

Editorial

With the transition to a new season, courses and schools are reopening their doors to fresh batches of students. The summer may have appeared quiet, but AMI's activities have been picking up speed, away from direct publicity—there are many exciting developments. We all know of the global appeal of Montessori, whilst realizing that Montessori may still have to travel some distance to reach certain regions. We are delighted to report on the most recent travelling feats: we are working on new projects in no less than three continents! Starting with A, and finishing with A, they are: Africa, Asia and Argentina.

Thailand

At this stage the most extensive and complete update can be given on Thailand. Recently a delegation from AMI, made up of André Roberfroid (President), Megan Tyne (Project Officer) and myself met with officials from the Thai government, who have expressed a firm interest in offering quality AMI Montessori. The ultimate aim is to reach as many children as possible that are currently in small, underprivileged schools.

Parties are building on the results of a training project that AMI has run in collaboration with the National Institute for Development of

Teachers, Faculty Staff and Educational Personnel—from 2006-2008. Rita Zener and Shannon Helfrich co-directed a primary course, assisted by Cathryn Kasper, Susan Stephenson, Gunilla Kolmodin, and Kannekar Butt, with whom the whole project had started. She was working on an initiative to introduce Montessori principles to traditional schools, and when she found them to be very receptive of the Montessori approach, she involved AMI. With financial support from Montessorians in the U.S. and Singapore made available to a large group of teachers from underprivileged schools, the road was paved for a course to start in 2006. The project gained recognition and received three National Awards.

This summer Pamela Nunn and I gave a three-day workshop to a large group of school administrators: it is important that this group has an understanding of Montessori if they are to support retraining of their teachers. Talks with government officials resulted in an official agreement in which both parties commit to the furtherance of Montessori; we are aiming to offer a new primary course to start in 2009. AMI is delighted with the developments in Thailand, and is now working hard on the realization of the 2009 course.

Argentina

Argentina is another exciting development. Last year we reported on the fact that there was great interest in Montessori. The proverbial seeds were planted, germinated and kept on growing. A special organization "The Fundación Argentina Maria Montessori (FAMM)" was created, which will be hosting an AMI Assistants Course, directed by Silvia C. Dubovoy. This type of course is to offer information to adults, so they may become assistants both at home as well as in a Montessori Children's House. The course is also meant to help create and increase interest in further AMI training. Both FAMM and AMI are hoping to commit to an AMI primary course in Argentina to start in 2009. Our thanks to all those who helped prepare the ground!

Africa

In May, André Roberfroid was invited to attend the 2008 Biennale on Education in Africa, which enabled him to establish new contacts. We were also thrilled that an outside charity invited us to submit development projects in Africa; at the moment a lot of hard work is being done to pull together the information, complete budgets and liaise intensively with our colleagues on the ground.

This African update is brief only by virtue of the fact that we are awaiting final decisions. But whatever the outcome, new projects are being considered and this has given fresh impetus to our commitment to further Montessori in Africa. We are sure that, wherever you are, you are also engaged in developing new exciting projects. We wish you continued inspiration in the realization of your plans, and invite you to drop us a line or digital photograph to share the development with the wider AMI community. Good luck.

Lynne Lawrence
Executive Director

One of the schools visited in Thailand



CONTENTS

- 1 Editorial
- 2 Marsilia Palocci (1929-2008)
- 3 News from the Training Group
- 4 News from the Training Centres

- 4 Montessori Parents
- 5 Thank you Peter Gebhardt-Seele
- 5 Student Corner
- 7 Montessori Events Worldwide

- 8 Montessori in the Mix
- 8 United Nations
- 9 Peace Salon and Unesco

Marsilia Palocci (1929-2008)

On July 25 Marsilia Palocci quietly passed away in her hometown Rome, having suffered from failing health during the past few years. She was buried in the family grave just outside Rome, at an intimate ceremony.

Although Marsilia would always impress on her friends and colleagues ‘not to make a fuss’, we cannot possibly concede to her wish in this instance. Her remarkable person, life and work were intrinsically connected to her utter commitment to the Montessori philosophy.

