

Michigan Montessori Society

Newsletter

September 30, 2025

Helpful Links:

- [Michigan Montessori Society \(MMS\)](#)
- [American Montessori Society \(AMS\)](#)
- [Association Montessori Internationale \(AMI\)](#)

Welcome to *Michigan Montessori Monthly*, the monthly newsletter from the Michigan Montessori Society.

Stay up to date on all the important news and updates for Montessori in Michigan, the nation, and the world.

Have an article or topic you'd like to share? Please email it to us at info@mmsoc.org.

Upcoming Dates

Date:	Details:
NOW	-Become a Member -Apply to be an accredited or member school
October 1	Early Bird Registration for Fall Conference Ends
October 6	Meeting: Board of Directors
November 3	Meeting: Board of Directors
November 8	Michigan Montessori Society Fall Conference - Ann Arbor, MI

Message from the President, Karen Lumsden

As we step into a new school year, we're also excited to introduce a fresh format for the MMS Newsletter. At MMS, we are always striving to meet the needs of our members, and

we hope this new format will better serve and connect our Montessori community across Michigan.

Each new school year brings a familiar rhythm, but the energy of September is something special. In Michigan, this month is especially beautiful, and opening our school doors to welcome children into our Montessori environments is a magical and inspiring experience. The enthusiasm, curiosity, and potential that fill our classrooms this time of year are truly invigorating.

- Karen Lumsden

Fall Conference

MMS's Annual Fall Conference returns to Weber's Inn Ann Arbor on **November 8, 2025**.

Our key-note speaker, Rosemary Quaranta, starts the day with her Keynote: ***The Gift of Observation: Unearthing the Brilliance in Every Child.***

Breakout sessions (6 in the morning and 6 in the afternoon):

- Debra Gorman Cagle, *Breaking Bread to Bridge Cultures and Build Peace*
- Leann Chamberlin, *From the Classroom to Leadership: Building a Culture of Excellence*
- Courtney Gupta, *Empowering Early Childhood Educators Through Connection and Support (*)*
- Shenna Patel, *Supporting the Whole Child: Understanding Behavior, Sensory Needs, Trauma, and the Impact of Screen Time in the Montessori Environment*
- Rosemary Quaranta, *Exploring the Sequence of Montessori Math Materials for Operations*
- Carey Wendell and Erin Mallory, *How to Educate Parents About Montessori Philosophy (*)*
- Shenna Patel, *Supporting the Whole Child: Understanding Behavior, Sensory Needs, Trauma, and the Impact of Screen Time in the Montessori Environment*
- Chris Schoenherr, *Honing Effective Communication in the Classroom, Staff Room, Conference Room, and at Home*
- Teneka Thompson, *Culturally Responsive Peace Education*
- Kaela Wright, *The Absorbent Heart: Approaches to Infant and Toddler Mental Health*



*Repeated morning and afternoon

Vendors will be on site again this year. Lunch is plated this year with vegetarian options, and there is always time for networking with colleagues from across the state.

Registration opens at 8:00 with coffee service. The keynote is at 9:00, with breakout sessions to follow—morning (10:45 – 12:30) and afternoon (1:45 – 3:30).

Each participant will earn a certificate from MMS for 7.5 for professional development as well as MIRegistry hours.

Costs?

Early Bird by October 1st

MMS Members \$90

Early Bird Non-Member \$115

Regular Registration: October 2nd – 31st

MMS Members \$100

MMS Non-Members \$125

Late Registration: November 1st- 5th

MMS Members \$125

MMS Non-Members \$150

Discount registration is available to all MMS Accredited and Member schools.

By the end of the day, you will have learned, laughed, and possibly won one of our **raffle** items. Most importantly, you will feel reconnected with Montessorians from around the state.



Challenges

This year also brings significant challenges. Many of our schools are feeling the impact of a growing shift—families choosing to send their children to free GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program) preschools.

While we fully support Governor Whitmer’s initiative to provide free preschool for Michigan’s children, it’s important to recognize the unintended consequences. We are seeing an increasing divide, where families with financial means continue to choose Montessori education, while middle-income families are understandably drawn to the cost savings of free programs. This shift risks segregating access to high-quality, child-centered education.

Eye on Legislation

Through the efforts of our Advocacy Committee and MMEAN (Michigan Montessori Educators Advocacy Network), MMS continues to engage with policymakers to advocate for Montessori inclusion in public funding initiatives. While not all schools are feeling the effects of GSRP yet, many are—and the long-term implications are clear. As GSRP enrollment increases, we may see a decrease in daycare and private preschool availability due to lower enrollment, creating broader challenges for early childhood education providers.

We urge you to take action! **Create an impact statement for your program**—tell your story, share your data, and explain what Montessori education offers. Share that statement with your

local representatives and with MMS. Your voice matters. When we come together, we amplify our message and strengthen our collective advocacy.

Let's work together to ensure that **high-quality Montessori education is part of the "preschool for all" vision in Michigan.**

We Invite You to Join our Community!

Join the Michigan Montessori community through an Individual Membership and start building meaningful connections today!

FREE Membership is available for **all staff members** of Accredited and Member Schools —just ask your school administration to register you!

Individuals are welcome to join for just \$25 per year.

As a member of MMS, you'll enjoy:

- Professional and social engagement through our **Fall Conference** and **Spring Gathering**
- Access to valuable **resources** and **professional development opportunities**
- A strong sense of **community** with others who share your commitment to Montessori education

Your membership helps strengthen and grow a vibrant network dedicated to promoting Montessori principles.

[Join Us](#) and be a part of something meaningful.

