

Spring Workshop
Saturday, March 24, 9:00 – 3:00
Schoolcraft Community College
Livonia Michigan
<http://www.mmsoc.org/workshops/index.html>

President's Corner

Pat Moore

Dear Montessorians,

The Michigan Montessori Society Spring (MMS) workshop will be held on Saturday, March 24, 2012 at Schoolcraft College in Livonia Michigan. The morning topic will be Creating a Classroom Environment That Supports Self-Regulation. The speaker will be Kathleen Lloyd Ph. D. an Early Childhood Educator at Lane Community College in Oregon. She is very highly recommended by Montessorians from Oregon, where she has been a frequent presenter. Kathleen holds an AMI Primary Diploma, and her dissertation analyzed Montessori's observation of normalization in relation to current theories on self-regulation. Kathleen will discuss strategies that participants can use in their classrooms to promote concentration by the children in our classrooms.

In the Afternoon Dr. Lloyd will continue her topic with the infant through Primary staff, and Judy Cunningham will present From Peacemaker to Peacebuilder to the Elementary/ Middle School staff. Judy is the Executive director of Montessori Model United Nations, as well as Head of School of Oak Farm Montessori School. She will demonstrate how to use the Model UN to meet the needs of the Elementary and Middle School student. Please visit our website for more information and registration forms.

In addition to sponsoring workshops, the Society continues to serve our Montessori commu-

nity in other ways. This year, we have affiliated the highest number of schools ever! We have added a section on our website for affiliated schools' special events. While the website continues to provide world-wide access to employment information, affiliated school lists, and an informative newsletter, we have recently expanded communications, by adding a Facebook page. Search Michigan Montessori Society on Facebook and "like" us.

We always welcome your ideas. Please email us your suggestions and concerns at mmsoc.org.

Hope to see you at the March Conference.



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From Peacemaker to Peacebuilder

When most of us think of Model UN programs, we think high school and/or college students. Judith Cunningham looked at Model UN and saw a Montessori connection.

Judith introduced all of us to Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) in 2006. Since then the program has only continued to expand and grow, and as of next year, it will include a regional component for those who cannot travel to New York City.

MMUN aligns each of the basic needs of elementary and then middle school students with the ways that participation in MMUN meets those needs. Researching real-world problems, such as contaminated water or the plight of child soldiers, develops students' sense of social justice and a commitment to building peace. To learn more about this exciting program, please join us at the Spring Workshop on March 24th when Judith will do a presentation on this very exciting program.

Judith Cunningham is Executive Director for the Montessori Model United Nations as well as Head of School at Oak Farm Montessori. During her 34 years of Montessori work, she has taught at lower and upper elementary levels, served as Elementary Coordinator and Academic Administrator at various Montessori schools, directed the elementary teacher training program for MMTEC, and conducted teacher training (math and science components). She holds a BA in psychology/ sociology, M.Ed. in counseling and an AMI diploma from Bergamo, Italy.



Spotlight on a Board Member



Hello, I am Meg Fedorowicz – your newest board member. I have been a Montessori-ian for about 30 years and am still learning! I

took my 3-6 training at MECA-Seton in the 80s, and my 9-12 training at MMTEC in the 90s. I am currently taking my 6-12 training at Seton Montessori Institute (www.setonmontessori.org). I teach at Meadow Montessori in Monroe, MI (www.meadowmontessori.org) and train at the Seton Montessori Institute in Chicago. My work as a Montessori trainer has taken me to many a conference and convention in this country, as well as giving training in Cuba, Brazil, and Slovenia.

I have written a book, *Nurturing the Young Scientist*, which is a collection of physical science activities for young children. It is appropriate for 3-6 and 6-9 classes and is available through Montessori Services. It is a personal goal of mine to get every teacher to include physics in his/her classroom.

I am happy to be back on the board after many years. As a past board member I worked as editor of the newsletter. Now I am on the Communications Committee. The first thing the Communication Committee has done is to institute a schedule for each newsletter to include a bit of curriculum information. Look for Julie's article in this issue on Music and Movement. Next quarter I will be writing about Math. Future topics include Language, Cultural Subjects, Art, Classroom Management, Practical Life and the Sensory Motor Activities.

Hope to see you at the Spring Workshop!

Why Have Music and Movement in the Montessori Classroom?

By Julie L. Harrison, Primary Directress

"If you can Talk you can Sing. If you can Walk you can Dance." is how the Zimbawean proverb goes. Many of in our culture might argue that fact unless you walk into a Montessori environment rich in sensorial materials, where rhythmic movement and appreciation of tone is encouraged. In the Montessori environment, where rhythmic notation and the reading of musical melodies is a part of the everyday curriculum, you see a second language of grace and cadence. The children naturally flow from working with the square chains to playing the singing charts on the bell stair, from building the brown prisms to playing the clapping charts with a feeling of accomplishment and pride. This is my experience but do not take my word alone.

Maria Montessori wrote about musical education in *The Montessori Method* (pages 206 -207):

This must be carefully guided by method. In general, we see little children pass by the playing of some great musician, as an animal would pass. They do not perceive the delicate complexity of sounds. The street children gather about the organ grinder, crying out as if to hail with joy the noises, which will come instead of sounds.