She became interested in Montessori education as a young girl, and in 1950 first enrolled on the Montessori 0-3 course in Rome led by Adele Costa Gnocchi. Inspired, and thirsty for further knowledge she signed up for Maria Montessori’s 3-6 course the following year. As it would transpire, a historical course: the last one to be conducted by Maria Montessori.

2

Landed with a class of 5 to 6-year-olds, Marsilia trod along a couple of years and found out that much of what she had heard in the course did not work in the class room. Disappointed and determined to find out why, she decided to take the Advanced Montessori Course to be given by Mario Montessori in London in 1957. It was the first full elementary course based on the work developed in India by Maria Montessori during her years of internment, and again a historical course. It may be safe to speculate that Marsilia was, probably, one of the first to hold AMI diplomas for all three levels.



Marsilia (right) with Fahmida

Young, vivacious, and a brilliant and dedicated student, together with her friend Fahmida Malik—a fellow student on the course—her talents were recognized by Mario Montessori. Both young women assisted his Montessori work for many years. The years and work with Mario Montessori would also be the basis of a very dear and close relationship with his wife Ada, his son Mario and his children and grandchildren. She became a very welcome guest in their house, everybody enjoying her wit and homeliness.

Over the years she would be asked to help in many of the AMI study conferences organized by Mario. When in 1961 he decided to start the Centro Internazionale Studi Montessoriani in Bergamo, with Eleonora Honegger in charge, as a training centre specifically to train teachers at

the elementary level, Marsilia was asked to assist both as a lecturer translator and a full-time course assistant. Camillo Grazzini, who was to direct the centre in Bergamo in later years, was one of her colleagues. They would later also be colleagues on several committees, where they would often exchange views and opinions with passion, which, however, were always based on respect for the Montessori philosophy.

Her work and responsibilities increased: when AMI’s Pedagogical Committee was set up in 1974, she was asked to sit on this committee, sharing in particular her knowledge of 0-3 and 6-12. She gave uninterrupted service until 2004, when she retired.

Marsilia also was one of the key people on the AMI Material Committee, and instrumental, together with Camillo Grazzini, Mary Hayes and Fred Kelpin in the digitization project of the blueprints of the materials. She was one of the first committee members to buy a computer for personal use, and would send many a disk full of intricate drawings to the AMI office in Amsterdam.

Marsilia was a trainer at the 0-3 and 6-12 level, an AMI Examiner, and an international speaker. In all areas she has left her mark.

This last year, even when or perhaps because her illness aggravated, she was in frequent touch with Amsterdam, sorting out papers and assisting with any pedagogical queries we put her way. She kept on sharing her vast knowledge and expertise with her former colleagues on the AMI Scientific Pedagogy Committee. Her commitment remained a steady factor.

We will always think of Marsilia with great affection and appreciation.



Marsilia (right) half-hidden behind Maria Montessori, Perugia

NEWS FROM THE TRAINING GROUP

Ready for a New Challenge? Train as an AMI Trainer!

In March the Training Group launched the new Seminar Format for the Primary Training Programme—it got off to a wonderful start with thirty-three participants from around the world.

The Seminar Format offers a shorter track to reaching full AMI trainer status. Participants complete two full course cycles, and attend five blocks when they meet as a group for intensive studies, lectures, and specific assignments. The feedback on the first block has been very positive: the opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other is very valuable.

The Training Group are now investigating the feasibility of a similar set-up for the Training of Trainers Programme at the Elementary (6-12), and Assistants to Infancy (0-3) level. A second Seminar Format at the Primary (3-6) level is also under consideration.

You can help the Training Group explore existing interest! Contact AMI at brenda@montessori-ami.org and answer four questions only:

- Would you like to know more about the New Seminar Format?
- Which level of training are you interested in (0-3, 3-6 or 6-12) ?
- When would you like to start your training: in 2009 or 2010 ?
- Where would you like to train: in Asia, Europe, Oceania or the USA?

Check admission requirements on www.montessori-ami.org, training, training of trainers.

The Training Group looks forward to hearing from you.

Ready for a new challenge? They have taken the plunge already !



