

MMS Spring Workshop
Featured Presenter: Cheryl Smith
March 28th
Macomb Community College

President's Corner

Dear Members,

I hope that you are using your membership to the Michigan Montessori Society to its fullest advantage. Remember that you are offered a discounted rate for our upcoming Spring Conference that will be held on Saturday, March 28th at the Macomb Community College Campus. Early registration affords you the discounted rate of \$45.00 which includes your lunch. For your convenience, you may register on line at <http://www.mmsoc.org/>

While you are on the website registering for the conference, please take the time to click on the advocacy link to find pertinent information regarding the State of Michigan Quality Rating and Improvement System which will have an impact all Montessori schools in our state. Representatives from your Michigan Montessori Society governing board have spent many hours in preparation to meet

with the State of Michigan to facilitate modifications in the rating process that will allow quality Montessori schools to score at the highest levels.

As always, we are happy to serve the Montessori community in Michigan with the hope that we will stay connected to all of our members.

Sincerely,
 Mary Lamos



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Ferndale Schools Opens Its Doors to Montessori

As part of our strategic plan Ferndale Schools is committed to maintaining a district of appropriate scope, that is small enough to care for the individual, but big enough to support quality programs for students, from preschool through graduation.

As part of this commitment, in the 2015-2016 school year, Ferndale Schools will be opening a 6-9 year old (1st-3rd grade) Lower Elementary Montessori Program.

The Ferndale Schools Lower Elementary Montessori program will be a high quality program that promotes the educational values, principles and qualities respected in the elementary field. This free program will connect with a target group of parents who support and understand the value of the Montessori approach and will run with FIDELITY in alignment with Montessori standards. A Montessori certified teacher with previous lower elementary experience



will be hired to lead the classroom.

“We know that focusing on the whole child - social, emotional, and cognitive will help gain academic achievement and promote child development for young children. Our program focuses on bringing in 6 year olds with a Pre-Primary Montessori background and families who are interested in the Montessori philosophy. This is such an amazing opportunity for families interested in Montessori or who have completed a pre-primary class to continue their Montessori education completely free of charge,” said Dina Rocheleau, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for Ferndale Schools.

Ferndale residents can visit the enrollment office or call 248-586-8686 to enroll in the program. Non-Ferndale residents who reside in Oakland County can apply now through February 18th for a guaranteed spot in the program. Students who apply after February 18th may still join the Montessori classroom however seats will be filled on a space available basis.

The Ferndale School District Lower Elementary Montessori Program will be housed at Roosevelt Primary School (2610 Pinecrest Ferndale, MI 48220). You can visit the school and learn all about the program during Ferndale Schools District Wide Open House on Saturday, February 28th from 11am - 3pm.

For more information on the Ferndale Schools Lower Elementary Montessori Program please contact our Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Mrs. Dina



Rocheleau at 248-586-8666 or email her at dina.rocheleau@ferndaleschools.org. For more information on enrolling in Ferndale Schools contact our Director of Public Relations and Enrollment, Mr. Bill Good at 248-586-8672 or email him at bill.good@ferndaleschools.org.

For more information on Ferndale Schools “like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ferndalepublicschools or visit our website www.ferndaleschools.org.

Spotlight on Schools



If you are interested in having your school highlighted in the MMS Newsletter, please submit an article with

a maximum of three JPEG pictures. Articles should be sent to kjlumsden@gmail.com.

Children's Place Montessori is located in Farmington Hills. It accepted its first class of students in 1985 in a church facility and built their present location of four rooms (2 classrooms, a multipurpose room and gross motor room) in 1991. The school offers two Montessori preschool/kindergarten classes and also offers day care from 7am to 6pm.

