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## Editorial

Storms and first snowfall have removed most traces of green from the neighbourhood; the trees have "succumbed" to nature and are now bare, with only a few lonely leaves hanging on. Winter has definitely arrived. But, while we are looking forward to next year's Spring, it is still a good time to reflect on our progress throughout 2008, and some of our ambitions and aspirations for 2009.

In the early months of 2008, significant work went into the preparation of AMI's Strategic Plan for the next five years. We owe our thanks to everyone who shared their time and wisdom so generously, and in particular to Barry Hilson who drew up the plan, on behalf of the Board. The Strategic Plan's key components have been communicated over the year to most of our stakeholders, meeting with very positive reactions. The concepts of "cherish, change and chase aspirations" truly expressed the prevailing sentiments.

With a view to "cherish and change," there was general agreement that the road to reaching more children starts at our training courses—where AMI trainers prepare the new teachers of tomorrow. To increase the number of participants on the Training of Trainers Programme, a special format was introduced, enabling a large group to fast track the rigorous phases of the Training Programme. They have proudly formed a new "branch" of the AMI tree. AMI also cherishes its relationships with the various national Montessori societies, realizing that outspoken and mutual support will help grow the number of children eventually accessing Montessori education.

In order to "chase aspirations," we saw a renewed commitment to the ideals that spawned Montessori's original thinking: an acute awareness of the underprivileged in society and our ambitions to reach out. Some of our members and training centres have developed initiatives to focus on national and international areas where children face dire economic or moral poverty. AMI as an organization is also stepping up its commitment to our social mission, to peace initiatives, and is looking at ways of empowering more people. We are enjoying these expanding outreach efforts, and are grateful to all involved in these initiatives.

Whilst these refreshing aspects are doing so much to revitalize our movement, this issue of the Bulletin is packed with ideas to promote an equally important movement: raising green awareness. As Kermit the Frog would say, '...it is not easy being green, but when green is all there is to be ... it's what I want to be.' Being green and acting green is not for "softies" and we all need to forcefully engage in this issue in order to leave a green and verdant planet for future generations.

Towards the end of the year, another green image appears centre stage: the Christmas tree. Its colour symbolizes life everlasting and the expectations of a new season. Our professional and personal New Year will start with the congress in Chennai in January, and I hope to be meeting many of you there.

For now, may you and your loved ones enjoy the December holiday season, and we hope that you are able to continue your Montessori work in 2009 recharged and refreshed.

Lynne Lawrence  
Executive Director

Sylvie & daughter Moira, Dallas, USA.

The parts of the flower are explained, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Green moments



# “Global Warming to Montessori”

## AMI Assistants course spreads to Argentina

Astrid Steverlynck

The first AMI Assistants course took place in Buenos Aires, from October 10-19, 2008. It was a huge success with 65 people gaining their certificates and another 20 participating in the introductory part of the course. The students came from different provinces and cities in Argentina (Santa Fe, Catamarca, Tucumán, Buenos Aires, Luján, Hurlingham, Bahía Blanca, Tandil) as well as from neighbouring countries (Chile and Paraguay).

Whilst some already had Montessori experience as owners or directors of schools and wanted to brush up on their knowledge and be part of the emerging Montessori-AMI community in South America, others came to learn about Maria Montessori's ideas. Many work in underprivileged areas far from urban centres; others work in traditional schools but are worried about the current crisis in education and are looking for new approaches; and some are still studying to become teachers.

Dr Silvia C. Dubovoy, the director of the course, was a great inspiration to everyone, showing us a child full of potential and promise for the future and transmitting to us the great responsibility that the child's education calls for. Most of the attendees already have plans for important transformations, in their personal lives as well as in their work. Their gratitude was manifest on the last day when the diplomas were presented: tears showed that their hearts had been changed, that the transformation had started right there.

Silvia also visited three schools with Montessori programmes in preparation for the upcoming Primary course. At the Fundación Argentina María Montessori (FAMM) we are now working, together with Silvia Dubovoy, towards the AMI Primary course planned for 2009 ([www.fundacionmontessori.org](http://www.fundacionmontessori.org)). Many hurdles have yet to be taken, but we are walking steadily down the road towards this important goal.

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## Remembering Binda Goldsbrough



New Zealand is mourning the loss of Binda Goldsbrough who died on 27 October. Binda trained with Dr Montessori in London in 1931 and moved to New Zealand in 1951. After her retirement in the mid seventies she became active in promoting Montessori education and created a course in Christchurch in 1977; she was involved in establishing Courtyard Montessori School in 1980 and became the first president of MANZ in 1982. She mentored many New Zealand Montessori teachers over many years, and has been the foremost contributor to the NZ Montessori movement.

Ana Pickering  
Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand



# NEWS FROM THE TRAINING GROUP

Carol Hicks and J McKeever (both US) have successfully concluded the last stretch of the Elementary Training of Training Programme, and the Training Group is delighted to announce their full AMI trainer status. Many congratulations to Carol and J—and all our best wishes for your work!



Carol Hicks



J McKeever

Alison Stern Awes (US) has reached auxiliary trainer status at the Elementary level—an important milestone. Congratulations.

Our congratulations also go to Louise Livingston (UK). She has reached auxiliary trainer status at the Primary level.

The Training Group wishes Alison and Louise well for the last Tier of the Programme and looks forward to greeting them as AMI trainers in the near future.



Alison Stern Awes



Louise Livingston

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# NEWS FROM THE TRAINING CENTRES

## Paris celebrates “anniversaire”

Patricia Spinelli

The AMI Training Centre in Paris, the Institut Supérieur Maria Montessori (ISMM), had cause to celebrate and reflect: 10 years of providing quality Montessori training in France called for a festive day. The event was full of sharing and exchanging of ideas, the room packed with some 200 guests, and the gathering filled with emotion.

