

Board Notes...from our MMS Board Member

Kay Neff



Protect us
all...
Wear a
mask.

Dear Members,

I volunteered to be the first member of the MMS Board of Directors to write an introductory newsletter message primarily because I wouldn't have to measure myself against my fellow board members, all of whom are amazingly is challenging enough to follow in the footsteps of past president Heidi Gauger and current president Karen Lumsden.

competent people. It

It is also fitting that I lead off because I am the longest-serving board member. This status puts me in the unique position of being able to look both backward and forward. I have served on the MMS board, with a short interruption sometime in the 1980s, for more than 40 years, and it is from this perspective that I can see both the progress we have made as a society, and the steps we need to take to remain a viable force in the greater educational community in Michigan.

My entry into the Montessori world was through the back door, so to speak. My older son, then three years old, was attending a Montessori school that closed suddenly in October. After a search yielded no other good schools in the area (and as most of you know, once you've experienced Montessori, nothing else compares) I hired the then-jobless teacher, found a space to rent, and started Dearborn Heights Montessori Center with nine children from the closed school. Through the years, we've added two satellite sites, along with day care, extended day kindergarten, elementary, middle school, and most recently toddler classes, but I have never taken Montessori training, trying always to maintain the parent's perspective that we began with. My editing skills, honed as a former high school English teacher, have come in handy as a head of school, and the countless Montessori conferences, seminars, and workshops I've

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attended, along with a Master's degree in educational administration, have provided a rich background from which to lead. But always—*always*—a trained Montessorian is needed to prepare the environment and guide the children.

Which leads directly to my current interest—advocacy for Montessori in Michigan. If you read the MMS Fall 2020 newsletter, you already know that a Montessori credential at any level, infant-toddler through secondary, is not given proper recognition in this state and most others. The advocacy group working under the auspices of MMS intends to see that changed. It is a slow process, hindered by personnel and policy changes in Lansing, but we are not giving up. Credential recognition is becoming even more important as Michigan's Great Start to Quality star rating system comes into greater use in the early childhood arena, and public and charter schools strive to develop quality Montessori programs.

Since my first days as a self-created head of school, I have seen MMS grow into an organization with which I am proud to be associated. Quality workshops and ongoing advocacy initiatives distinguish it for sure, but I am even more gratified to see a whole new generation of Montessorians who will continue the work that was started by those of us who are about to step off the stage. Bravo!

Kay Neff

MMEAN Update by Sue Fitzpatrick

Michigan Montessori Education Advocacy Network is working for YOU!

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.

MMEAN's Mission Statement:

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

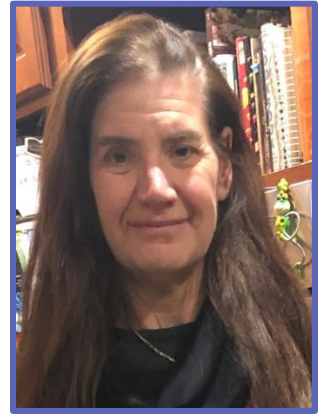
MACTE accredited Training Centers Are the Only Montessori Training Centers Recognized by the United States Department of Education

In our upcoming advocacy efforts with the Michigan legislature, we will present evidence and documentation on the rigors of Montessori teacher preparation. Our goal is to have the Montessori teaching credential recognized by the State of Michigan and to have it part of a credit process for Master's degree and/or incorporated into an alternative pathway for a Michigan teaching certificate. We are just beginning this legislative approach and anticipate it will be a lengthy process. It has been accomplished with much work in a few other states.

To be very clear, this recognition may only be given to Montessori teacher credentials obtained from MACTE accredited training centers. MACTE has worked hard to obtain this status from the U.S. Dept of Education over the past decades and recently was granted it again. This may be **the** pivotal piece to our success. Please keep this in mind as you consider your own career training or if you are a Head of School sending teachers for training.

Our new MMS Board member...

