroom as the project proceeds.

Shortly after the Open Forum, Mary Caroline and Maria Teresa were able to report that their proposal has been successful and that funding for a five-year period has been granted by a coalition of 13 Dallas foundations. Congratulations!

Tanzania & Kenya

Lynne Lawrence provided an overview of the Help the Children Projects in Tanzania and Kenya, and the sustainable model of training and provision of Montessori materials that has been developed.

Steve Hughes loves Montessori

Dr Steve Hughes is an Assistant Professor of Paediatrics and Neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School, and Director of Education and Research for The TOVA Company <<http://www.tovatest.com>>. Above all, he is a Montessori parent who gained deep insights into the approach, especially by being able to link it to his field of expertise: brain development.



On April 19, following the AGM, he entertained us with a talk that wittily and clearly demonstrated common misconceptions about children's development. He argued that in spite of all men's technological advances in the past century, traditional education still 'doesn't get it right' and that there are worlds yet to be gained for vast majorities of children.

Steve shared his enthusiasm, as a paediatric neuropsychologist, for the cognitive development that Montessori education stimulates. 'Montessori education meets the developing brain at every stage. There is always material anticipating and stimulating the next step in growth, always some activity that helps the developing brain discover, access, or learn something more about how the universe works. Dr Montessori understood—to an uncanny degree—the needs of the developing brain from childhood through adulthood, and created a framework that always anticipates and delivers exactly what is needed to promote wide-scope cognitive development. Modern neuroscience may still have much to learn from her.'

Quoting Maria Montessori, Dr Hughes captured the essence of Montessori's beliefs on learning. 'We cannot know the consequences of suppressing a child's spontaneity when he is just beginning to be active. We may even be suffocating life itself. That humanity which has revealed in all its intellectual splendour during the sweet and tender age of childhood should be respected with a kind of religious veneration. It is like the sun which appears at dawn or a flower just beginning to bloom. Education cannot be effective unless it helps a child to open up himself to life.'

Linking Activity Based Learning to modern educational objectives, Dr Hughes referenced the 'Four Pillars of Education' called for by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): 'Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Live Together, Learning to Be.' He emphasized what Montessorians in the audience must have realized: it is precisely Montessori that is good at promoting this type of learning.

For more information on Dr Hughes's Montessori presentations and work visit:
<<http://www.goodatdoingthings.com>>

NEWS FROM THE TRAINING GROUP



Naoka Ogawa



Jennifer Shields



Jenny Höglund



Gretchen Hall

New Trainers

The Training Group is delighted to congratulate: Naoka Ogawa (Japan/Canada) who has reached AMI Trainer Status at the Primary level.

On reaching the status of auxiliary trainer, congratulations also go to:

Jennifer Shields, Primary, USA

Gretchen Hall, Primary, USA

Jenny Höglund, Elementary, Sweden

Newsflash: Seminar Format at the Elementary Level

The enthusiasm with which the Seminar Format at the Primary level has been received prompts the extension of this format to the training of trainers at the Elementary level.

The plans are:

- Six two-week seminars, over a three-year period
- Commencing in October 2011 and ending in March 2014
- Two full course cycles for practical training, within those 3 years

Requirements for prospective applicants:

- An AMI Elementary diploma
- An AMI Primary diploma
- Five years of teaching experience, 3 of which are consecutive, in an Elementary class
- A university degree

If you are interested in knowing more about the Elementary Seminar Format, please contact the Training Group at: brenda@montessori-ami.org

More specific details on venue, costs, etc. will be announced as soon as they are available.

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NEWS ABOUT AMI COURSES

New Summer Courses in Europe

France, Bilingual French-English Summer Primary Training

Institut Supérieur Maria Montessori, Paris

<http://montessori.france.asso.fr>

course over two summers from July 1 - August 14, 2009 and June 28 - August 18, 2010 with interim seminar from October 26 - October 29, 2009 and April 19 - May 3, 2010.

Director of Training: Patricia Spinelli

Sweden, Bilingual Swedish-English Summer Primary Training

Maria Montessori Institutet, Dalby, Sweden

Summers 2009 and 2010,

plus two 2-week seminars in the Fall of 2009 and Spring of 2010.

www.mmi-institutet.se

Director of Training: Ulla Wikefeldt

Switzerland, Bilingual French-German Summer Elementary Course

Montessori CH, Internationales Ausbildungszentrum Schweiz

Zurich, Switzerland

<http://www.montessori-ch.ch>

course over three summers from 2009 - 2011.