It was a wonderful day, with talks from many contributors: Danièle Rapoport, psychologist, Dominique Bertineau, principal of the Maison de Jordan, Julio Gascon, trainer IUFM, Christine Schuhl, editor in chief of *les métiers de la petite enfance*, Yan Poyet, president of Unifformation, Françoise Neri, head teacher of the Maria Montessori school of Lyon and Patricia Spinelli, AMI director of training at ISMM.

The main topics addressed were “bien traitance” and Montessori teacher training. Marianne Etienne, Aline Gilbert, Nathalie Justine, Isabelle Séchaud (Montessori directresses) and Sophie Hubbard, assistant, spoke about their personal development.

In the evening a great concert with Lucky Lise, Laura Pelerins and her musicians provided a fitting, musical close to this very special day.



*‘There is no description, no image in any book that is capable of replacing the sight of real trees, and all the life to be found around them, in a real forest. Something emanates from those trees which speaks to the soul, something no book, no museum is capable of giving. The wood reveals that it is not only the trees that exist, but a collection of lives. And this earth, this climate, this cosmic power are necessary for the development of these lives. The myriads of lives around the trees, the majesty, the variety are things one must hunt for, and which no one can bring into the school.’*

*(Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence)*

## Nature and the Child

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Felix Bednarski

**When I was six, my family relocated to a new settlement surrounded by a forest. The following five years I truly connected to nature: I walked to school through wooded areas, witnessing the full impact of the four seasons. After school I explored a nearby river and the woodlands. My favourite activity was to climb high in a tree, and overlook the land: it gave me a great sense of serenity.**

Montessori realized the importance of nature: ‘Set the children free, let them have fair play, let them run out when it is raining, take off their shoes when they find pools of water, and when the grass of the meadows is damp with dew let them run about with bare feet and trample on it; let them rest quietly when the tree invites them to sleep in its shade; let them shout and laugh when the sun wakes them up in the morning as it wakes up every other living creature which divides its days between waking and sleeping.’ (*Discovery of the Child*, “Nature in Education”)

Edward O. Wilson, Harvard University, states that ‘Humans have an innate affinity for the natural world, probably a biologically based need integral to our development as individuals.’ His research also reveals how positively people respond to open, grassy landscapes, scattered stands of trees, meadows, water, winding trails, and elevated views. *Ecopsychology*, a new field linking the human mind and the environment, has created new research on the impact of nature on human beings’ physical and mental health. Peter Kahn in *The Human Relationship with Nature: Development and Culture* refers to over one hundred studies that identify stress reduction as one of the main benefits of spending time in nature. Natural landscapes can be therapeutic and restorative: whereas over 2000 years ago, Chinese Taoists created gardens and greenhouses that they believed beneficial to their health, we have long overlooked Nature as a healing balm for the emotional hardships in a child’s life.

Fifty years after my boyhood days in the forest, I had to design a playground at our school. I asked the children about their favourite activity. Nearly all agreed that climbing trees was at the top of their list. Since we are located in Toronto, Canada, that task was immense. As I couldn’t move the school to the forest, we decided to bring the forest to the city.

We found a logger who could provide us with a variety of cut trees—the start of a journey to help “our” children get connected with nature. The playground became a composition of logs placed in different configurations. Some logs stood upright, some were Y-shaped to allow us to place on an angle another log, creating a ramp that children could climb, exercising their physical abilities. Some trees, with all limbs, were placed flat on the ground to create a shelter for the children to sit and lean. The children now hug the limbs of trees, and exercise their physical ability as they move between the logs, using them as balance beams. They touch the logs, discover their texture, and look for insects hidden under the logs, decayed with time. The logs have even filtered into the school! Some large logs now lie flat on the floor, and cut logs have become chairs and tables in the main lobby.



Many researchers claim that contact with nature can help children overcome serious learning difficulties. The New York State College of Human Ecology at Cornell found that children with more contact to nature measured higher in self-worth and lower in behavioural disorders, anxiety, and depression. Richard Louv in *Last Child in the Woods—Saving our Children from the Nature Deficit Disorder* refers to a study that outlines how children with ADHD directly benefit from the exposure to the natural world. Green walks for children generally improve their attention and their impulse control—two key characteristics found when diagnosing ADHD. The study’s authors speculate that the natural environment gives those children a chance to recharge their attention spans without any effort.

Louv says, ‘a widening circle of researchers believe that ... the disconnection from nature, even when it’s available, has enormous implications for human health and child development. They say the quality of exposure to nature affects our health at an almost cellular level.’

Montessori writes, ‘when children are placed in natural surroundings, then there is the revelation of their strength’ and nature ‘responds to the needs of the child’s spirit.’ (Discovery) With the experience of nature being critical, it should become an integral part of our work with children.

For more details about Peter Kahn, his work and his publications, go to: <http://faculty.washington.edu/pkahn/>.



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## Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

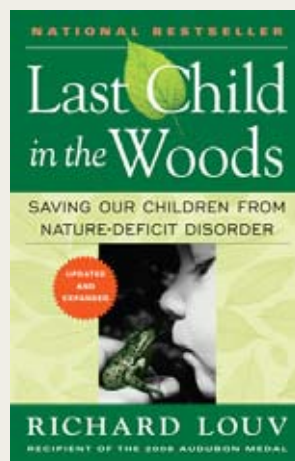
reviewed by Victoria Barrès

Richard Louv, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008, (updated and expanded version). Orig pub. 2005.

