

President's Corner

It is here!

A new school year! It is

a time of new beginnings or continued journeys. This year the board renews its commitment to serving Montessori in Michigan. We have outstanding seminars planned. The advocacy committee continues to work for recognition of Montessori excellence. We are overhauling our website to offer more online services and present ourselves in a more efficient and logical way. We are endeavoring to use social media to support good resources and innovative ideas. Our newsletter continues to provide timely and thoughtful articles we hope will be of interest and use to you, our membership. Through affiliation we hope to support authentic quality Montessori schools for the Michigan community.

We are working diligently to be useful, supportive and a true voice for Montessori philosophy. In serving our membership it is important that you tell us your interests, your concerns, your ideas, and your wishes for services. We need your input! We need your questions! We need your great ideas! Our organization becomes stronger and relevant through you!

We are looking forward to another engaging year. We hope to see and talk to you at the seminars. We offer our contact information because we truly would like to hear from you. So let's go forward as a united community committed to each other and our shared vision of education and the future.

My hands to yours,

Heidi Gauger

MMS
Fall
Conference
Nov. 4, 2017
8:30 ~ 3:30
Henry Ford
College

Michigan Montessori Board of Directors 2017-18

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MMEAN Update

Michigan Montessori Education Advocacy Network is working for YOU!

By Sue Fitzpatrick

MMEAN's Mission Statement:

"We advocate for the validation and advancement of authentic Montessori education in Michigan."

This group of passionate volunteers has been busy working on behalf of all of you in the greater Michigan Montessori community to ensure that Montessori programs are included in and protected by any legislation and regulation that will impact them.

Updates on work with Child Care Licensing and Montessori Teacher Credential recognition:

Recent communication from Mark Jansen, Child Care Licensing Division Director at the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing, Michigan Department of Human Services, regarding changing the licensing recognition of Montessori preschool credential, indicated that the law changes are expected to be made during 2018. Susie Hyatt, Administrator at Montessori Radmoor in East Lansing, who has been corresponding regularly with Mr. Jansen on our behalf, has offered assistance in rewriting the new law to assure that pre primary Montessori credentials are given equitable recognition by the Licensing Division.

Updates on the Revision of the Great Start to Quality PQA environmental rating instrument

According to Jill Claxton, the Interim Director of the HighScope CEEE (Center for Early Education Evaluation), "We have been really pushing to finish up the last few items of the revised PQA. We are presently organizing a pilot study that will begin in October, hoping we have allowed enough time since the beginning of the school year for classrooms to be operating in "business as usual" mode. We are looking for programs/classrooms that we can observe in to test out the new tool."

Over the past two years, your Great Start to Quality Montessori Working Group members gathered, submitted documentation and met many times with CCEE members, including giving them a tour of an AMI Montessori school. Our hope is to influence the revised PQA to reflect the high quality of Montessori environments in the rating scores and improve recognition in the Great Start program Star numbers.

*Our care of the children should be governed
not by the desire to "make them learn
things", but by the endeavor always to keep
burning within them, the light which is
called intelligence.*

~Maria Montessori

MMS Fall Workshop with Una Barry ~ Nov. 4, 2017

Relationships: the Cornerstone of Community Living!

"The child has a different relation to his environment from ours... the child absorbs it. The things he sees are not just remembered; they form part of his soul. He incarnates in himself all in the world about him that his eyes see and his ears hear." (The Absorbent Mind, p.56)

This surely, more than any of Dr. Montessori's words of wisdom, gives us our marching orders to ensure that the child's environment is optimal for his development. A crucial and overarching element of that environment,

encompassing the entire school community, is the relationships to which the child is witness. It behooves us then to ensure that the relationships with our partners on this journey - our assistants, administration, and parents - model a spirit of respect, honesty, connectedness, and generosity. Attendees will come away from this workshop with concrete guidelines on understanding and managing these relationships respectfully, positively, and proactively, ensuring the child as the ultimate beneficiary