Denise VanPelt



My name is Denise Van Pelt. I began my Montessori career when I was a Montessori student myself. I currently work for the Grand Rapids Public Schools at Grand Rapids Montessori as a Children's House teacher. I have been working there for 7 years.

I began my teaching career at the Joliet Montessori School in Joliet IL where I taught for three years after obtaining my AMI diploma in 1996. I moved to Libertyville, Illinois where I assisted in opening the Alta Vista Montessori School in 1999.

I paused teaching to raise my children once my second was born in 2002. I briefly filled in at my children's school, Montessori School of Lake Forest, substituting and teaching the parent infant class. I was given an opportunity to teach at Our Lady of Humility where I stayed until my husband was given a job in Michigan in 2013.

I became familiar with the Michigan Montessori Society through workshops and quickly recognized the passion and dedication to the Montessori philosophy this organization holds.

I am now on the board and excited to help advocate for the Montessori pedagogy with the education system in Michigan. Working for the public schools in a Montessori classroom offers the unique perspective of how important our work is. I am hopeful I will be able to assist in having Montessori teachers and schools receive the recognition they deserve.

I currently live with my husband and small dog in the small town of Rockford just north of Grand Rapids. My children are now both enrolled at Grand Valley State University. I enjoy being close enough to the city to be able to explore the downtown area and being able to take advantage of the outdoors in both winter and summer. I especially enjoy being outside snowshoeing in the winter and paddle boarding in the summer.

MMS *Oh, the time's, they are a-changin'*

This past year has been a struggle for all of us...including your MMS Board. During our monthly virtual board meetings, we faced situations we never dreamed we'd encounter, but we worked together and have discovered talents we never knew we had. I'm sure many of you have had the same experience. "Necessity is the mother of invention." During this trying time, the Montessori community has been on our minds and I want to share with you some of our accomplishments. With so many of us cut off from friends and family, one of our first tasks was to generate a list of all the Montessori programs we could find in Michigan to be able to reach out to all Michigan Montessorians. It was a daunting task with every board member searching through each county in Michigan for Montessori schools, locating phone numbers, securing accurate emails and trying to make contact. Our goal was to be able to reach out to all of you, to welcome you and give you an opportunity to share in the company of like-minded people.

While the list was being researched and created, we began to discuss our plans for a fall workshop. Since we were forced to cancel the spring workshop, we were determined to provide our community an opportunity to learn and grow, as we have since the beginning of this organization. Our first virtual workshop on Practical Life and the Human Potential presented by Rosemary Quantara and Jennifer Nolan in November gave us all a boost in morale.

Our next effort was to create MMS Conversation Forums, providing a platform for Montessorians in Michigan to gather virtually and discuss matters of importance, or just to see some friendly faces and listen to solutions for the challenges we're all facing. Our first Forum took place in December, focusing on problems and solutions to meet the challenges of the pandemic. The second was in February and focused on the efforts MMS is mounting to make sure the concerns of Montessorians are heard in the state capital.

Our most recent activity was becoming a sponsoring organization for MiRegistry. This will allow us to sponsor Montessori presentations that will reach not only Montessorians, but all educators to help spread the word of what the Montessori philosophy is all about. While professional development hours that are not sanctioned by MiRegistry will still count toward your required annual hours, those that are certified through MiRegistry will count toward your star rating hours. Having the ability to provide Montessori oriented training through MiRegistry will be a great benefit to our community. Our first virtual mini presentation in February was a successful experience and we hope to be able to invite more of you to these shorter informative experiences in the near future.

We on the MMS Board have done our best to evolve to continue to provide services to the Montessori community. With the vaccine on the horizon and the hope of again meeting face to face at some point, we are proud of the work we've done to help you through this pandemic. But until that time, we're here, to serve you and help you, and through you, your students, to prosper through this pandemic. Let us all continue to invent new ways to help each other that will allow us to emerge from this experience proud of how we rose to the challenge.

What can kids do in music class

Ex.1



when they're not allowed to sing?