"The First Seminar Group", together with trainers Annette Haines and Rita Schaefer Zener

Some quotes from trainees on the Seminar Format that started in March:

This programme is a unique opportunity to gain a truly profound understanding of Montessori's thinking.

I would like to reach as many children as possible and hope this will be possible by becoming a trainer, and training new young people to become teachers. I want to promote Montessori also as a social movement.

It is great to be with people who are going to be my colleagues.

I love working with adults—my challenge is to help create a clear and perceptive understanding of Montessori, encouraging and assisting the young teachers of tomorrow.

I felt a tremendous responsibility to bring Montessori teacher training to my region — and I am so excited at the prospect of all this happening.

The Seminar is helping create an incredibly rich tapestry: we could never have done this separately. It is very valuable that we are here from all parts of the world, with different experiences.

I would really like to further AMI training, to help the development of Montessori and AMI, to build commitment.

My drive is to gain a real understanding of child development in all its aspects, so that I can give my future students a very clear message – and also be able to talk to students with very different backgrounds and life experience.

Naoko Ogawa – Auxiliary Trainer

The Training Group is pleased to announce that Naoko Ogawa, trainer-in-training at the Washington Montessori Institute, has reached Auxiliary Trainer status at the primary level. Congratulations!



NEWS FROM THE TRAINING CENTRES

Hangzhou Primary Course

The first AMI Primary Course in China got off to a running start on Monday, July 28, 2008. Fifty eager students arrived at the temporary Wulinmen School site to meet their training staff. Members of the Miraton Corporation were on hand to greet students and to orient them to the organizational aspects of the course. Mrs Chen, the head of school for Wulinmen, was on hand to greet the students as well as Michael Guo, head of Miraton.

The Director of Training for the Primary Course is Shannon Helfrich, who has relocated from the USA to initiate this new project and to establish a permanent training centre in Hangzhou, China. Staff members come from Taiwan, Australia and locally from Wuhan, China.

4

The staff of the training centre is attempting to contact AMI trained teachers who are already working in China and would be delighted to hear from these teachers or those who know where they might be teaching. There are many Montessori schools throughout China but very few trained teachers. This first course is the beginning of a huge project to train 400 AMI teachers at all three levels within the next five years. The primary course is actually the second AMI course being offered in Hangzhou, as Judi Orion began a 0-3 course this past spring and will finish later in 2008.

A permanent site for the training centre is awaiting the last building inspections and will soon be ready to accept children and the next course of students set to begin their course in mid-September. The course accepts students from overseas and is conducted in English with Mandarin translation.

Come visit beautiful Hangzhou and meet the newest Montessori community.



Shannon Helfrich with her Hangzhou Primary student group

Montessori Parents Question and Answer

Thank you to Carla Candeloario Sued from the Dominican Republic for asking us a very relevant question: How do you go about celebrating birthdays in the Casa? And how does Montessori look upon inviting a clown to the classroom? She was interested to hear what traditions Montessori would follow in a culture which usually enjoys making much of children's birthdays. Rita Zener, AMI director of training at the primary level, answers.

At times when the customs of a society are at odds with the Montessori school there is some confusion. This answer must of course be general we do not know the school nor the teachers. It is customary in Montessori schools that we do not introduce balloons and large cakes as part of a celebration. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with balloons or large cakes or even clowns, but they are not appropriate in a Children's House. Perhaps for that sort of celebration, you would have it in your own home. A home does not have the same restrictions that we have in a Children's House.

In the Children's House we are guided by Dr Montessori about what can be there. First, everything there must be a "motive for activity." That is, everything there is for the use of the children—especially that they can use it independently and by themselves. Secondly, there must be nothing superfluous. That means that anything that does not further the child's development at this stage should not be allowed. Thirdly, we are directed to protect the child's own inner guide. (Inner guide is the name Dr Montessori gave to the young child's ability to teach himself what he needs for his own development.) Any kind of over-stimulation can overwhelm the inner guide – even though it might be something not harmful in itself. For example, too many toys, too much loud noise, or too much disorder can easily overwhelm a child's inner guide. When a child is overwhelmed, he cannot choose freely the work he needs for his own self-construction.