Adults who fell in love with nature when they themselves were children are comfortable in sharing their love with children. Others less fortunate, who consider nature generally as a place of ‘activity’ to be endured rather than enjoyed, can learn to rediscover and love nature themselves together with young children.

The joy of silence and contemplation, ‘learning to be’ rather than emphasizing ‘learning to know’ and ‘learning to do’, when shared with young children, also leads to very special relationships that encourage ‘learning to live with others.’ Composers and musicians know the great value of creating moments of silence, together with the great philosophers and thinkers of all cultures and religions. How has this profound truth become covered with weeds, in a jungle of noise—even for very young children?

Richard Louv’s book reminds us of the fundamental truths about the genius of childhood, how nature nurtures creativity and facilitates facing the fear of the unknown. His book has ‘stimulated an international conversation about the future relationship between children and nature,’ and has helped to develop a new movement to reconnect



children with nature. The last chapter includes a field guide with many useful suggestions that go beyond lists of ‘activities.’

## Well Worth a Visit! The Children and Nature Network

<http://www.childrenandnature.org>

The Children & Nature Network (C&NN) was created to encourage and support the people and organizations working to reconnect children with nature. C&NN provides access to the latest news and research in the field and a peer-to-peer network of researchers and individuals, educators and organizations dedicated to children’s health and well-being.

*‘How often is the soul of man—especially that of the child—deprived because one does not put him into contact with nature.’*

*(Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence)*



# The Child and the Natural Environment

Molly O'Shaughnessy

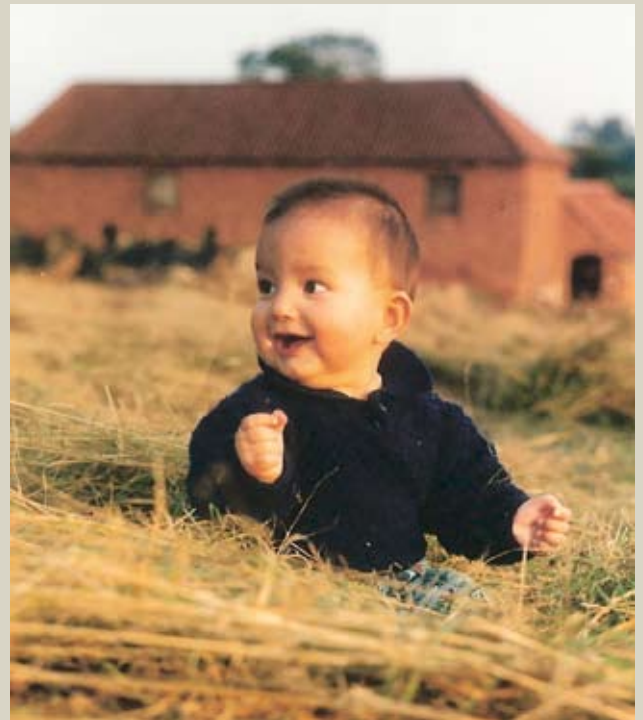
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Moving into the twenty-first century, environmental issues are paramount. The damage and threat to the viability of our natural world is of grave concern to educators as well as philosophers. In an attempt to address the environmental crisis, teachers implement “politically correct” ecological curricula in classrooms across the nation. Children do projects on the rainforest in Brazil, study the effects of ozone depletion, celebrate Earth Week, see videos about various forms of environmental abuse and so forth. Studies have shown that this approach to the problem can be counterproductive, causing students to feel “hopeless and disempowered.”<sup>1</sup> David Sobel, in an attempt to understand why this kind of curriculum does not help in solving the Earth’s problems, asked environmentalists what most influenced their strong commitment to ecological values.

The response was telling. They stated two main reasons: ‘many hours spent outdoors in a keenly remembered wild or semi-wild place in childhood or adolescence, and an adult who taught respect for nature.’<sup>2</sup>

Teachers need to recognize and help parents recognize that love of the environment cannot happen in the abstract. Empathy for the environment cannot be taught simply through words. Sobel states, ‘What’s important is that children have an opportunity to bond with the natural world, to learn to love it, before being asked to heal its wounds.’<sup>3</sup> We must help forge a bond between the child and nature by starting in the child’s immediate environment. Young children feel a natural empathy and affinity with all aspects of the natural world. Children love to touch and care for animals, to smell and pick flowers, to listen to the sounds of birds and ducks, to take refuge in small places such as trees and snow forts.

Infants and very young children should have ample time to just “be” outside—to explore with parents, grandparents, and older siblings. They need to experience organisms in their immediate surroundings—to cultivate a relationship with all the elements of the natural world. As the child moves into the Casa dei Bambini, the environment must continue to represent a living, organic environment, not simply become Montessori materials arranged neatly on the shelves. The materials as “keys to the world” come fully alive only if the child is able to relate them to real-life experiences—to use them as tools for exploration, rather than in isolation. The sensorial materials act as spotlights on reality. Each piece of apparatus reveals some particular aspect of the world to the child.