Our school was very music oriented. Being a former vocal music teacher, singing was a part of every day. Dancing, performing, learning to clap and play instruments together, and singing were an integral part of school life. When the news came that the virus was spread more easily through singing, a big part of our school schedule was cut. However, we are fortunate to own Kodaly charts (Ex. 1 & 2) from the last century, so when we couldn't sing, we focused on teaching the children to read music,

create rhythmic patterns and play **Orff xylophones**. ↓

Initially, we help the children learn to feel the beat in music. Using clapping, marching, stamping, patchen (hitting the thighs with hands) and snapping, the children begin to move together to the beat of the music. Using the charts, we introduce



simple musical notation that helps the children begin to read music. Although the charts are no longer available, they are easily replicated using **I**, **□**, **3** to create rhythmic patterns for the children to read. Assigning the syllables ta (tah), titi (teetee) and sh to the symbols reinforces their understanding of the patterns.

Ta **I** titi **□** sh **3** For example, **I □ I I** is read ta, ta, titi, ta. and **□ □ I 3** is read titi, titi, ta, sh
 . ta titi ta ta titi titi ta sh

All three symbols are given one beat each. For example, if you count 1, 2, 3, 4 with a steady beat and say ta, ta, titi, ta, the third beat has two equal syllables for one beat. Both examples above have 4 beats. The children also enjoy clapping the beats or using rhythm sticks to read the rhythms. Repeating the pattern on their knees, or tapping their toes, or nodding their heads allows them to create a movement pattern.

When introducing the rest, **3** I use the sh sound very softly as a rest is silence. In order for the children to grasp that a rest occupies space in time, instead of a clap, we put our hands out to each side, palms up.

Reading music notation is an enjoyable musical group activity that the children can participate in without singing. It's also easily transferred to an individual activity for them to choose during class time. Pre made rhythms can be provided as well as blank cards for the children to create their own

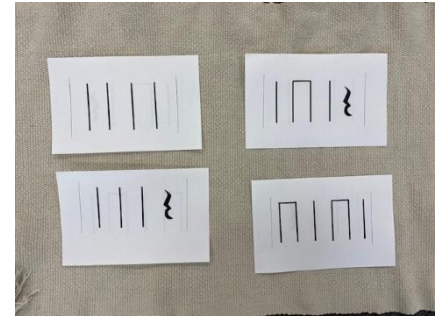
Ex.2



rhythms. I usually create 4 beat measures, although several cards can be put together making a longer activity.

Reading across, ta, ta, ta, ta, ta, titi, ta, sh

ta, ta, ta, sh, titi, ta, titi, ta



Echo clapping is a very simple activity that we often do as we gather for transitions. Initially, the most important direction is to make sure the children understand that they must listen first, then clap. First the teacher claps a rhythm (I start with 4 beats). I find that it is easier for the children to replicate the pattern if while I clap, I verbalize the syllables associated with the rhythm. Example: Teacher: ta, ta, ta, sh (while clapping) Children: ta, ta, ta, sh (while clapping) Teacher continues maintaining the beat: ta, titi, ta, sh Children: ta, titi, ta, sh. Etc. I find that ending each measure with a rest initially allows the children to maintain the beat more easily. After they've become proficient in clapping 4 beats, I add patchen (hitting thighs with hands) stamping, or snapping to the patterns (although usually only two different actions). Then expand the number of beats to 8. Echo clapping naturally leads to the children wanting to create a pattern themselves.

An additional musical activity we are able to enjoy is creating movement patterns using snaps, claps, patchen and stomps. Again, initially limiting the number of beats to 4, a child creates a pattern that the other children replicate. Example: Child claps ta titi, then stamps ta ta. Then the group, after observing the child replicates the pattern themselves. We also introduce the rondo form creating an ostinato (repeated pattern) that we return to after each child is given an opportunity to improvise his/her own pattern.

While this is not ideal for a vocal music teacher, it will carry us through until the children can again raise their voices in song and the musical skills they are learning will give them the joy of participating in an ensemble until then.

The videos below show the children echo clapping and creating a rondo.

