

Board Notes...from our MMS Board Member

Cathè Calder

I'm back! For more than 20 years I served on the Board of the Michigan Montessori Society (MMS) before taking a hiatus in 2014. I served with some of the greats of Michigan Montessori – Pat Moore, Joyce Fruge, Ann Carson, Brian Campbell, and Kay Neff—as well as many others. I returned last year to find MMS as robust and meaningful as ever.



Spring
Workshop
April 22

Michigan has a plethora of Montessori schools, from very small one-room facilities to much larger schools. I am the founder and Head of School at Meadow Montessori in Monroe, Michigan. Our school, which is fully accredited from infancy through high school, is 38 years old. It is worth noting that Michigan is the ONLY state in the country to have a fully accredited Montessori school for every level.

My Montessori journey began as many of yours did—I just wanted to find a school for my children. As a graduate student at the University of Michigan, I was a teaching assistant lecturing in the Women's Studies department. This "gig" led me to other university teaching positions, so when someone suggested I consider becoming an elementary Montessori teacher, I scoffed. I saw myself only teaching at the university level.

Yet off to Bergamo I went for my 6 – 12 training in 1982. Who wouldn't want to spend a year living and learning in Italy? By 1984, I found myself opening a school with my dear friend and colleague Meg Fedorowicz. The rest, so to speak, is history—at least our history.

I could not have fallen into a more rewarding career. Where else can one teach some Asian history in the morning, play violin with students in the afternoon, be reminded of the importance of math and science in our every-day lives, and travel! This March I will find myself on a service trip to Tanzania with our secondary students.

The Michigan Montessori Society promotes the work that all of us do each day, and I am honored to work with amazing people once again. If you haven't taken the time to visit some of the MMS affiliated schools, please do so. Each time we visit another school, we become better Montessorians. Please know you are always welcome to join us at Meadow Montessori.

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MMEAN Update

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 and teachers are included in and protected by any legislation and regulations that will impact them.

By Denise Van Pelt

Montessori Public Policy Initiative (MPPI) is a joint collaboration between AMS and AMI/USA. As the experts on Montessori policy and advocacy, MPPI unites, supports, and equips the Montessori community, creating an effective advocacy voice for authentic Montessori education. MPPI drives education policy change so that all children have access to the gifts of a Montessori education.

The Michigan Montessori Education Advocacy Network (MMEAN) has been busy behind the scenes in the last few months. There are two key happenings, the first being about Senate Bill 1010. The second has to do with the Great Start to Quality Improvement Process.

Senate Bill 1010.

With the election in November, there were changes made regarding who is on the Early Education Committee. Due to the changes and the timing of the election, the bill did not make it out of committee and onto the floor. While this is not what we had been working for, we are not back at square one. We are currently speaking with senator Theis' office and other representatives to have the concept reintroduced. We are advocating for the teacher certification pathway. Now that it is the new year, Sen. Bill 1010 will need to be introduced to the new education committee. The bill may not continue to be referred to as Bill 1010, though it will not need to be re-written. The drive behind it being a pathway to state licensure certification will remain.

If you are interested in helping move this pathway forward, the first step will be to establish a connection with your state representative. We know that the personal connections can help make a difference. As the Early Education Committee begins to look at items on their agenda, we will present the pathway for state licensure and hope to have this proposal on the short list.

Members of MMEAN will work toward this and keep everyone informed about what can be done.

Great Start to Quality Improvement Process

The Great Start to Quality Improvement Process rating system is moving to deciding between two tools to use in classrooms and centers to best assess the quality rating to be established for Early Education Centers. The website, greatstarttoquality.org, has the information about these two options being considered. The two options present an important piece which includes the change of sites being able to set their own goals to enhance quality EC programs. The two options which are being looked at are of using either ECERS-3 or CLASS. Currently the state would like to know which is more ideal for Montessori schools. It may be helpful for a handful of schools to use both to help evaluate which would be better.

There are a few schools who are looking at both these quality rating programs to help determine which may be better to use within a Montessori school. Once these schools have completed the process, we will share their insights on both.

If you have any questions about either the pathway to state licensure or on the Great Start to Quality Improvement Process, please feel free to email us at michigan.montessoriadvocacy@gmail.com.

MMPI Essential Elements

By Denise Van Pelt

Michigan Montessori Educators Advocacy Network (MMEAN) is working closely with MMPI in our efforts to secure equitable recognition for Montessori teachers. This work is being done in connection with LARA and MDE. Recently, Michigan Montessori Society (MMS) adopted the MMPI Essential Elements as standards for Affiliate and Member Schools. This article examines one of the Essential Elements of an authentic Montessori program.

Montessori Essentials #5 - Instruction that primarily takes place in small groups (Elementary and Secondary) or one-on-one (Early Childhood).