Fall Workshop Presenter ~ Una Barry

Una Barry received her Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Primary Diploma in Dublin Ireland. She is a State Registered Nurse in Ireland and has over 35 years' experience working with children in various settings and with varied challenges. Una has recently retired as Head of School from the Montessori School of Greater Hartford (MSGH). Prior to taking on the HOS position, Una directed a Primary environment and subsequently became MSGH Program Coordinator. She has spent much of her career supporting

teachers in the classroom, supporting parents in their parenting, and working with boards on strategic initiatives. Una is an AMI consultant and has the pleasure of visiting many schools in that capacity. She serves on Montessori - related Boards, including The Montessori Training Center North East located in Hartford, Connecticut, and she is active in grassroots Montessori advocacy. Una speaks about Montessori every chance she gets.

MMS - What's In It For Me?

Individual membership and school affiliation in the Michigan Montessori Society helps you keep in touch with other active Montessorians! Networking with others committed to promoting authentic Montessori programs is vital to your professional growth. Don't miss the opportunity to join our vibrant organization.

- *MMS presents two professional development seminars every year. Members enjoy a significant reduction in seminar fees.*
- *A newly designed website is coming the fall! We continue to work on ways to make your experience as an MMS member more current and exciting!*
- *You can register for seminars and become a member online using your credit card.*
- *MMS publishes a newsletter online, posts job openings, promotes educational opportunities, and disseminates other helpful information.*
- *Because most MMS communication will be sent electronically, it is imperative that you provide us with your email address. Please be assured that we do not sell or share our electronic list with anyone.*
- *We have also assumed the important task of advocating for Montessori education at the State and National levels. There is power in numbers; your membership supports our efforts.*

The Michigan Montessori Society's objectives are to:

- *Broaden understanding of the Montessori method*
- *Encourage the growth of Montessori education*
- *Act as an information center*
- *Support existing schools*
- *Provide professional development*

In order to continue to receive these benefits and more, join MMS today!

Montessori “Elevator Speech”

Ever wished you had a brief speech that you could use to share your passion for Montessori with a stranger? Well so do we! For those of you that have a hard time condensing the Montessori philosophy and experience into something you can share in five minutes or less, we are offering two different explanations of what Montessori is. The first is reprinted from an article by Aubrey Hargis. This article stresses the philosophical aspect or core principles of Montessori. Next month, we'll share a “nuts and bolts” version, explaining the elements of the classroom. Hopefully, within these two articles, you will find something speaks to you so that you can craft your own five-minute Montessori elevator speech.

A philosophical approach by Aubrey Hargis....

1. We follow the teachings of **Dr. Maria Montessori** (1870-1952). She was a medical doctor, a teacher, a philosopher, and an anthropologist. Her progressive view of children was way beyond her time, and her writing is still very relevant today. Interested in reading some of her work yourself? You should! Try *The Secret of Childhood* for starters. Read more about her life and take the Montessori challenge for fun.
2. We understand that children of different ages have different needs and abilities. We study child development theory (for example, **sensitive periods**) and make sure that our classrooms and homes have developmentally appropriate activities and expectations. When something new is discovered about the growing brain, we are taking notes, ready to back it up with our educational practice. (More often than not, the research simply confirms the Montessori method!)
3. We **observe** our children. The child has so much to teach us about learning. By watching closely, we can modify our lessons and materials to best suit the child's interests and growth. We try to anticipate what the child will need next and make sure that this experience is available for when the child is ready to explore the subject or skill. We call this "following the child".
4. We believe that the **environment** itself is the best teacher, and we **prepare** it like a mama bird would craft a proper nest for her babies. Rather than dictating what a child should learn and when, we design the classroom or home to fit the needs of the child, rich experiences balanced by beauty and order. This takes a great amount of effort, but we are rewarded when a child enters and is inspired to learn. In a typical Montessori classroom, you would see objects in baskets, trays, or boxes arranged on a shelf attractively. Each work contains a purposeful work that is designed to teach a specific concept. (Pssst: We don't randomly select concepts to teach, remember? We base them on our observations of the child.)
5. We model **grace and courtesy** (good manners), treating our children as we wish ourselves to be treated. We use calm voices when teaching and speak with respect in regard to the children's feelings. We carry ourselves with poise and handle objects with care. We believe that the children are acutely observing us even when we aren't aware of it, and they will mimic our behaviors and attitudes. We know that humans aren't perfect, but we really try to bring out the best in ourselves.
6. We recognize that **children are unique** individuals who are not likely to master the exact same concepts or have the same interests at the same time. We celebrate this uniqueness and allow each child to develop at his or her pace. We believe that learning is a natural process that develops spontaneously. When we place our trust in the child, we are often surprised at the immense amount of learning that takes place through the child's interaction with his or her world.