Therefore, our celebrations are usually very calm. The child might bring something that he can prepare on a plate—like individual cakes or pieces of fruit, etc.—and pass to others by himself. There might be a small celebration of the child's life among the group. Different schools in different countries handle this in their own way. But it is always on the calm side—certainly not with the uproar that usually accompanies the performance of a clown.

Thank you Peter Gebhardt-Seele!

On August 16, Peter Gebhardt-Seele was proud to have his students graduate from the 6-12 course summer course in Baldegg, Switzerland.

Lynne Lawrence, AMI Executive Director, and André Roberfroid had flown out especially to be part of this delightful ceremony, in recognition of the many years Peter trained students on AMI Montessori courses. With his retirement from active training duty now on the horizon, they were the last batch he has successfully prepared to go out into the 'elementary' world.

The bilingual summer course (French/German) in Baldegg has literally been the crowning accomplishment of Peter's work on AMI courses. Discovering Montessori relatively late in his professional life, he went from strength to

strength. After many years of work in Washington, Ireland, Cleveland and Kansas City, he rose to the challenge of getting elementary training off the ground in his native Germany. He offered a few courses under the umbrella of the AMI Munich Centre—going on to direct a much needed, well-attended and highly valued bilingual course in neighbouring Switzerland.

Although stepping down as director of training, Peter's interest in Montessori will not be pensioned off. We know he will continue to follow AMI's work with great interest, and we reciprocate wholeheartedly the warm feelings of connectedness.

Peter, enjoy your years ahead, together with your wife Heidi. You are a dear friend.



Peter explains to some students how you can "illuminate" the world.

5

Student Corner

Hadrien Roche is a recent graduate at the primary level from Chennai, and is currently taking summer elementary training in London. He is granting us a lighthearted and anecdotal look into his student life as an aspiring teacher, but we slowly see the true Montessorian emerge. At the moment, Hadrien is also volunteering in the preparation of the upcoming Montessori Congress in Chennai, India.

Talking about it

It's one of those times you wish you were a plumber. The last wedding I attended was terrible. When you make someone's casual acquaintance, very quickly they might ask the dreaded question, 'what do you do for a living?' (and, if you are in North America, the follow-up question is, 'and how much do you earn?') Now, if you are a plumber, the dialogue goes like this:

- So, what do you do for a living?

- I'm a plumber.

And that's it. You don't have to start explaining the psychological characteristics of the embryonic tap, or the developmental needs of the average 3-year-old drainpipe. When your answer is, 'I'm a Montessori teacher,' you know you're in for a good half hour of intense debating

and lecturing. It makes any social event a marathon of explanations that will range from half-heartedly dismissive, where you casually declare you're in alternative education, to excessively passionate, where you end up with your fist raised, screaming 'For the children!'

Granted, when you meet someone single and attractive, you might want to use the opportunity to shine a little and pretend you have an interesting job. But then you're faced



with the challenge of speaking about it without sounding either too pedantic or outright crazy (an attempt I miserably fail at each time).

There are quite a few issues when it comes to telling casual acquaintances about Montessori. It's a difficult topic to explain properly, it goes against the grain, quite a few grains in fact, and then we are faced with the problem of time available. We had a year to train, read and try to get a glimpse of understanding. Since we realize we're not going to be able to talk to people for a year, we are generous and aim for a 30-minute presentation on the beauties of the method. Most people only expect a 5-minute blurb.

And last but not least, it's a subject on which people have Opinions. Start talking to people about quantum physics, or the mating parades of koala bears: people generally don't know anything, don't care that much about it, and will listen politely to your educated ramblings. But not so when it comes to education. People know, people are experts. Their knowledge will be either entrenched behind years of parenting experience, or just too full of Common Sense, that dreaded enemy of science. Let's face it and allow ourselves a moment of arrogance: the average person, and even your average parent, doesn't necessarily know more about child development than about koala bears in love. We like to think that we do, that we studied, and read, and—in the case of our veteran members—have a lifetime of experience; suggesting to the laymen that they know little about a subject, on which they consider themselves expert, will rarely win their hearts, however gracious and courteous we Montessorians are.