In the Montessori classrooms, the teachers (or guides) have been trained and educated in child development. Using this knowledge, the Montessori teachers strive to guide students to discovery. Within the training, future teachers learn about child development, specifically Maria Montessori's four planes of development.

The four planes of development are an essential piece of Montessori training. The child and where they are developmentally determines how we approach the student and how we present material to them. We are told early within the training there are vast differences between each plane. It is for this reason we take into account what plane of development the students are on and consider what this means regarding how they learn.



In our training, we are shown in detail how to present a lesson to students. We note each step in the lesson, paying attention to everything. This means we not only learn what the lesson is, but we also learn how to demonstrate to the child how to manipulate the material. This process is very detailed from the beginning of the lesson, the interacting with the lesson, all the way through returning it to the shelf again.

In the primary or 3–6-year-old training, a key element is we are to show the child using our hands and not our voices. This permits the attention to be drawn to the material. We carefully demonstrate for the child the first lesson and the best way to handle the material. At

this age, the lesson is to be given to an individual child. It is very rare for this age to have lessons in groups.

Looking at the development of the child, between the ages of 3 and 6 the child is working on independence. The approach within the class is for the child to do this by accomplishing works by themselves. There are a few times when a whole group or small group lesson is appropriate, though these are the exception.

As the child grows and turns six, they move developmentally into the second plan. While they are continuing to work on independence, they now want to discover their place in the social





world. The shift in their development means we as teachers also need to shift how we demonstrate the lessons to them. For this reason, small groups become more common in the lessons. The concept of being a part of the group and being accepted is important to the child. The intellectual being wants larger more complex work, and desires to work with someone on these tasks.

As the presenter for these lessons, we are keenly aware of how many students are to be present for the lesson being given. We are also aware if the students need to have the

sole attention of ourselves, or if their learning would be best in a small group. These key differences are not just because of the material but the student's place in their own development.

Think of the triangular diagram showing the four planes of development Maria Montessori refers to in her writings.

<https://themontessorifamily.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/the-4-planes-of-development-2.png>

These stages must be fully understood by those who are a part of a high-quality Montessori program to permit the best learning for students.

As we think about the younger students, those who are in the first plane of development, they are forming themselves. These are the children who do best with individual lessons and who can be so absorbed in their work, they are not aware of things going on around them. The high level of concentration permits the young focused child to fully learn about the material in front of them. This also helps the child gain independence. Students in the second plane are very socially aware and are seeking out the why and how of things around them. These students who are in the second plane do best when working with a partner or in a small group.

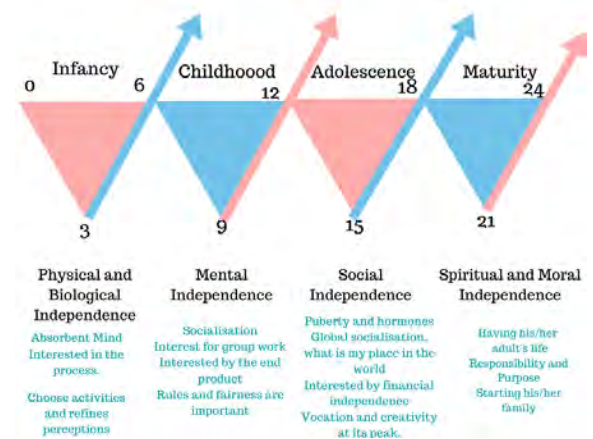
This giving of lessons is also one of the main distinctions between a Montessori program and a more traditional school setting. In the traditional school setting, the teacher is in front of the class, instructing students as a whole group, then for a brief time students work on the same task. In the traditional school



setting small groups may take place, but very rarely do lessons happen individually.

In the Montessori class, frequently it is difficult to find the teacher since he or she is at the child's level giving individual or small group lessons. It is only briefly the teacher is giving the whole class a lesson. For these reasons, when observing a high-quality Montessori program, the observer will see lessons being given to either individuals or to small groups.

The 4 planes of Development



MMS Spring Workshop ... In Person!!



Spring Cleaning: A Time to Reflect and Refresh With Shannon Tyrybon

MMS will be presenting our next workshop in person at Gerisch Middle School Auditorium, 12601 McCann Ave, Southgate MI. We are very excited about being able to offer Montessorians an opportunity to gather again and reconnect after years of virtual meetings and social isolation. The day will include a presentation (9 – 12), lunch on your own (12– 1:00), a tour of Montessori Center of Downriver and a time to reconnect with your colleagues (1:00 – 2:00). Our presenter, Shannon Tyrybon, is a qualified presenter which allows you to add 5 hours to your required professional development requirements. Registration begins at 8:30.