“Sam growing in the Meadow”

photo: Charlotte Elliott

Can we who are in a void of wonder and connectedness feel the fascination once again or even lead young children to do the same? Perhaps it is the child that can lead the way. I believe she can. The capacity for love is abundant in the child. As Dr Montessori wrote, ‘only poets and little children feel the fascination of a tiny rivulet flowing over pebbles.’<sup>4</sup>

Notes 1, 2 and 3: *Beyond Ecophobia* by David Sobel (Great Barrington, MA: The Orion Society and the Myrin Institute, 1996); chapters 9 and 10 respectively

4 *The Discovery of the Child* by Maria Montessori; chapter 4 “Nature in Education”

First published in *The NAMTA Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 1, Winter 2000

The full version of this article can be found on the MTCM website, under ‘Publications’ at: <http://www.mtcm.org/publications/childandtheenvironment.pdf>

David Sobel: *Beyond Ecophobia*: <http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=803>

*'It is self-evident that the possession of and contact with real things brings with them, above all, a real quantity of knowledge.*

*The inspiration engendered by it revitalizes the intelligence that was interested and wished to know.*

*Now, from all these things new intellectual interests arise (climates, winds, et cetera).*

*Instruction becomes a living thing. Instead of being illustrated, it is brought to life. In a word, the outing is a new key for the intensification of instruction ordinarily given in the school.'*

*(Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence)*

## Bringing Nature to the Children...

and Taking the Children out into the World of Nature

Meredith Crandall Brown

**Although all Montessori teachers aim for a natural flow between inside and outside, this is sometimes difficult to achieve. This contribution offers some ideas for ensuring that children experience nature wherever the school is based.**

It was important to me that the children were aware of the world around them. We used to take walks in the neighbourhood and notice tiny changes. We had several types of walks: flower walks, snowflake walks, leaf walks, insect walks, for example. We would try to identify what we could. The whole group would go out in the morning to do things like smell flowers and the extended-day children would go out to identify and press flowers. Another activity that the children enjoyed was making their own leaf books using the Leaf Cabinet. Later they were reminded of the shapes and the names of the flowers and leaves when they spent time working with the corresponding Classified Cards.

The different seasons were also important: when the leaves began to drop from the trees we would go out in the morning and try to catch the falling leaves. Each child would pick a few of their favourites from the ground. We'd bring them back to press and after a week they would be tied to a very long hemp string that was extended all the way across the room and left up until the new leaves came out in the Spring. The children loved this and it was a gorgeous decoration and conversation starter. We would go on "trash walks" every couple of weeks during the extended day—an absolute favourite! The children were paired off and they would each share a bag. They used to wear little gloves and we'd pick up trash, although they weren't allowed to touch band-aids or cigarette butts or anything in the street.



"Abraham and the Sunflower"

photo: Meredith Crandall Brown

Music was another important feature of the time spent with the children and I used to play my guitar with them every day. On really warm days we would celebrate by taking the guitar and going up to the field during the extended day. Once there I would choose a tune the children knew and come up with new lyrics about animals and plants and they would dance and act out the various things. Also popular with the extended-day children in Seattle was a field trip to see the salmon running in from the ocean at a nearby beach with a stream outlet. It was an incredibly powerful scene: these massive fish swimming over the sands with half their bodies out of the water.

Last year in Portland we had a mini invasion of ants just as school started. I put out the Classified Cards that showed the parts of the body of the ant as well as a big poster of a gigantic photo of an ant so the children could see all the teeny body parts and hairs. They used a magnifying glass to inspect them. That was fun and almost all the children learned valuable vocabulary for parts of the insect.



We incubated little baby chicks as well, which resulted in amazing language opportunities and another chance to connect the Classified Cards to the real world. We made all sorts of great links with the general life cycles of both chickens and other birds.

The children were able to observe birds on other occasions as we had a bird feeder attached to our window. A poster identifying local Northwestern birds was also put up.

Outdoors little garden plots were created where we grew fruit and vegetables. We would harvest the produce and then make salad whenever possible. Each Fall I would bring a huge sunflower head into the classroom and the children used tweezers to pull out the seeds that we would then eat or put on the bird feeder. This was a nice activity to have on the shelf for a while.

Basically, nature was worked into many of our conversations. I always encouraged them to bring in objects for our Nature

Table, to tell real stories about special experiences they had had outdoors and so on. When it came to introducing nature into the indoor environment, the Classified Cards were invaluable, but we also made use of songs, books and poems about nature and gardening. If your Children's House is in an urban environment it is of course more challenging, but also very do-able.



## Why did I Choose an AMI School?

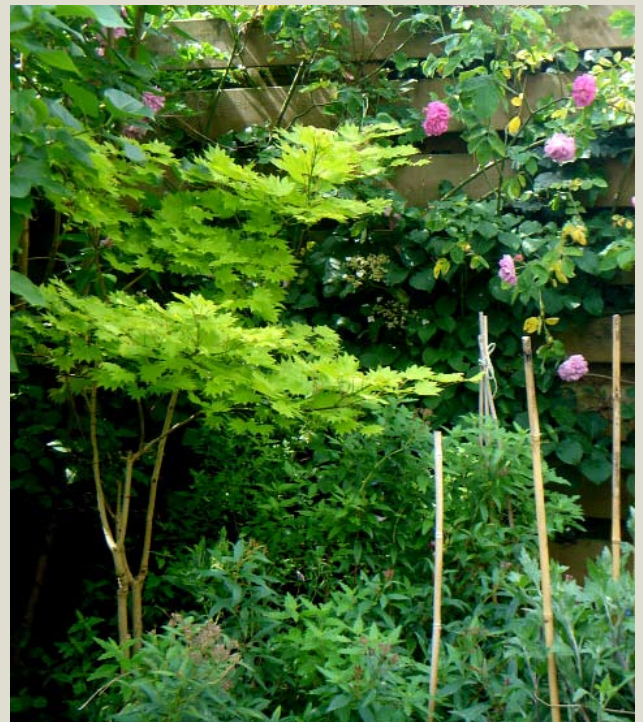
### ... The Garden!