Meet a New Board Member

Kristan Small comes to the Board of MMS from Wexford Montessori, Lansing School District where she has been an elementary teacher. The school is celebrating its 20th year, so congratulations to Wexford Montessori. Kristan brings the valuable perspective of Montessori in the public center to the Board.



Kristan completed her elementary training (6 – 9 and 9-12) at St. Catherine University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is currently a coach and (occasional) instructor for the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector as part of her work as the Focus Teacher and Grant Manager at Wexford.

Kristan describes herself as someone who is a strong advocate for teachers and Montessori education. In her own words, *I'll bring all that I've learned in Lansing to this new role on the Board. Having taught both conventionally and for the past twenty years as a Montessorian, I still find great joy in this work because of the commitment to lifelong learning that we all share.*

Wexford Montessori

What Goes Around, Comes Around — A Montessori Legacy Comes Full Circle



Twenty-five years ago, two young brothers, Desta and Soren Rudolph, walked the halls of Children’s Place Montessori in Farmington Hills. Like so many Montessori students, they were curious, industrious, and fortunate to be raised in a family that nurtured their natural instincts and desire to learn.

Fast forward to last summer, when those same brothers returned—not as students, but as leaders and changemakers. With deep fondness for their early years, Desta and Soren came back to the school that helped shape them. This time, they brought with them something remarkable: solar energy.

Desta, guided by his father and driven by a vision for a sustainable future, founded **Independent Energy Hawaii**, which has since grown into the leading solar installation company on Oahu. During the devastating wildfires on Maui, his company donated over **\$50,000** in materials and labor to help rebuild homes for those displaced—an extraordinary act of compassion and community service.

Their decision to install solar panels—**at no cost to the school**—during last June’s intense heat wave is more than just a generous gesture. It’s a testament to the values instilled in them during their formative years at Children’s Place Montessori: care for others, respect for the environment, and a belief that we are all connected.

Giving back has always been part of their ethic. And their story is a shining example of how the seeds planted early in life—through kindness, curiosity, and community—can grow into something powerful and enduring

As the old saying goes:

What goes around, comes around.

And thanks to Desta and Soren, it came back around in the most inspiring way.



Accreditation - New Name, Same Process

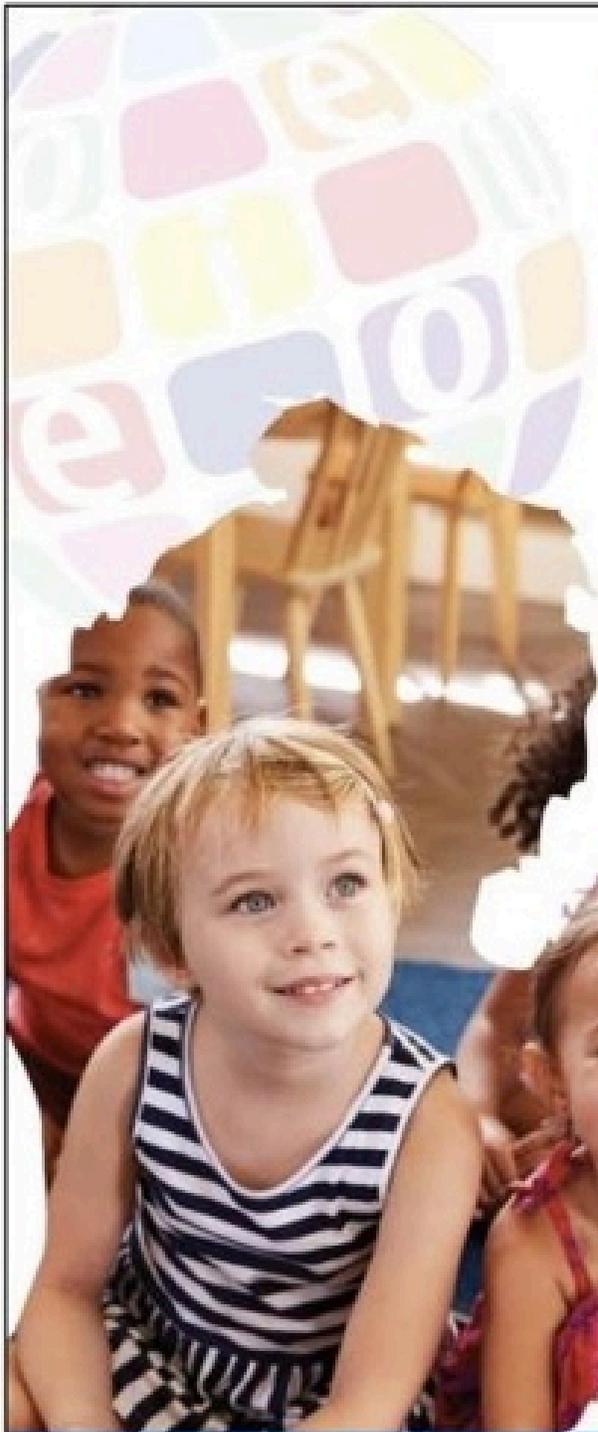
After much discussion, the Board of Directors decided to use the term accredited in place of affiliated for all schools that meet this important criterion.

Accredited schools meet all of the qualifications (<https://mmsoc.org/join/become-accredited-school/>) as authentic Montessori schools. Any school that is accredited by AMS or AMI automatically becomes accredited with MMS with application.

Montessori programs that meet the qualifications (<https://mmsoc.org/join/become-member-school/>), but only offer a three-day program may join MMS as a Member School.

So many benefits, not the least of which is FREE memberships for all staff members!
Be sure to reach out to us with any questions info@mmsoc.org.

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