[Click here to see a video of children doing Echo Clapping](#)

[Click here to see a video of children doing a Rondo](#)

Valentine Concentration Game ...with a twist...(and a treat !)

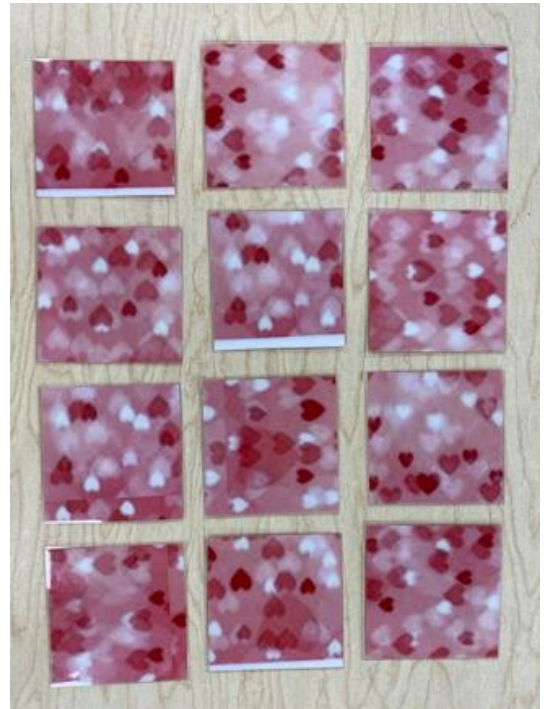
In addition to the many materials we provide the children in the Montessori classroom, we enjoy bringing seasonal work for them to enjoy. One game we recently developed adds a bit of excitement to the standard “find the match” game.

For this game, two sets of matching cards that are distinct are needed (different reverse and different colored borders for matching pictures).



..... Different reverse

One set is placed face up in a circle and one is face down in a grid.



The object of the game is for the child to match two face up cards that are adjacent to each other in the circle by finding their mates in the face down grid. This gives the children two

opportunities to “win” the prize in between the two matching cards. (for parties we might use candies, for classroom use a disk or other marker)

The first card they reveal shows them their first match. Then they look to the circle to determine which two cards are adjacent to their first pick and try to locate one of those two options. The children manipulate only the cards in the grid, but those cards are always returned to the same spot after revealing their picture. The cards in the circle remain untouched during the game. If a child turns over these two cards (see example 1), based on the above circle of cards, they would note where the images are and put them back face down. If they choose the cards in example 2, they would win the prize found in between those two cards on the circle and take the prize. The cards in the circle remain where they are and the two matches on the grid are turned face down as they may be needed later in the game.

Ex. 1



Ex. 2



The game continues until all the prizes are taken. This version of Concentration takes less time to complete allowing those children with shorter attention spans to participate joyfully. We have created this game for several holidays and the children never tire of it. While the competitiveness of “winning” the marker (or candy) may not appeal to some, we have found that the game actually leads to more cooperative play among the children as they are more than happy to give hints. The removal of the markers limits the length of time the game is played. If you’d like to create this game for yourself, please contact Kathy at Kathy@MMS.org and we would be happy to email it to you. You will need a duplex color copier and a laminator.



Spot the Differences

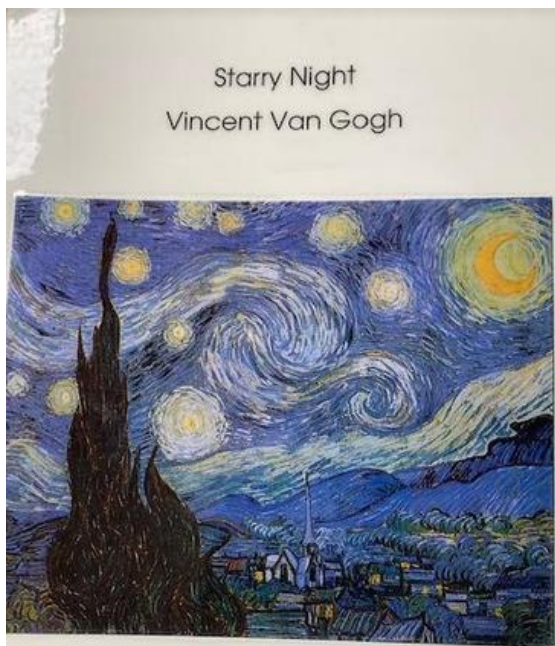


ART MASTERPIECE MYSTERIES BOOK 4

...a fun way to introduce art to children.