*Charlotte Elliott*

**Our family values nature. So when it came to choosing a school, we looked for a place that reflected those values. We visited several Montessori-type schools within walking distance of our home in London and nothing I saw or heard really inspired me.**

Each place seemed so lifeless, even with a room full of children. There was one school that really emphasized the importance of knowing the natural world, the changing of the seasons, the life-cycle of plants and animals—I began to feel excited—was this it? I asked to see the garden and was shown the most disheartening strip of patio ever imagined. I felt so cheated! And there was only one more school on my list.

The moment I walked into the AMI school, I knew it was the right place. The rooms were orderly, yet full of fascinating things on shelves. I wanted to touch them all! I looked out of the window and there was The Garden. It had an apple tree, lawns, flowerbeds and a pond that was not fenced off. 'Are the children allowed to go into the garden?' The answer was affirmative. Not only play, but also to work. 'Work? What a bonus!' I didn't need to know anything else; any place that can look like an Aladdin's



cave of wondrous things, can be reassuringly friendly without a person in sight, and had a real garden where one could get their hands dirty was going to be ok.

To find a school that drew attention to the things that crawl around in the grass, or fly about flowers or trees was truly fortunate. As a result, our son has an acute sense of observation, he enjoys designing and planting gardens of his own, he can name many of the animals, plants and trees around us and his roots are literally in the earth, wherever he goes. Man does not live by bread alone—he needs a garden too!



# Montessori Garden in Karachi

Masooma Alibhai

A plot of around 2000 square yards was given as an amenity to the Pakistan Montessori Association to use for its Montessori projects—a long cherished wish of our previous President Gool Minwalla. Although a school has been built under the able supervision of Habiba Thobani, the current Association President, almost half of the land is still barren. Hopefully the time has come to turn it green with help from the children of registered Montessori schools.

The committee has decided to plant trees, mainly palm trees to suck in the salt water. This is to help the children become aware of the importance of trees and to give them

the pleasure of watching the trees they planted grow.

Each school will sponsor a tree, the children will plant it with the help of the gardener and come to water their very own tree once a week, accompanied by their parents, and under supervision of an Association member.

This will bring some green colour into the educational fun fair that the Association hopes to hold some time in February. In addition to the tree planting, seasonal flower beds will be encouraged later on, providing a good opportunity to learn the names of flowers, especially in the winter months. Hopefully, we can accommodate a bird bath too, a joy for all to see. Be sure to visit the Montessori Garden in your next visit to Karachi; for Karachi barren as you are, we strive to make you green.

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“Sensations of the Sea”  
photo: Mark Freitag

**‘All things are part of the universe, and  
are connected with each  
other to form one whole unity.’  
(Maria Montessori, To Educate the  
Human Potential)**

# The Child's Place in the Natural World

Phoebe Allen

## Biophilia vs. Eco-phobia

Many children worry about the disappearance of nature in a global sense, yet have little or no personal connection with the natural world around them. Instead of math phobia, children are developing *eco-phobia*—the fear of rainforest destruction, the hole in the ozone, pollution in rivers, acid rain, and the extinction of cuddly-looking panda bears and seals.

As parents and teachers, we must guard against the move toward “environmental education” that leaves children with a sense of hopelessness. Instead, it is important we provide children with opportunities to bond with nature and fall in love with the Earth, before we ask them to save it.

## Primary Work for Early Childhood: Initiating Biophilia

Research indicates that certain brain patterns are developed only if the child is interacting with the environment. Early childhood is obviously the most critical period for bonding with the earth and initiating what entomologist E.O. Wilson calls *biophilia*—an affinity for the living world. Before age six or seven, our main objective should be to cultivate empathy between the child and the natural world, to nourish his sense of kinship with life through stories, songs, seasonal celebrations and, most importantly, direct experience.

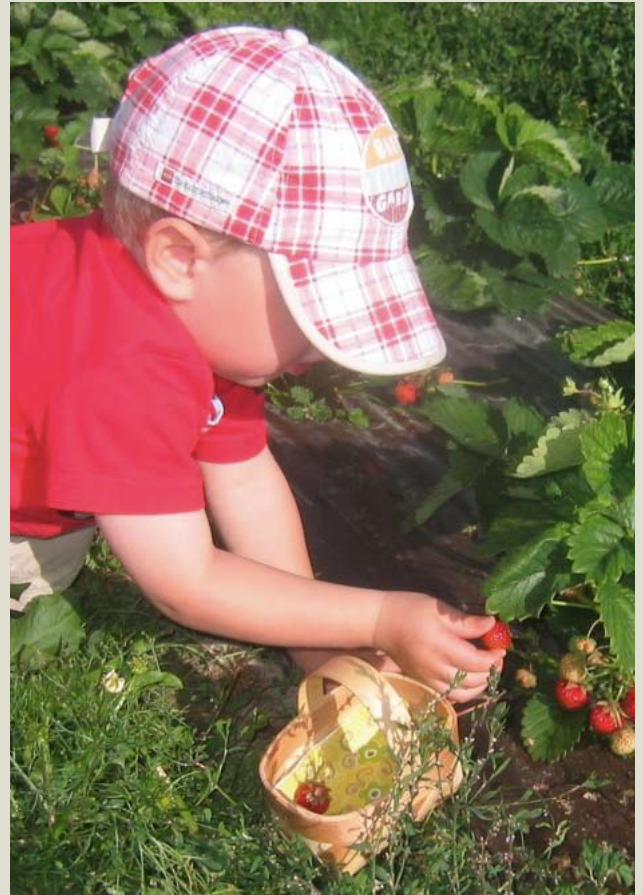
## Elementary Work: Exploration

Since exploration is a characteristic of the child aged six to twelve, activities in the elementary years should naturally include collecting rocks and seashells, hunting and gathering mushrooms and wild foods, going on treasure hunts, exploring streams and wading in creeks, searching for amphibians and insects, making maps and following trails and animal tracks, hiking and campouts, and studying local geological features through personal observation.