Because the school has children for the full day, the owner/director opted to provide a variety of environments for the children to experience throughout the day. The Montessori classrooms are occupied during mornings from 8:30 to 11:45 and from 1:00 to 3:30. The other rooms are utilized during the early mornings, late afternoons, during

enrichment classes and when the children are unable to go outside for play after lunch. The outdoor environment is a spacious acre with climbing apparatus, swings, sand pits, a bike path, soccer field and sledding hill for winter fun.

Enrichment classes offered are music, art, Spanish, yoga, gymnastics and dance. These classes are held during the last half hour of the morning classes and after the afternoon classes. In addition, the children prepare performances during December and June. The school boasts a very diverse student population and honors them with celebrations throughout the year. To show appreciation for the parents, the school has developed traditions of Mother's Day Banquet, Father's Day Bar-B-Que and Grandparent's Tea. The children and teachers are active participants in preparing the food for these celebrations.

This school offers an authentic Montessori program with a robust Practical Life/Everyday Living area and a wide variety of Montessori materials, both purchased and teacher made, in Sensorial, Language, Math and Science and Geography. While the teachers and support staff are all AMS trained, they've come from different training centers and educational backgrounds which have produced a rich learning environment for both students and staff.

Children's Place has a very rich music program thanks to the guidance of the director who is a former vocal music teacher. Music classes include elements of Orff, Kodaly, square dancing, ear training as well as singing. The children prepare musical performances twice yearly that are specifically written for their abilities. Past performances include Cowboy Trails, Santa's First Christmas, and last year A Tribute to Pete Seeger. In addition, individual piano lessons are offered.



The school has a warm, inviting atmosphere that many parents liken to an extended family. The school offers both an academic year program September through mid June and a summer program from mid June through mid August. Several field trips and a broad range of in-school presentations round out this program. The children that attend this Montessori school enjoy the benefits of a Montessori program as well as many extras that make childhood fun.



FERTILE GROUND

"The child, making use of all that he finds around him, shapes himself for the future."

"The things he sees are not just remembered, they form part of his soul."
—Maria Montessori

Memory commonly begins to take shape by the age of four or five—sometimes even later. Did you ever wonder why? I believe that the preceding years are busily spent on inner construction. Memories are built on this sturdy scaffold of experiential knowledge.

I have a 2 1/2 year old granddaughter and I have been able to observe, over the last year in



particular, the purposeful work that she is doing to form her future self. I see her beginning to come into consciousness with the world about her. Her beautiful little absorbent mind is soaking up every sensorial detail, filing them away to be accessed and connected at some future date with information she does not yet possess.

As Montessori guides, it is our responsibility to construct an environment rich in opportunity for these young ones. We want those gathered impressions to be the very best that they can be, rich in sensory impact. The prepared environment should be lush, with good music, plants, art, and light. The child's senses can be awakened in other subtle ways: a fur stole draped over the library chair, a lavender sachet in the peace corner, coffee beans and spices to grind in practical life, a fresh pine stump for pounding nails. Food preparation activities can provide opportunity to try new tastes and textures. Each new "exposure" in the 3-6 classroom may be that child's first, should it not also be the best?

Consider the Science area as an avenue to shape the child's approach to life. Montessori science

teaches children to gather information in an orderly way and to use that information to solve problems. Simple physical science activities, for example, help the young child to make sense of the world, by isolating one truth and encouraging repetition so that truth can be internalized. Early science experiments help to organize the child's world and crystallize specific and fundamental scientific facts.

The last, and arguably most important way that we can influence the young child's self construction, is through modeling grace and courtesy ourselves. Montessori emphasized that education, "is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment." Child of the Sixties that I am, I have finally accepted that I cannot change the world. However, I do believe that I can make a difference in my own corner of it. By demonstrating certain behaviors, we each are capable of shaping the fertile environments and providing the nurturing experiences that Montessori spoke of. That is possibly the greatest gift that we give to our students.

Our voices and tone, facial expressions, and body language can tear down or build up a little soul. We always have the opportunity to be the adults that we strive to be on our very best day- the role model with high expectations, who is also compassionate, encouraging and kind.