Spot the Differences books by Dover Publications expose the children to works of art in an engaging way. The pictures are presented as they were created and next to the original is a copy with subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) changes. We used these books to create a work for the classroom. (see below) The children use dry erase markers to circle the differences on the second image, using the checklist

above to determine when they've completed the task. The image in the center (bottom) is located on the reverse of the first page so that they can check to see if they have found all the differences. The laminated pages allow the dry erase marks to be cleaned easily for the next child's use. There are four different books available with a wide variety of artwork. Not only do these clever images expose the children to great works of art, they encourage the children to pay close attention to details.



Starry Night
Vincent Van Gogh



Can you find 9 changes?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



Spot the Similarities - Artists and Their Art

Several years ago, I purchased a set of cards with pictures of artists' works. There were two pictures by each artist that were similar because of each artist's individual style, but were not exactly the same. The child had to see the commonalities of the art to successfully match the cards. Later, I wanted to expand the activity a bit and so I found pictures (or paintings) of the artists and added a third picture of their work below their portraits to guide the children. The images of the artists along with their art card gave the children an understanding that these beautiful images were created by someone. It introduced them to the artist and connected them to their work.



MMS Standing Committees

Advocacy – Sue Fitzpatrick, Chair, Mary Lamos, Shannon Tyrybon, and Kay Neff.

MMEAN Sub-committee members are Susie Hyatt and Sue Cherry

Affiliation – Shawn Gasiorowski, Chair, Shannon Tyrybon, Erin Compton

Financial – Kay Neff, Chair, Mary Lamos

Membership - Sue Szczesny, Chair, Kathy Smoko

Newsletter - Karen Lumsden, Chair

Website – Mary Lamos, Chair, Kathy Smoko

Workshop – Mary Lamos, Chair, Sue Szczesny, Kay Neff, Erin Compton, Shannon Tyrybon, Theresa Weber, Cyndi Iannuzzi, Kathy Smoko

MMS - What's In It For Me?

Individual membership and school affiliation in the Michigan Montessori Society help 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 has launched! We continue to work on ways to make your experience as a MMS member more timely 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 level. There is power in numbers; your membership supports our efforts (see MMEAN articles above).*
- You will be notified when affiliated schools offer mini workshops that may interest your staff.*

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!



MMS Trading Place...For Sale, For Trade, For Free.....

Have something you no longer want, but think it could be useful to someone else?

Have something that you just can't throw away, but don't have a need for it?

Here's where you can avoid adding to landfills, might help someone out and possibly earn a little cash!

Here are the first submissions to our MMS Trading Place. If you see something you might be able to put to good use, please send an email to Kathy at Kathy@mmsoc.org. If you have something you'd like to offer in the next newsletter, contact Kathy.

Community Workers and their Equipment

This work provides pictures and labels of a variety of community workers with 6 pictures of their equipment. The pictures are color coded by the borders around each picture.

10 ml Lamination

You need not order the complete set, order as many or as few as you wish.

Worker Cards 3 ½ X 5

Labels 3 ½ X 1

Equipment Cards 3 ½ X 3 ¼

\$4/career or \$30/set of 10 careers

This is not used material, it's made to order.



Police Officer



Mail Carrier



These are older Nienhuis maps.



Europe Map \$5 or 25¢/piece



US Map \$5 or 25¢/piece



Africa Map \$5 or 25¢/piece



South America Map \$5 25¢/piece



North America Map \$5 or 25¢/piece



Asia Map \$5 or 25¢/piece

Dressing Frames 50¢ each -
Some need repair.