7. We do not use rewards and punishments to force children to comply with rules or to combat ill behavior. We believe that each child is on the way to developing **self discipline** and that the rewards should be intrinsic (within oneself) rather than externally imposed. When a child misbehaves, we first examine the reasons why the child is exhibiting those behaviors (hungry? tired? overstimulated? testing boundaries?) and then we contemplate whether a change in the prepared environment would help or if we need to teach certain problem-solving skills to prevent another occurrence. Never do we use shame or humiliation. We try to help the child understand appropriate behavior in a social context in a gentle, firm manner.

8. We believe that children learn best when they are **free to move** their bodies throughout the day. Children have physical rights. They should not be constrained to desks. They should be allowed to move around in their environment, visit the bathroom as often as they like, and work in a variety of sitting or standing positions. We want to teach our children to respect their bodies and control their movements, and by allowing this freedom, we feel that this helps the growing brain learn more effectively. We encourage this independence, but also teach respect for others. No one's freedom should infringe upon another's right to concentrate.

9. We believe that the **materials** a child works with (one could just as easily call them "toys") should be **carefully chosen** to support the current developmental stage. With few exceptions, natural materials are preferred, and the works themselves should be arranged attractively on the shelf. Concrete experiences are always offered first and abstract thinking presented later, when the child has a firm grasp on the concept. Maria Montessori herself developed and sanctioned specific materials for learning that are considered classic and essential to a Montessori classroom. You might want to take a look at the pink tower, the moveable alphabet, or the golden beads. Oh, and yes, we call it work and not play. Really it's just semantics, so don't let it bother you.

10. To Montessori teachers, presenting a lesson to a child is an art form. For example, for the 3-6 age child, we captivate the child's attention by talking very little during the lesson and instead making our movements slow and deliberate. This allows the child to focus on our actions and remember the little details that may be forgotten if we were speaking at the same time. One of the classic Montessori lesson techniques you might want to investigate is called The Three Period Lesson.

11. We believe that education can change the world for the better. We are advocates for **peace**. The children themselves represent a "bright, new hope for mankind." We feel that the work we do as educators, guiding children toward self reliance and compassion, is incredibly important in the grand scheme of future life on Earth. How our children are treated as babies is going to impact our entire civilization when they are all grown up and making decisions that affect others. We are humbled by the great possibilities that exist within the tiniest of humans, and we respect their inner wisdom.

Still confused? It's okay. Montessori philosophy is as vast and deep as the ocean. Start by going to the beach. Feel the wind on your cheeks and listen to the waves crash. It's okay that you don't get it all at once. Then pick something to study. Starfish. Dolphins. Jellyfish. It doesn't matter what you begin with because the animals inside the ocean are interdependent. As you do your research, you will begin to understand the power of the entire system.

Welcome to Montessori!



International Peace Day Celebrations



Several area schools enjoyed celebrating peace day with parades, readings, art and planning a peace garden. Making World Peace Cookies is always a favorite activity.