Spring is coming- go re cultivate that "fertile ground" within your classroom

Deb Herron
Teacher/Mentor at Alpha Montessori-Flint Michigan
MMTEC Staff (Sensorial, Botany, Zoology and Physics)
Owner Montessori Science Solutions

MMEAN Continues to Work for Montessori Educators in Michigan

In an effort to keep you up to date on the efforts of your Michigan Montessori Educators Advocacy Group (MMEAN), the minutes of the most recent meeting are summarized here. The group meets monthly in Brighton to discuss progress made thus far and strategize for the next step in their efforts on your behalf to support Montessori programs. The current rating system penalizes Montessori programs unfairly and does not recognize quality Montessori schools with the highest rating. The result is that authentic Montessori programs will be judged as inferior, giving parents the impression that Montessori is not the quality educational model we know that it is. Make no mistake, the Star Rating System will eventually impact your school. If Montessori schools are to survive and thrive, it is crucial that you educate yourself and become involved in the work MMEAN is doing to assure that Montessori education remains a viable option to children in the state of Michigan.

A legislative professional has offered to advise MMEAN on our advocacy efforts in Lansing. He will meet with the group at the March meeting.

A Great Start Readiness Program representative will meet with Montessori school heads to explain how to become a GSRP school. The meeting will provide an opportunity for Montessori advocates to ask questions about the process and also allow them to educate the representative about the elements that make up quality Montessori education. It will be another opportunity for Montessori educators to make

their presence felt. The heads of all affiliated MMS schools will be sent invitations to attend this meeting. GSRP schools are qualified to accept students whose tuition will be paid by the state.

In an effort to secure data regarding how quality Montessori schools fare on the PQA rating system (the system utilized by the GSRP), five schools are in the process of voluntarily undergoing evaluations. It is the opinion of MMEAN that quality authentic Montessori programs cannot receive the highest rating. The data that will be collected will verify our assertions that the PQA is skewed against Montessori philosophy.

The State of Michigan has turned over the responsibility of hiring GSRP school evaluators to High Scope, the organization that developed the PQA. It is unlikely that they will hire evaluators that are oriented toward Montessori.

Twenty-five heads of school attended the workshop on the QRIS and several offered to assist MMEAN in our effort to align the rating system with the Montessori curriculum.

At a statewide early childhood conference in November, Montessori educators offered workshops. There was considerable interest from the non Montessori attendees and it is hoped that more Montessori educators will offer to become presenters in these various workshops in an effort to raise the profile of Montessori education in the state.

Work on aligning the Montessori curriculum with the Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality continues. This effort will be extremely important when we meet with High Scope to be able to show that Montessori programs meet the standards set up by the state. Volunteers are needed to accomplish this goal. Please contact MMS if you are able to help.



The Spring Seminar is taking shape with just a few details yet to be finalized. Our speaker will be Cheryl M. Smith. Cheryl graduated from Xavier University with a M.Ed. and 3-6 Montessori certification in 1984. She began her Montessori studies under the guidance of Hilda Rothschild, who took courses with Dr. Montessori. Cheryl has served as Directress and Head of School in private Montessori schools in Ohio and North Carolina. She has been a presenter and guest lecturer for CMTE-NC and XU. She helped develop the public Montessori programs for Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, as Montessori Curriculum Coordinator. While Director of Professional Services for the American Montessori Society, she visited and was a consultant for private and public Montessori schools across the US. Five years ago, Cheryl returned to the classroom – her first love.

Cheryl has been described as a dynamic speaker by those that have had experience with her. MMS is indeed excited to welcome her to Michigan. The seminar will be held at Macomb College on March 28. During the seminar, Cheryl will discuss why Montessori is relevant today, why it is important and the hallmarks of an authentic Montessori program. She will also share some current scientific research that supports Montessori's philosophy. In the afternoon session, Cheryl will explore the common threads that tie us together as Montessorians.