Presenter: Shannon Tyrybon MEd

Shannon has been a Montessori assistant, a Montessori lead teacher, a Montessori parent, and is now a Montessori teacher educator for adults. Her greatest learning experience has been raising her three children, but second to that she has earned her bachelors in psychology with a concentration in child development, her early childhood Montessori credential and her master's in education with a concentration in Montessori. She is the Early Childhood Coordinator and instructor at the Michigan Montessori Teacher Education Center where she gets to live out her passion talking about Montessori philosophy and child development with adults working toward earning their Montessori credential or training to become a Montessori paraprofessional. Shannon also consults and curates professional development for Montessori schools across the state creating workshops specific to each school's needs. She hopes you leave this presentation feeling inspired to continue on Dr. Montessori's legacy, and wants you to know that she would love to come speak at your school for a more intimate and specified topic. Please feel free to contact Shannon at shannont@montessoriedu.com



Montessori Center of Downriver

By Mary Lamos

Even on a grey January day, students at the Montessori Center of Downriver, in Southgate, Michigan, can be found enjoying their new playground. Purchased with the Child Stabilization Grant, the playground is the newest upgrade to this popular and longstanding Downriver school. The Montessori Center of Downriver has been serving Downriver families for over 30 years. Founded by Mary Lamos in 1990, MCOD began as a one-room 3-6 classroom in a church basement. The school continued to grow in population until it was bursting at the seams. While searching for a new location, they came upon a vacant elementary school in Southgate. A lease was signed, many hours of painting and repair took place, and the school moved into Chormann Elementary school, where they opened four 3-6 classrooms.

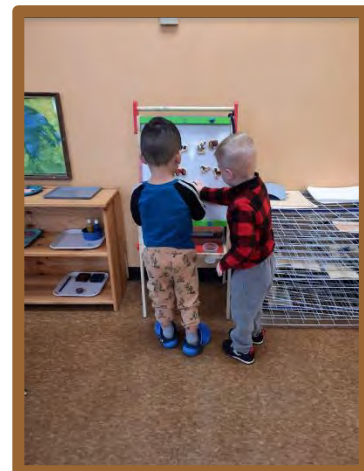


The new playground at MCOD



Toddlers enjoying books

During the time at this location, MCOD partnered with the Southgate Community Schools to transition its kindergarten graduates from Montessori into the public school's multi-age program. They were able to offer placements to special needs children from the school district's Early Childhood Development program and transition them into the Montessori 3-6 year old classes. This partnership continued and the Montessori Center of Downriver prospered. When the school district disbanded their multi-age programs and transitioned Chormann into a traditional public school, it was time to search for a permanent home for the growing school.



Buddies



Toddlers enjoy climbing, too!

A decision was made to construct a new building. The financing was put in place with assistance through the SBA 504 loan program, and construction began in March of 2007. With many hours of hard work by the entire staff, the school was move-in ready by September 2007 and opened its doors in at 15575 Northline Road. In the new building, they were able to open a toddler class and three 3-6 classrooms.

Now, in 2023, the school has two toddler classes and two 3-6 classes, along with many of its earliest staff! This high staff retention not only provides stability for the children, but also helps create a warm, family-like environment. And it's not just the staff that stays—MCOD is currently serving its second generation of families as former students send their own children.

After being awarded several rounds of the Childcare Stabilization Grant, the school has been able to make some needed improvements, including new furniture and materials and an updated playground, as well as continue Mary's commitment to excellence by paying for staff training. The grant has also allowed the school to offer free Friday lunches to all children as a way to give back directly to families. The Montessori Center of Downriver is looking forward to many more years of serving Downriver community families.



All the classrooms have an abundance of natural light

The 3 – 6 classrooms are very well-equipped.



The entrance of Montessori Center of Downriver

Black History Month

By Karen Lumsden

February has been designated Black History Month for many years. Recognition of the contributions of not only African Americans, but also of people of color around the world helps to inform all of us of the history and rich culture that is too often overlooked. Sharing the stories of the triumphs of spirit and perseverance encourages us all to set goals and work toward achieving them. There are many biographies available that are appropriate for all ages, however, I have found that sharing the highlights of the lives of individuals orally is more engaging to young children. In addition to stories, I've written several simple songs I teach my children as I've found that it helps them retain the names and associate them with the individual's accomplishments. This year, I created a matching work with the pictures of individuals and a short synopsis of their contributions. Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Charles Drew, Bessie Coleman, Phillis Wheatley, George Washington Carver, Jackie Robinson, Mae Jemison, Errol D. Collymore and Ruby Bridges are highlighted in this first set of matching cards of African Americans that have contributed to the betterment of our country. The songs celebrate Mae Jemison, Charles Drew, Rosa Parks, George Washington Carver, Jackie Robinson, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and Mary McLeod Bethune. I've included two of the songs below.