For the musical education we must create instruments as well as music. The scope of such an instrument in addition to the discrimination of sounds, is to awaken a sense of rhythm, and, so to speak, to give the impulse toward calm and co-ordinate movements to those muscles already vibrating in the peace and tranquility of immobility.

Maria believed that the most primitive of instruments should be used to awaken a sense of rhythm in the child i.e. stringed instruments, drums and bells. Montessori wrote, At any rate, I believe that simple primitive instruments are the one best adapted to the awakening of music in the soul of the little child.

Maria asked a gifted musician and directress in Milan to perform musical trials and experiments with young children. The directress noted that while the children were not sensitive to musical tone they are sensitive to rhythm. The directress arranged simple dances and was amazed at how the children progressed from jumping and other harsh movements to disciplined spontaneous movement in everyday living. In Montessori's words, She now noticed that as she multiplied and repeated the rhythm exercises, the children little by little left of their ugly jumping, until finally it was a thing of the past.

Angeline Stoll Lillard's important work, *Montessori, the Science Behind the Genius*, touches on this topic in the chapter entitled The Impact of Movement on Learning Cognition:
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Michigan Montessori Society Board

If you are interested in serving on the Board of the Michigan Montessori Society, please contact Heidi Gauger hwgmontessori@gmail.com.



Invitations for Learning from Dan Hodgkins

If you have room for computers, you probably need more blocks....

*"The best multimedia, interactive environment is still the real world. Rather than expose kids to artificial minds that possess no human values or common sense, offer them the squishiness of mud pies, the scent of peppermint and the feel of balancing a block on top of a tower."
Jane Healy, Ph.D. Failure to Connect*

I was walking through an airport the other day when I was startled by a large billboard advertisement. It showed a very young child sitting on a mother's lap holding a laptop computer. The heading asked, "Is your child going to be ready for the future?" Does it take a computer to ready a young child for the future? The implication is the earlier we start a child on the computer the more ready he/she will be. Earlier doesn't mean better. We don't have children touch a hot stove so they will be ready for "hot stuff" later. We don't have children practice sexual activity early so they will be better at sexual relationships later.

Learning for young children goes from simple to complex and concrete to abstract. Early experiences for children need to include lots of opportunity for pouring, measuring, moving, building and manipulating.

In a preschool classroom I observed a young child sitting at a computer captivated by the screen. What struck me was how unaware the child seemed to be with what took place around him. During my observation the child did not interact with another child and was silent during his whole time at the computer experience. The problem with this experience was it did not provide the quality and quantity of crucial emotional, social and physical experience young children require.

Children are natural "manipulators" of the world - they learn through controlling the movement and interactions between objects in the world.

Before you add computers to the classroom, you might want to ask the following questions:

- Are there lots of blocks and plenty of space for building?
- Are there lots of opportunities to pour, measure, empty with sand and/or water?
- Are there opportunities for children to play with numbers using real objects, like playing cards, magnets, etc.?
- Are books in all centers, including the bathroom?
- Are there spaces for children to pretend, interact and converse in small groups?
- Are there spaces for children to use paint, clay and glue?
- Are there large spaces for moving, jumping, climbing and running?

If the answer is no to most of these you don't need to add computers....

Fred Rogers said, "A computer can show you how to spell hug, but it can't help you get those feelings."

For more information on workshops contact me at:

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or visit my website:

www.danieljhodgins.com

Music, continued



Movement and learning perpetually entwined in Montessori education. Beginning in the home or day care, infants sleep on the floor beds instead of cribs, so they can move around an entire room to explore and get objects. In Primary classrooms, children move to wash tables and trace Sandpaper Letters, to put large wooden map pieces in place, and play scales and compose music on Musical Bells. . .The possible examples are endless: In Montessori classrooms, learning is accomplished through movement.

My experience has shown me that there is no greater gift than to observe a child joyfully singing and working to perfection at a task. This joy is only compounded as I watch a child as she gracefully maneuvers through a classroom with the map of Africa and then successfully returns the map to its rightful place with confidence and peace, in a job well done.

In *THE ESSENCE OF MUSIC* by Matilda Giampietro (Music Director @ The Washington Montessori School in New Preston CT) Matilda says:

The essence of music is the expression and communication of joy, delight, sorrow, wonder, and the patterns and seasons of everyday life. People of all cultures use music and dance to express and enjoy being alive. We use music to mark important passages in our lives as individuals and as nations. We use music and dance to celebrate, to relax, to participate with other human beings in this great adventure we call life. The particular qualities and gifts of each culture are available to us in their music and dance. The simplest of good children's music contains these elements.

Matilda Giampietro further notes

A good Montessori music program today needs to include the Montessori Materials as well as all the singing games, dances and songs so necessary for a child to grow into his or her human potential. These riches are no longer a part of every child's (or teacher's) daily environment, as they were in Maria Montessori's time. I don't think she could have imagined the cultural poverty in which many American children live.

I share both Matilda's concerns and passion.