So, how can we do it? Supposing that you WANT to talk about Montessori and stop pretending you're a plumber at every family gathering, here are a few tips:

- Keep it short, and use a few succinct statements: 'they don't do everything they want, they want everything they do', 'it's not a choice between development and knowledge, it's development through knowledge', 'when your child is 16, would you rather have her know her multiplication facts, or be strong enough of character to be able to say no?'
- If you feel there is opposition at hand, use very complex words to make it sound too daunting to allow contradictions. 'It's a method that is scientifically designed to holistically assist the children's cognitive

and psychosocial development through non-directive interaction with a prepared environment which enables an inductive approach to learning' is a good way to level the field before you can actually start to talk if there are any contenders left.

- Tailor the presentations of the infinite virtues of the method to whomever you're speaking to. No need to bother trying to sell your brother-in-law, a Wall Street broker, the merits of freedom of thought, where as reading and time management skills will get his immediate attention. Save the bit about saving the world and non-competitiveness for the art gallery in Berkeley.

The same goes when presenting Maria Montessori herself: she can be a devout catholic for your Baptist friends, a feminist, exiled by the fascists for your leftist acquaintance, or a strong scientific mind for the engineer crowd.

In the end, these little encounters, these little moments where you struggle and try to explain are quite important. Especially in a country like mine, where the average answer is 'Montessowhat?', all these discussions are little seeds that you send flying on the wind. It doesn't really matter whether or not the people you're talking to have fully understood what you're talking about: for one couple that will say 'I have to check if there's a school like that nearby for my children', you'll have dozens of 'sounds nice', or 'makes sense.' And that's okay, it's even a good thing.

The revolution we're all trying to realize will happen like all peaceful revolutions, slowly, but inexorably. It's all about ideas, about how people see things, conceive and imagine. By talking to all these people, I know each time I'm opening a door, a small one, that says, 'there is an alternative.'

When enough people consider an alternative viable, it becomes mainstream and accepted. We don't have to shout at anyone to convince them, just, little by little, create awareness. It takes a few trained individuals to open schools, but it takes a lot of sympathetic people to keep them running and make a global change possible. And remember, every time you want to raise your fist and chant 'For the children!', go and sign up for a refresher course.

Concentration and Collaboration

Children act in accordance with their natures, and not because of the teacher's exhortations. Goodness must come out of reciprocal helpfulness, from the unity derived from spiritual cohesion. This society created by cohesion, which children have revealed to us, is at the root of all social organizations.

- Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*



Montessori Events Worldwide

October 4

Paris, France

Celebrating 10 years of the AMI training centre
L'Institut Supérieur Maria Montessori
speaker: Mme Danièle Rapoport, psychologist
round table on the theme "the teacher and her training"
amf@montessori-france.asso.fr

October 10-12

Oxford, UK

"Observation in Education: Montessori's Approach"
Montessori Europe conference. Lynne Lawrence will speak
on "Observation, the cornerstone of Montessori Education"
www.montessori-europe.com

October 16-19

Baltimore, MD

Sheraton Columbia Hotel
"The Montessori Assistants to Infancy from All Perspectives:
The Journey from Unconscious to Conscious" Speakers
include: Judi Orion, Lise Eliot, Louise Kaplan, Paula Lillard
www.montessori-namta.org

October 24-27

Fairfax, Virginia, USA

Cosmic Education Workshop
A workshop for AMI teachers at the 9-12 elementary level
(AMI Heads of school welcome)
www.amiusa.org/newforms/cosmic_conference.asp

November 7-9

Westin Crown Centre Hotel

Kansas City, MO, USA
Public School Forum
For AMI schools and those aspiring to AMI standards
www.amiusa.org/newforms/conferenceRegistration_ps.asp

November 8 – 9

Toronto, Canada

Humberside Montessori School
Second Language Acquisition in Montessori Schools –
Theory-Research-Practice. Open to all teachers, assistants
and administrators. Speakers: Nina Spada – Professor in
the Modern Language Centre at the University of Toronto,
Sandra Giralto – AMI Director of Training, Toronto and J
McKeever – AMI Auxiliary Trainer, Milwaukee + Open Forum.
www.montessorisocietycanada.org