World Peace Cookies

Legend has it that a woman brought a freshly baked batch of cookies out of the oven. As she did so, she saw her neighbor out working in his yard. The cookies were so tasty, fresh out of the oven, she was inspired to take a plate of the still warm cookies out to him. He was thrilled by these cookies with all their neighbors, we the name of her recipe to World Peace are baked around the world to celebrate UN



the unexpected gift and said, "If people would share could achieve world peace!" She immediately changed Cookies. A tradition was started and now these cookies International World Peace Day every Sept. 21.

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 stick plus 3 tablespoons (11 tablespoons; 5 1/2 ounces) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2/3 cup (packed) light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon fleur de sel or 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 5 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped into chip-size bits, or an equal amount of store bought chocolate mini-chips

Directions

Sift the flour, cocoa and baking soda together and keep close at hand.

Working in the bowl of a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or in a large bowl with a handheld mixer, beat the butter on medium speed until it is soft and creamy. (If you'd like, you can make the dough by hand using a rubber spatula or wooden spoon.) Add both sugars, the salt and the vanilla extract and beat for 2 minutes more.

Reduce the mixer speed to low and add the sifted dry ingredients, mixing only until they are incorporated – the dough may look crumbly, but that's fine. For the best texture, you want to work the dough as little as possible once the flour is added. Toss in the chocolate pieces and mix only to incorporate.

Turn the dough out onto a smooth work surface, divide it in half, gather it together and, working with one half at a time, shape the dough into a log that is 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Wrap the logs in plastic wrap and chill for at least 3 hours or for up to 3 days.

Getting ready to bake: Center a rack in the oven and preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Have two lined baking sheets at hand.

Working with a sharp thin-bladed knife, slice rounds that are 1/2 – inch thick. (The rounds often crack as you're cutting them – don't be concerned, just squeeze the bits back onto the cookie.) Arrange the rounds on the baking sheets leaving about 1 inch of spread space between each round and slide one of the sheets into the oven. Bake the cookies for 12 minutes – they won't look done nor will they be firm, but that's just the way they should be. Transfer the baking sheet to a cooling rack and let the cookies rest until they are only just warm, at which point you can serve them or let them reach room temperature.

Storing: The dough can be made ahead and either chilled or frozen. In fact, if you've frozen the dough, you needn't defrost it before baking – let it warm just enough so that you can slice the rounds; bake the cookies 1 minute longer. Packed airtight, baked cookies will keep at room temperature for up to 3 days; they can be frozen for up to 2 months.

In preparing for the construction of their Peace Garden, these children are placing flowers, butterfly bushes, bird feeders, a bird bath, peace poles and a bench where they'd like to see them placed after the garden's white picket fence is built.

Children's Place Montessori

Peace Day Festivities 2017 Waterford Montessori Academy

Social Justice ~ Montessori Style

The MMS Board would like to find out what community projects your school is participating in and highlight them. The following are two projects supported by local schools.

Patty Anton, who lived and worked in Montessori schools in Michigan much of her adult life, joined Three Mariposas Montessori School in Dominican Republic. With the recent devastation from the hurricane, we are certain her school that serves Cabarete, one of the poorest communities in DR, could use our help. For more information, <http://3mariposasmontessori.com/content/>

Another that is fulfilling her dream is Christy Snoke. She traveled to Central America to bring Montessori to children in rural Belize. Follow her at <https://blackorchidmontessori.wordpress.com/>

School Highlight – Montessori Children’s Academy, Sterling Heights

Please contact the newsletter editor if you are interested in submitting an article highlighting your school.