Active vegetable and flower gardening, taking care of farm animals, and connecting the gardens and animals through the compost cycle is also very appropriate for the elementary child, bearing in mind John Muir's words, ‘When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.’ (*My First Summer in the Sierra*, John Muir. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1911, pg. 157)

## Adolescent Work: Social Action

Addressing environmental problems that call for social action should begin more appropriately around age eleven and, hopefully, extends beyond adolescence, giving students plenty of time to study the challenges of distant ecosystems as well as opportunities to manage school-wide recycling programmes, or take action on local or global issues.



Picking strawberries

## Nature-based Schoolyards

A potential bridge between the indoor environment and “the wild” lies right outside our schools’ back doors—nature-based schoolyards offer perfect alternative play areas for our young children, provided we create green, inviting spaces. Native plant habitats can offer a laboratory for encouraging curiosity, observation, critical thinking and intellectual growth. These outdoor spaces invite participation and engage children in unstructured physical activity, providing a hidden curriculum that children will discover on their own.

## Into the Wild

We are not the only species that prepares its environment—a marvellous, mysterious and wonder-filled world awaits us in the meticulously “prepared” environment of wild, un-manicured spaces. Nothing more is required of the adult than to lead the children into these wild, outdoor spaces, where they will make their own discoveries.

For a copy of the highly informative full text, please contact Phoebe Allen at: [PhoebezInk@aol.com](mailto:PhoebezInk@aol.com).

# The Meadows of the Sea

Charlotte Elliott and “the shoulders of others”

AMI’s Journal, *Communications*, is currently showcasing a series of Montessori’s lectures on Cosmic Education. In her third lecture given at the 21st International Course Extension, she talks about the sea, its life forms and how “carbonate of lime ... is the fulcrum upon which everything is based...”<sup>1</sup> She was, of course, talking about the Carbon Cycle, a topic rich in a near endless variety of discoveries for the Elementary child.

‘Carbon dioxide is the key metabolic gas of Gaia, influencing climate, plant growth, and oxygen production. It cycles constantly through the system from its source as volcanic output to its final sink, burial as limestone (calcium carbonate).’<sup>2</sup> Like Montessori, James Lovelock, a life scientist, sees planet Earth as an interrelated organism with highly successful, interdependent functions and life forms.

Lovelock describes one of these interdependencies as, ‘the meadows of the sea—the sunlit upper layers of the ocean,’ which are populated by the phytoplankton and zooplankton (*foraminifera*) that Montessori refers to. It is these invisible marine creatures that have been successfully “pumping down” excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, quietly contributing to its burial in limestone for millions of years.

‘Carbon dioxide is continuously exchanged between the atmosphere and ocean.’<sup>3</sup> And today, this cycle is being disturbed by the excessive amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The oceans are developing high levels of carbonic acid, which changes the pH of the water, eventually affecting the saturation levels of calcium carbonate. The “meadows” are becoming too acidic, ‘the link between global warming and the large-scale bleaching of corals, considered controversial only 10-15 years ago, is now universally accepted.’<sup>4</sup>

Cosmic Education has become an even more essential undertaking in today’s climate—we will need the active assistance of those future generations, as well as ourselves to heal this planet.

- For lots of well-organized information and guidance (such as calculating your personal impact on the climate) visit: <http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/>
- See reading references below: The Earth System is a comprehensive academic publication for those interested in Earth Sciences; James Lovelock has written many books on the interdependency of the natural world, most notably, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*; and *An Inconvenient Truth* is a highly accessible account of global warming, its potential effects, the scientific evidence and what we can do to mitigate the situation.



“What is it?”

photo: Mark Freitag

1 Maria Montessori, “Cosmic Education”: Third Lecture, 21st International Course Extension, London, January 9, 1936 (Amsterdam: AMI, 2008). Lecture given in Italian and translated by students. The English transcript has now been edited for the first time.

2 James Lovelock, *Healing Gaia—Practical Medicine for the Planet*, (New York: Harmony Books, 1991)

3 Lee Kump, James Kasting and Robert Crane, *The Earth System*, 2/E (N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004/1999)

4 Al Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth* (New York: Rodale, 2006)



# GREEN MIX

## Carry Your Own Chopsticks and Promote the Montessori Movement

Takako Fukatsu

In our fast-paced society, we are constantly throwing away products that we only use ONCE. And, chopsticks are proving to be no exception.

Your average Japanese person throws away 420 disposable chopsticks—*waribashi*—each year, for which 850,000 trees (diam. of 30 cm 6 m hgt.) need to be chopped down every year. 96% of them are imported from China.

So, as a (former) designer and Montessorian, I have thought of a business that will not only promote environmentally sound products but also propagate the Montessori movement in the world. Every time you buy these eco-friendly chopsticks, part of the proceeds will go to help cover the translation fee of the journal *Communications* into Japanese. So, by being Green, you are also supporting the spread of our movement and promoting the Peace that starts from children. Carry your own chopsticks and promote Montessori! Thank you for your support.

For more information contact Takako Fukatsu at [ecollage@nifty.com](mailto:ecollage@nifty.com)  
<http://ecollage.sakura.ne.jp/sb.cgi?search=chopsticks&x=o&y=o>



## Conserving Water

Victoria Barrès remembers visiting a Montessori Children's House in a refugee community in Orangi, a neighbourhood of Karachi, Pakistan. It had double-sessions, with about 50 children in each. Initially, the children were taught practical life activities using the **water** from the tap available at the centre. The mothers, who lived in tents and had to seek water daily, complained to the centre that the children were wasting water.