November 8

London, MM1

Being and Belonging – Supporting the Socialization Process.
AMI Professional Development Day
Speaker: Nikki Hughes, AMI Director of Training, Dublin.
Ireland
info@mariamontessori.org

November 13-16

San Francisco, CA

Golden Gateway Hotel
"Documenting Montessori Outcomes as Unique and Relevant"
www.montessori-namta.org

November 15

Paris, France

Annual General Meeting of the Association Montessori de
France. 14 00 hrs.
Gérard Berry, professor at the Collège de France, a leading
expert on information technology, will speak on the meets
and bounds of IT and how it can contribute to the
wellbeing of humanity.
amf@montessori-france.asso.fr

January 5-8, 2009

Chennai, India

26th International Montessori Congress
www.montessoricongress.com
See more details on page 10.

February 7, 2009

London, United Kingdom

Seminar on Language
Speaker: Lynne Lawrence. Sponsored by Montessori
Society AMI UK.
www.montessori-uk.org

February 13-16, 2009

Houston, TX, USA

Intercontinental Hotel

AMI Refresher Course

Keynote: Sir Ken Robinson. Assistants to Infancy: Judith
A. Orion, M.A.. Primary: Ginni Sackett. Elementary:
Phyllis Pottish-Lewis. Assistants' Workshop: Annette
Haines, Ed.D.. Administrative Workshop: Kay Baker, Ph.D.;
Mark Brackett, Ph.D.; Sue Pritzker, Mary Lou Cobb, Jim
Fitzpatrick. Parents' Workshop: Patricia Oriti, Pat Schaefer,
Mary Caroline Parker, Ph.D

A Public School Montessori Forum

Keynotes: Annette Haines, Ph.D., AMI Primary Trainer;
Cecilia Green, Associate Superintendent of School Leadership
Cosmic Education
A Workshop for AMI teachers at the elementary level- ages 9-12
AMI elementary trainers: Kay Baker, Ph.D.; Carol Hicks,
Phyllis Pottish-Lewis and Allyn Travis
ami-usa@montessori-ami.org & www.ami-eaa.org

March 4-7, 2009

Acapulco, Mexico

Hyatt Hotel

XIII Mexican Montessori Congress

(Most of the conferences are in English. The conferences
in Spanish are simultaneously translated to English)
For AMI teachers of all levels
betty30011974@yahoo.com.mx

March 13-15, 2009,

Vancouver, Canada

"Thinking Beyond Boundaries, the role of Montessori in
the 21st Century". Invited speakers: Dr Gordon Neufeld,
Larry Schaefer, Nicole Marchak, Phyllis Pottish-Lewis,
Eduardo Cuevas, Lynne Lawrence, and Angeline Lillard.
www.montessorisocietycanada.org

Montessori in the Mix

Ecuador

AMI has been approached by an anthropologist inviting us to help introduce Montessori education to the indigenous Shuar people.

If you are an AMI graduate living in Ecuador and interested, please get in touch with the AMI secretariat. info@montessori-ami.org.

Lynne Lawrence

Lynne Lawrence talked at length to Dennis Shapiro of La Jola Public School Montessorian. The full story can be read online shortly at www.jola-montessori.com.

The Power of Singing

Le Don du Choeur [gift of the choir] is a Swiss charity that sets out to help children in less privileged situations. Funds are raised by the choir, which includes children from private schools in Geneva. The theme is as simple as beautiful: children sing to help other children.

One of the new projects adopted by Le Don du Choeur is the establishment of a school that caters specifically for mentally challenged children (5-17 years). The Anbumalar school opened its doors last year and now caters for 63 children, of which 20 are orphaned. The school is located just north of Chennai. Because of its location, contact was made with the AMI training centre in Chennai, who at the moment are giving free professional development and Montessori orientation to a team of parents and teachers. The Montessori Centenary Committee of the French Section of the Swiss Montessori Society has also made a donation, to help realize this project.

Ever wanted to visit Amsterdam?