It’s a sunny September morning, and here at Montessori Children’s Academy, children are being escorted from their cars to the foyer of the school. The pleasant and friendly greetings of “good morning” and “have a nice day” can be heard as the parents drive away and the children begin to take off their outside shoes so that they can walk to their classroom. The custom-built brick building was constructed in the year 2000 and since MCA’s humble beginning in 1982, the school has been a lifelong dream for owners Jan and



Shree Malkar. If you ask them they will tell you the story of how they wanted to have a Montessori school for their two children, Shuntanu and Shona. Both children are now grown and oddly enough, Shona is the Elementary directress, while her three children are in the Elementary class and primary



class. Located in bustling Clinton Township, Montessori Children’s Academy **is the only AMI recognized school in Metro Detroit**. The building is situated on 2 ½ acres and



offers a spacious outdoor play area with play scapes, a vegetable garden, a bike path and open grassy fields. The various 5-day-a-week programs offered at MCA are for toddlers (18 months to 2 ½ year olds), Primary (2 ½ to 6 year olds) and Elementary (6 to 12 year olds.) Following the guidelines and standards of the Association Montessori Internationale, each class is fully equipped with

Montessori materials, has a diverse age group of approximately 24 to 30 students, has a certified AMI directress, a three- hour uninterrupted work period and is observed annually by an AMI consultant.



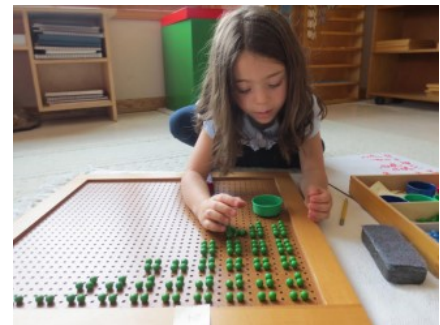
Each classroom has many windows to allow natural light to illuminate the room, and just outside each class is a bird feeder that draws a nice variety of birds like golden finches and red headed woodpeckers. The day will continue to go from loud to quiet as the children work through their work



flow and false fatigue. There are moments that can be captured if one is really watching where an older child is helping another or someone who has hurt themselves is being comforted by their peers. It is a harmonious atmosphere that is the essence of a Montessori classroom. By lunch time, everyone is hungry and ready to set up beautiful tables complete with tablecloths and small bud vases filled with fresh flowers that were arranged by the children. Once the tables are set, the children arrange their lunches on real plates and can pour themselves a cup of milk or a cup of water to carry to their table. In the toddler room, the



children each have their own pitcher of beverage and clean up their spots using wicker baskets to carry an item at a time. The elementary are perhaps the fastest to eat and go outside, but before they do, they all help to sweep, wipe the tables, shake out table cloths and take laundry and dishes to the kitchen. To watch the children manage the responsibility of cleaning up their spots is delightful.



The rest of the day includes recess, nap and a second work period until 3:30, when many of the children are dismissed. The children who remain for after care, eat snack and then enjoy the outdoors until their parents come to pick them up. It's like a well-oiled machine. It seems like each day is just like the day before. This intentional act is exactly what the staff strives to maintain - a consistency routine, one that the children can thrive from. Jan and Shree's dream of a Montessori school is lived out each day. As they have stated in their mission statement, Montessori Children's Academy is a place where you will find **"A community of joyful learners who care about their world, are culturally literate, and passionate promoters of peace."**



Your MMS Board – Meet New Member, Theresa Weber

A New Face on the MMS Board Brings New Experiences to Share

Theresa is a teacher trainer at the Adrian Dominican Montessori Teacher Education Institute.

Theresa Weber has been an educator for 39 years. She has a degree in education and her pre-primary certificate in Montessori. Theresa taught in a traditional school for 7 years and then started exploring Montessori when her children were reaching the preschool age. After observing Montessori through her children she started working as an assistant in the classroom and the next year began her Montessori training at Adrian Dominican Montessori Teacher Education Institute (ADMTEI). She spent over 20 years teaching and assisting at Brighton Montessori School and has been the language educator for ADMTEI for 9 years.



Although Theresa no longer teaches in the classroom she continues to teach adults and promote the Montessori philosophy.

Theresa lives in Brighton with her husband. They have three children and three grandchildren, with another soon to be welcomed into the family. She is thrilled that all of her grandchildren have had the benefit of a Montessori education. In her spare time she knits, reads, and spends as much time as she can with her grandchildren.