Rosa Parks (sung to The Wheels on the Bus)

The rules on the bus were just not right
Blacks in back, front for whites,
Rosa Parks disagreed, but did not fight
She just said, "No!"

Montgomery Bus Boycott then began
Folks shared rides, cars and vans,
Martin and Rosa joined their hands,
They just said, "No!"

After a year the boycott's through,
All can ride, every hue,
They gained civil rights for me and you,
They made it so!

George Washington Carver
(sung to Found a Peanut)

George Washington Carver found a peanut one day,
He discovered that the peanut could be used in many ways
Peanut butter, peanut oil, peanut soap to name a few,
Many products he developed, Dr. Carver, we thank you.

If you are interested in obtaining any of the information, the songs or the matching work, please contact Kathy@mmsoc.org.

Montessori Education Week ~ Feb 26 – March 4, 2023

Montessori Education Week is coming up Feb. 26 – March 4, 2023. Planning events for this celebration of Montessori's gifts to the education of young children gives us an opportunity to share her life's work with our communities. Many of you will create unique experiences for your schools and we would love to hear about them. We will offer a few suggestions here and hope that they may inspire you to produce an event that will be meaningful to your students.

❖ *Create a time line of Maria Montessori's life.*



1870
Maria
was born in
Chiaravalle,
Italy
on August 31



1882
Entered
secondary
technical
school



1890
Entered University of
Rome to study
engineering



1892
Entered medical
school
Univ. of Rome



1896
Graduated
Medical
School.



1896
Began working with
mentally
handicapped children &
worked for equal
rights for women



1898
Mario Montessori
was born



1902
Began
graduate study
in psychology



1907
Opened
Casa
Bambini



1913
Traveled to U.S.
Met with
Hellen Keller.
Thomas Edison
& Alexander Graham
Bell & his wife,
Mabel



1913-1938
Traveled Europe
& the U.S. giving
lectures and
publishing books
on her education
methods



1931
Traveled to
India to
escape
World War II



1936
Traveled to
Amsterdam
with her
son,
Mario



1949
Lectured on
peace.
Nominated
Nobel
Peace Prize



1950 & 1951
Nominated
For Nobel
Peace Prize



1952
Maria
Montessori
died in
Holland at
age 81



Casa Bambini

❖ *Focus on Montessori's goal of world peace.*

- Help the children ponder what it means to be peaceful.
- Describe the qualities that make a person peaceful. Discuss ways to become a peaceful person
- Create a peace pole using words the children offer as elements of peace.
- Using the word PEACE or PEACEFUL, have the children think of words beginning with each letter that encourage peace. Ex. P – patient, polite, E – empathy, encouragement, A – accepting, appropriate C – caring, considerate E – equality, enduring F – friendly, fair U – understanding, upbeat L – loving, likable
- Add to the children's "peace" vocabulary. Introduce words and concepts.
- Discuss "sounds" or "colors" that help the children feel peaceful.
- Help the children experience deep breathing to calm themselves and bring inner peace.
- Create a labyrinth for the children to walk through peacefully
- Create a peace "blanket" using a marker to write words the children suggest on a plain blanket. Could be used in the peace corner to give comfort to the children when needed.
- Explore the sense of touch or hearing to discover how it might provide a calming effect.
- Introduce poetry that encourages a calm, peaceful feeling.
- Share poems about peace and help the children create poetry about peace

Childrens smile,
Flowers blossom,
Sunlight shine into our window.
Smiles gone,
Flowers withered away,
Gloom fills the day.
Let's keep peace in the world,
So Happiness stays.
— Hua Jing

Peace *by Sama Elamin*

Place where there is no war and friendship that never
ends
Everyone is happy and smiling
All of the enemies become friends
Coming together and not fighting
Equal to each other, no differences.

❖ *Help the children understand that the materials they use were made by Maria Montessori.*

- Ask the children to identify a favorite activity in the classroom.
- Find pictures from early Montessori schools of children using the materials we have in the classroom.
- Explain how children have been exploring these same materials for over 100 years.

❖ *Write an article for your parents examining the importance of Montessori's gifts.*

"I'd Love to Work at Your School...

but I need health insurance!"

How often have you heard or said these words? Offering health insurance to employees often means the difference between being able to operate at a profit or a loss. We realize there's a need on the administrator's side to be able to offer a competitive package of benefits to potential employees and a need on the teachers' / assistants' side to secure sometimes life saving medical insurance. Michigan Montessori Society board of directors has begun to investigate the possibility of becoming or joining a consortium that would be able to provide its members with group insurance options that would be more affordable. If this is something you would be interested in / benefit from, please reach out to us so that we will have an idea of approximately how many members we would be able to bring to the group.



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.
- 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 Places...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, help someone out, and possibly earn a little cash! If you see something here 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 @ (313) 405-0668.