All year round we are happy to greet many international visitors, as quite a few people know that the AMI building in Amsterdam houses Dr Montessori's study. It is open to the public—by appointment!

Of course all our visitors are very welcome, but we were rather thrilled some time ago to have one of the stars of the travelling production of George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess" call on us. Remarkably, singer Jolie Brown has a parallel career as a Montessori teacher, and is a graduate of Hartford, CT. Why don't you follow in her footsteps and include a visit to AMI on your foreign travels?



Jolie – in the background AMI's unique wallpaper with Maria Montessori's portrait!

8

United Nations

Reaffirming Human Rights: Universal Declaration at 60

Sixty years ago the UN adopted a key contribution to world peace and development, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Now is a good moment to reflect on its influence, and consider what remains to be accomplished, especially for children.

The UN's site, where you can test your knowledge of human rights, has a special children's corner, with links to CyberSchoolBus, UNICEF: Voices of Youth and Animated Children's Rights. It includes Children's rights in cartoons (including a motto familiar to Montessorians 'children have the right to develop their full potential')! To see a video on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, read the "Did you know?" section or download a simple version. (The site includes Dutch, English, French, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese versions. www.knowyourrights2008.org)

To mark this 60th anniversary a special conference, organized by the UN Department of Public Information (UN/DPI), the NGO/DPI Executive Committee, Unesco and its NGO liaison committee, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the French Government, was held at Unesco, September 3-5, 2008. AMI was represented by our UN representative Evelyn Greenberg and Unesco representative Victoria Barrès.

The Conference aimed to highlight effective ways civil society, together with other partners, can contribute to advancing human rights at all levels by generating greater awareness of human rights issues and strengthening commitments worldwide.



Peace Salon, Paris, May 30-1 June, 2008

The 3rd International Salon for Peace Initiatives, under the auspices of Unesco, was held recently in Paris, highlighting work in France and abroad to break with the culture of violence. The event focused on enriching the culture of peace and non-violence, linking its multiple dimensions: justice, non-violent conflict resolution, mediation, human rights, environmental respect and development, disarmament, gender equality, etc.

Inaugurated by Federico Mayor, former Director-General of Unesco, and International Coalition Honorary Board member, the Peace Salon attracted more than 13,000 visitors and 190 exhibitors to workshops, theatre and film, as well as the International Conference, co-organized by the International Coalition for the Decade. It included 6 roundtables and 60 workshops about peace actors worldwide. André Roberfroid, AMI President, spoke at the opening roundtable with Federico Mayor and the Unesco representative. Special events highlighted the work of Gandhi and Martin Luther King to commemorate their contributions to Human Rights.

The Association Montessori de France (AMF), AMI and the AMI Training Centre of Paris partnered at the Salon. A special word of thanks to AMF, especially to Lynn Teale, for help in logistics and coordination. The stands had attractive posters and photos. Young parents watched “Edison’s Day” (a NAMTA production) attentively. Many viewed the Centenary DVD “A Montessori Journey”. Questions about Montessori education and peace led to discussions on social reform issues needed for a more peaceful society through education.

2 October: UN Day of Non-Violence

Are you going to do something at your school, your home, your street, with your family? Last year the UN voted a UN Day of Non-Violence in honour of Gandhi. The UN now understands that peace and non-violence need everyone’s support.

Contributions from AMI members included articles on conflict resolution, pamphlets and calendars on peace, and a simplified version of the Declaration in six languages. Children’s artwork from East Dallas Community School, Sweden and Norway, illustrated the children’s understanding of the simplified declaration linked to their daily lives.



André Roberfroid and Victoria Barrès at the stand in Paris.