Thus, the teachers had a wake-up call about limiting the amount of water for the washing exercises. It was a good lesson for all, and one that can be followed anywhere! For instance, in Kenya the bowls are not placed on a table, but on a little tripod instead. One of its legs is shorter than the other two, and the bowl is "tipped up". The water automatically flows to the lowest rim of the bowl, and it looks as if the bowl is quite full. A perfect way to make do with little water.

## Don't Print!

An astronomical amount of paper is wasted every day! Green activist, Mandy Haggith believes paper consumption is a key component of global warming and recommends only using recycled paper when necessary. Read her research in "Paper Trails", Virgin Books 2008, or visit [www.shrinkpaper.org](http://www.shrinkpaper.org) for more ideas on how to save paper.

Steps can be small: some people include a message with their emails to remind recipients that whenever you print an email, a piece of irreplaceable, and expensive paper, is used.



Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail. Thank you.

# Green Schools

**‘green school** n. a school building or facility that creates a healthy environment that is conducive to learning while saving energy, resources and money.’

## Irish Green—The Green Flag

Joan Rafter

The children in our school in Dublin are working to achieve a green school flag. This process is the means by which we declare that the school is reflecting good practice with regard to the environment.

We have just completed a fabulous collage of a funny man with his mouth open to receive all our recycled paper. The children call him Mr Recycling. Two children are responsible for moving the recycling into the big bin at the end of every week.

All members of the school play a part in working towards getting the green flag. Each week we move closer to this.

## Japanese Green—Solar Energy

Takako Fukatsu

The Mukudori Kazeno-Oka Montessori School, Tokyo have installed an OM solar energy system which combines “Low Tech” heat transfer with Advanced Technologies to heat the entire school. The basic concept behind the OM Solar system is remarkably simple: the system utilizes the heated air under the photovoltaic glass panel on the roof top to heat up the floor in the winter and in the summer, the hot air provides heat for the school’s hot water supply.

Everyday, children put their hands into a transparent air duct to check “today’s air” and feel the relationship of the sun with their life at the school.



## Europe Green

Rinze Hoekstra

Every year, students of the Middle School section of the International Montessori School of Tervuren (Brussels, Belgium) participate actively in the Green Week, a European initiative where NGOs and authorities & businesses come together to promote and talk about a wide variety of environmentally linked issues. For a whole week our “delegation” attends presentations and activities. Sometimes the school also has its own stand to promote a specific issue (e.g. biodiversity, on which the students home-produced a DVD).



During the last edition of Green Week, our students asked panelists what they could do to help fight climate change.

Two speakers illustrated the throwaway nature of today’s society by drawing attention to their three-year-old mobile phones that were already “outdated.” They urged everyone to consider the effects on the environment, and stressed that we should be independent trendsetters, rather than over-dedicated followers of fashion.

The students made a passionate plea to the policy-makers to step up communications on environmental issues to young people, and promote the message that it is “cool” to be green.

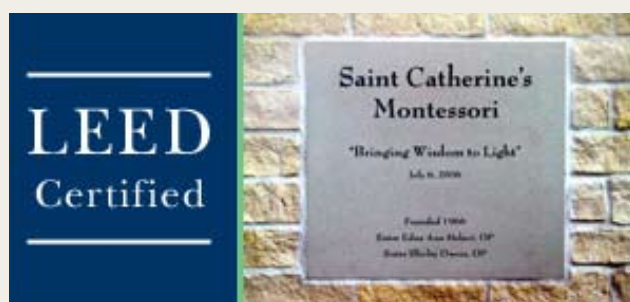


## UK Green

In the UK, Display Energy Certificates (DECs) are being introduced to raise public awareness of energy use and efficiency. Schools that monitor their energy consumption and carry out no-cost, good-housekeeping, energy-saving measures can save an average of 15% on their energy bills. For details and energy saving top tips: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding/schoolbuildings/energyefficiency/certificates/>

## US Green

According to the US Green Building Council, ‘... promoting the design and construction of green schools ... can make a tremendous impact on student health, test scores, teacher retention, school operational costs and the environment.’ Details on Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification, ideas and resources can be found at: <http://www.buildgreenschools.org/gsi01/index.html>



St. Catherine’s Montessori received **official LEED Certification** in May, making it the first and only LEED certified K-12 school in Texas, USA.

<http://www.stcathmont.org/LEED.html>

The LEED Rating System is the US accepted benchmark for the design, and operation of high-performance green buildings; promoting a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

## UNESCO & UN GREEN Education for Sustainable Development

Victoria Barrès

UNESCO is the lead agency for the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014, DESD). This global educational effort hopes to encourage changes in behaviour that will ‘create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society’ for all.

The concepts of sustainable development is evolving and more people are becoming aware of the importance of introducing them to very young children in different cultures in child-friendly ways. As the Decade evolves,

much more educational material will become available—and the AMI community should be considering the importance of contributing its experience and knowledge in viable ways (i.e. with lots of photos and text that is understandable to the general public). For full details: [http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=27234&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=27234&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

## The Contribution of Early Childhood Education to a Sustainable Society

This publication explains how to educate young children with the aim of preventing further degradation of our planet and contributing to a sustainable society where values of human rights, peace and justice are upheld. For more details and other related links:

[http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=56601&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=56601&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)



## DPI/NGO Conference at the United Nations “Climate Change: How it Impacts us All”

Silvia C. Dubovoy

Global warming is a dramatically urgent and serious problem, and the UN also has been focusing on climate change and solutions to its impact on the earth and human survival. A wide variety of promising solutions to reduce the phenomenon of global warming are being promoted: we do not need to wait for governments to solve the problem; each of us can make a difference by adopting a more responsible lifestyle.