Director of Training: Peter Gebhardt-Seele

Assistants to Infancy Courses

Later in the year, also planned are Assistants to Infancy courses. Proposed locations are Germany and Switzerland. Please check the AMI web site for the latest details.

Director of Training: Patricia Wallner.

2010

Hopefully coming up in 2010 is an AMI primary course at a location near the German/Czech border.

Director of Training: Maria Roth.



The United States

Hartford

The Primary Course at the Montessori Training Center of New England (MTCNE) in Hartford has just started. The centre has greatly appreciated all efforts to continue the work begun by Shannon Helfrich (now putting China on the Montessori map) in providing quality Montessori teacher training for the north-eastern United States.

CREC, the larger educational organization of which MTCNE is a part, is dedicated to promoting public Montessori schools. The CREC Montessori Magnet School has been twice selected as a "School of Excellence" by Magnet Schools of America (MSA) for its success with student achievement, parent involvement, and racial and economic student integration, and was awarded a special prize as the most outstanding public Montessori school in the United States.

And more new courses in exciting locations are about to start in:

- Miami (Primary Course)
- Vancouver (Assistants to Infancy)
- Kansas City (Elementary Course)
- San Diego, a Masters Programme 0-3, 3-6 together with the University of San Diego
- Hershey Montessori Institute (Elementary Course) (part of a Masters Programme)

AMI courses in new countries

We are delighted to announce that a Primary Course in New Zealand, Auckland will be given in a block format, to start in June. Good luck to the students and to Cheryl Ferreira, the director of training. You will be getting further news of developments in Auckland in later bulletins.

Also, China and Thailand are on the way to becoming steady partners in the new world. The third Primary course has just started in China. And Thailand is excited about the second Primary course, which took off with excellent enrolment two months ago.

AMI on Twitter

We have joined the Twitter Community. Do you want to follow our updates? Go to <http://twitter.com> and create your own Twitter account, and find our current "tweets" on <http://twitter.com/MontessoriAMI>

You can help us feed the Montessori community with snippets of Montessori news. If you contact us, we will upload to the Twitter site. Please remember the challenge to condense any news to 140 characters max. This includes punctuation and spaces.



New faces at the AMI Office

The many activities and projects of the AMI organization are supported by a small professional secretariat and many many volunteers. The secretariat is extremely happy to welcome a few more hands on deck: both Nanna Baumann (February 2009) and Mette Samkalden (May 2009) have joined our small team on a part-time basis. They are helping with course-related work and membership administration.



Nanna is a recent graduate in Communication Science, which included a year abroad in Tokyo and an internship in Cameroon. She is now doing a pre-master's programme in sociology at the University of Amsterdam.

Both Nanna and Mette are enjoying their work at AMI, and given the internationality of their studies, experience and interests, they feel very much at home in the AMI global Montessori network. Welcome aboard!



Mette Samkalden is currently studying Organizational Anthropology at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam. She has an interest in cross-cultural and international organizations, and has completed a recent exchange with a Chinese university in Sichuan.

Visit from Chiaravalle

The AMI office was delighted to greet, on May 19, a small delegation from Chiaravalle, the town where Maria Montessori was born. The group had just come from London, where visits to the Maria Montessori Institute and some schools had been on the “menu.”

In Amsterdam they also visited some schools, and showed express interest in how to start a middle school. They enjoyed seeing children taste all sorts of fruit blindfolded at the “Wielewaal,” admired the school library, and loved the architecture of secondary school “Montessori College Oost”, the ooh and aaargh eliciting winning architectural wonder of Herman Hertzberger.

The team were also promoting trips to Chiaravalle and invite us all to step into Maria Montessori’s birth house (Casa Natale), which has been converted into a small, but very attractive museum.

See <<http://www.mariamontessori.it/flash/base.asp>>

Whilst this delegation represented the environment of Maria Montessori’s early years, their guided tour of Maria Montessori’s study at AMI provided them with more than a glimpse into her professional life and work.