AMI presented a well-attended workshop: Peaceful Environments for Peaceful Education, with Patricia Spinelli, AMI, Director of Training, Victoria Barrès, and Maria-Antonietta Malleo, Professor of Art History, University of Palermo and IFOR UNESCO representative. See: www.nvpdecade.org/english%20new/index.html. Related stories exist in French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

UNESCO

UN Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Non-Violence and Peace for the Children of the World (2001-2010). UNESCO is the lead UN organization for this UN Decade, as its mandate includes both education and peace. AMI participates in UNESCO/NGO activities, including peace and education. Last year AMI also joined the International Coalition of the Decade (15 international NGOs and 11 national coalitions) (www.nvpdecade.org), with seven Nobel Laureate Honorary Board members. In June AMI was elected to the executive committee. AMI also supports the campaign for a Declaration on Children’s Right to Non-Violent Education and to Education on Peace and Non-Violence. This Declaration would represent a lasting contribution to the Decade to promote peace and non-violence, and help children become actors of peace and non-violence. A workshop, sponsored by AMI and other NGO coalition members (Franciscans Int’l, IFOR, Pax Christi), was held at the upcoming UN/DPI conference.

26th international montessori congress

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



sādhanā
reflective practice, spontaneous living

Chennai Calling “Come to the Congress from 5-8 January, 2009!”

Prepare for a Montessori Congress unlike any other

Theme “Sādhanā” – reflective practice, spontaneous living
The venue Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai, India

The Programme

Plenary Sessions

During each session, in addition to having guest speakers address the delegates, there will also be presentations that augment the topic under discussion.

Breakout Sessions

Each delegate may choose to join any of the various breakout groups. These breakout groups are intended to operate/function at four levels:

- **Observation**
Delegates may choose to view various demonstrations by skilled practitioners and experts to get a glimpse of Sādhanā in daily life.
- **Participation**
Art forms and skilled everyday activities will provide an experience of the traditions from the past, still alive today. At these sessions, delegates may choose to participate in drawing of kolams (decorative floor patterns), stringing flower garlands, spinning, attending martial arts sessions and so on.
- **Reflection**
Readings from texts which highlight Sādhanā and reverberate with the theme of the Congress. Subsequent

discussions will be led by group leaders. The readings will encompass the works of educationists and social reformers from the past and the present.

- Panel Discussions

This will be an opportunity to meet experts and discuss matters of relevance to education and society today. The panelists will be eminent educators, AMI teachers and trainers and experienced professionals from various fields.

End of the Day

At the end of the day's plenary sessions, participants will be served dinner at Kalakshetra and treated to a variety of cultural programmes at the Kalakshetra Auditorium.

Speakers include: Dr. Mrityunjaya Athreya, Irene Fafalios, Sandra Giralto, David Kahn, Baiba Krumins Grazzini, Dr Krishna Kumar, Lynne Lawrence, Judi Orion and Jaya Row.

Find out much more from www.montessoricongress.com
The Congress is open to anyone interested.

AMI Head Office

Koninginneweg 161
1075 CN Amsterdam
Netherlands
Tel: (31) (20) 679 89 32
Fax: (31) (20) 676 73 41
e-mail: info@montessori-ami.org
website: www.montessori-ami.org

AMI is an:

- NGO represented at the United Nations (since 1985)
- NGO in operational relations with Unesco (since 1962)

AMI Branch Office

AMI-USA
410 Alexander Street
Rochester, NY 14607-1028, USA
Phone: (1) (585) 461-5920
Fax: (1) (585) 461-0075
E-mail: ami-usa@montessori-ami.org

AMI Board

André Roberfroid, President
Lynne Lawrence, Executive Director
Pieter van der Linden, Treasurer

Victoria Barrès, Sue Birdsall, Sally Connellan,
Peter Davidson, Silvia Dubovoy, Annette
Haines, Salma Imtiaz, Monte Kenison, Molly
O'Shaughnessy, Judi Orion, Mary Caroline
Parker, Christian Schjetnan, Patricia Spinelli,
Kamini Sundaram, Maria Teresa Vidales



The AMI Bulletin contains information and articles written for and by our members. The contents do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AMI.

Copyright © 2008, all rights reserved.

No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form without prior written permission of the publishers.

Design
Published by AMI
Special thanks for this issue

CO3 (www.co3.org)
info@montessori-ami.org
Victoria Barrès, Odette Cutullic,
Charlotte Elliott, Shannon Helfrich,
Fahmida Malik, Mary Caroline
Parker, Hadrien Roche and
Rita Zener.