Starting with the little things, many of the solutions cost nothing, whilst some others require a little investment. Every little bit helps—for the UN’s top 50 things to do to stop global warming, go to: <http://globalwarming-facts.info/50-tips.html>



## Message for World Environment Day 2008

From the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon: 'Addiction is a terrible thing. It consumes and controls us, makes us deny important truths and blinds us to the consequences of our actions. Our world is in the grip of a dangerous carbon habit...' <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2008/unissgsmo48.html>

## OzonAction Education Pack for Secondary Schools

[http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/information/educationpacksec\\_school.htm](http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/information/educationpacksec_school.htm)

Ozzy Ozone is the UNEP's flagship campaign for children regarding stratosphere ozone protection. The Education Pack for Secondary Schools was developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) OzonAction Programme under the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. They form an integral part of the global Ozzy Ozone campaign and it is a follow-up activity to the OzonAction Education Pack for Primary schools, which was developed in 2006.



# Recommended Reading

(all of the following books can be found via Amazon)

- *Acclimatization: A Sensory and Conceptual Approach to Ecological Involvement*, 1972, and *Acclimatizing: A Personal and Reflective Approach to a Natural Relationship*, 1974, both by Steve Van Matre
- *Earth Prayers from around the World*, Roberts & Amidon, editors, 1991
- *The Earth Speaks*, Steve Van Matre, 1983
- *Gaia—a New Look at Life on Earth*, James Lovelock, Oxford University Press, 1979/1988
- *Healing Gaia*, James Lovelock, Harmony Books, 1991
- *An Inconvenient Truth*, Al Gore, Rodale, 2006
- *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv, Algonquin Books, 2005/2008
- *The Lorax*, Dr. Seuss, Random House, 1971
- *The Man who Planted Trees*, Jean Giono, Peter Owen Publishers, 1954/1989
- *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Annie Dillard, 1985
- *A Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold, 1966
- *The Sense of Wonder*, Rachel Carson, 1965
- *Sharing Nature with Children*, Joseph Cornell, 1979/1999

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harvesting potatoes  
photo: Barbara Cohen

Here 'endeth' the Green Section.

# Montessori Events Worldwide

January 5-8, 2009

**Chennai, India**

26th International Montessori Congress

Kalakshetra Foundation

theme: Sādhana

[www.montessoricongress.com](http://www.montessoricongress.com)

February 7, 2009

**London, UK**

“Language as a developmental key for fulfilment of the human potential”

Speaker: Lynne Lawrence

One-day seminar hosted by the Montessori Society AMI UK

[www.montessori-uk.org](http://www.montessori-uk.org)

March 4-7, 2009

**Acapulco, Mexico**

The XIV Mexican Montessori Congress

Speakers: André Roberfroid, Lynne Lawrence, Molly

O'Shaughnessy, David Kahn and Dr Steven Hughes

For information contact Beatriz Zavala at

[betty30011974@yahoo.com.mx](mailto:betty30011974@yahoo.com.mx)

March 13-15, 2009

**Vancouver, Canada**

“Thinking Beyond Boundaries: The Role of Montessori in the 21st Century”

Montessori Society of Canada

Speakers: Lynne Lawrence, Annette Haines, Eduardo

Cuevas, Nicole Marchak, Dr Angeline Lillard, Phyllis

Pottish-Lewis, Larry Schaefer and Dr Gordon Neufeld

Two lectures are open to parent registration. Open Forum on March 15.

[www.montessorisocietycanada.org](http://www.montessorisocietycanada.org)

March 28, 2009

**Cork City, Ireland**

The Association of AMI Teachers Ireland (AATI) Annual Conference. International speakers. More details in the next bulletin.

April 18, 2009

**Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

Annual General Meeting of AMI

Speaker: Dr Steven Hughes

April 19, 2009

**Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

Open Forum, hosted by AMI

May 16, 2009

**London, UK**

“Keys to Exploration of the World”

Speaker: Lynne Lawrence

One-day seminar hosted by Montessori Education UK in London.

[www.montessorieducationuk.org](http://www.montessorieducationuk.org)

June 5-7, 2009

**Brighton-le-Sands NSW, Australia**

Whole School Refresher

0-3: Maria Teresa Vidales on “Language as an Aid to Life: Joining the Multicultural World”

3-6: Janet McDonell on “Cultural Extensions: Geography, Botany, Zoology, Art Appreciation, Literature Appreciation, Music Appreciation”

6-12: Phyllis Pottish-Lewis on “Art Refresher: A Journey of Appreciation and Experience”

[www.montessori.org.au](http://www.montessori.org.au)

[info@montessori.org.au](mailto:info@montessori.org.au)

July 20-26, 2009

**Jackson, Wyoming, USA**

AMI-EAA 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.

Limited space. Registration deadline May 31.

[www.ami-eaa.org](http://www.ami-eaa.org)

# 26th international montessori congress

under the auspices of the association montessori internationale  
january 5-8, 2009, chennai, india



sādhana  
reflective practice, spontaneous living

## Next Issue of the AMI e-Bulletin (February 2009)

We will have a special report covering the events at the Chennai Congress in the next issue of the AMI e-Bulletin. The overall theme will be "Peace" and your contributions are requested for January 26, 2009. Please feel free to send articles on teaching practices, news items from your schools, thoughts or questions from parents, book or video reviews, and web-links to your favourite sites/resources, not to mention your own websites. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome! With many thanks from [jokeverheul@montessori-ami.org](mailto:jokeverheul@montessori-ami.org).



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- NGO in operational relations with Unesco (since 1962)

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