Tasting Apple, Banana and Melon at the Wielewaal Montessori School, Amsterdam



(from l to r.) Mr Morresi, Lorenzo Fabbri, Councillor of Culture, Michela Verdenelli, Councillor of Youth, and Tourism, Lucio Lombardi of the Casa Natale, Patrizia Giombini and Maila Morresi of the Fondazione Montessori

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Montessori Events Worldwide

July 6-10

Rome, Italy

“Music and the Montessori Method”

Opera Nazionale Montessori, download programme from:
http://www.operanazionalemontessori.it/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=265&Itemid=42

July 11-12

London, UK

AMI Refresher at the Maria Montessori Institute

“Creative Development in the Child—2”,

led by Rukmini Ramachandran

<http://www.mariamontessori.org/>

July 20-26

Jackson, Wyoming, USA

Annual Summer Conference

“Stories in the Rocks: Inspiring Children to Explore the Earth Sciences”

Presenters: Jakky Sangster, Kathleen Berry, Deborah Thompson, and Leslie Droege. Brochure and registration forms are mailed out in January.

www.ami-eaa.org, for more information.

Limited space.

July 29-August 1

Simsbury, Connecticut, USA

The Montessori Administrator’s Association will hold its annual summer retreat for Montessori Administrators in Simsbury, Connecticut from Wednesday, July 29 through Saturday morning, August 1st.

This year’s theme is “Enhancements in School Leadership: Impact of Neuroscience.”

<http://montessoriadmins.org/>

August 23-29

Germany and the Netherlands

Montessori Summer Seminar

“Neuroscience and Montessori-A Natural Partnership”

This seminar is offered by Hogeschool Edith Stein/OCT, Hengelo in close collaboration with the University of Muenster, and AMI.

Brochure from www.montessori-ami.org

Thanks to funding from the European Union, reduced fees can be offered to all participants.

Planning International Montessori Visits!

Montessorians are a travelling breed, and their interest in how Montessori is implemented around the world is truly “boundless.”

The AMI secretariat gets quite a few requests for information on how to go about organizing school visits, not only in Amsterdam and the rest of the Netherlands, but also in other countries. Sometimes people have been very disappointed to find that their trip coincided with school

holidays, and that they could only peer through the windows from the outside, and not have the joy of seeing a school in session.

Our tip: please check well in advance about school holidays periods. Contact the Montessori society in the country you are visiting for useful information (see society links on the AMI website) or enlist the help of Google.

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Theme & Copy for Next Issue

Thank you once again to all our contributors! Without you this bulletin would never happen. May we paraphrase Lincoln’s definition of democracy? The AMI bulletin is of the members, by the members, for the members.

For the next bulletin, projected for September, we would like to focus on the subject of Biology and Animal Life. After all, this is the Darwin year! In Maria Montessori’s words, ‘Living creatures create a universal balance. Animals and plants are not forms of life that are separate

from their environment and merely adapt to it mechanically. One might say that life is the force that creates the world.’ (*Education and Peace*)

Get inspired, and get writing. Deadline for copy: August 24.

Your suggestions for future themes are more than welcome. Email Joke Verheul at jokeverheul@montessori-ami.org for all feedback on the bulletin, tips, good advice, and last but not least your contributions and photographs.

Peace Corner Revisited

Peace and Education, or Education and Peace—the order of these two magnificent words kept on switching in the writings of Maria Montessori. To her they were interconnected and indivisible topics. She very often spoke and wrote on the subject. Even when the title of a lecture would lead the artless reader to suspect a different subject, the main message would always come back to the child’s pivotal role in the creation of peace. ‘If we ... yearn for

peace, we must lay the foundation for peace ourselves, by working for the social world of the child.’

This is an open invitation to keep on sending your thoughts and stories on peace. We now have a permanent Peace Corner that will be in constant need of your contributions.

Next Issue of Communications

To our call for new names for *Communications* quite a few spontaneous suggestions landed in our email box. We will have to keep you in suspense for a bit about the final outcome. Since the look of *Communications* will be changed as of next year, this can be married beautifully to the introduction of a new name.

The first issue of 2009 is nearing completion, and will be sent to you over the summer vacation. So if you have a leisurely hour or so to read some profound Montessori articles, with a glass of lemonade under a parasol, grab your chance. The theme of this issue is Language and the Absorbent Mind, and includes articles by Susan Feez, Maria Montessori, Mario Montessori, an article on Montessori and the “invisible” influence of Hegel on her ideas, a wonderful outreach project in Uganda, and more.

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