



The Montessori

Responsibility

# OBSERVER

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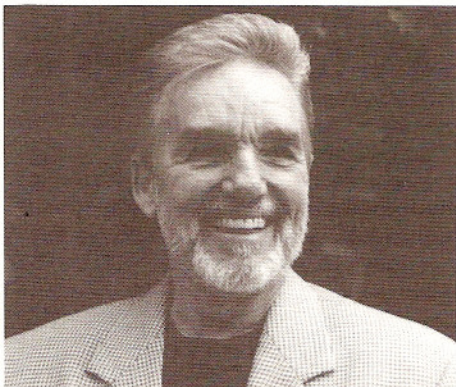
## John Bradshaw Appointed to Society's Advisory Board

In August, 1994, John Bradshaw, accepted the Society's appointment to serve on its Advisory Board — joining Elizabeth Hainstock and Dr. Orin Cornett to review and offer advice on the Society's work of expanding awareness of Montessori principles in the world. A noted author, educator and public speaker, Mr. Bradshaw is particularly well-known for his PBS 1990-91 TV series on "Homecoming" — an exposition of his approach of "healing the inner child" to resolve early childhood abuse and dysfunctional family relationships (see *Observer*, September, 1992).

Mr. Bradshaw holds a B.A. degree from the University of Toronto (1958) and M.A. degree in Philosophy (1963) from the same institution. As an educator, he has served on the faculty of various institutions, and has been a teaching fellow at Rice University (1969-72) where he completed graduate work in Psychology and Religion.

Since 1960, Mr. Bradshaw has conducted many lectures and seminars concerning behavior, motivation and the process of "healing the inner child". In 1981, he began to host a television series based on Erik Erikson's eight stages of man. Since then, he has hosted such popular TV series as BRADSHAW ON: THE FAMILY, BRADSHAW ON: HOME-COMING and others. He is also the author of three best-selling books based on the

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John Bradshaw, new Advisory Board Member



IMAC Advisory Committee meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland, July 14, 1994, clockwise from left, Dr. H. Kent Baker, Dr. Alexander Riddel, Pradeepa Lanora, Sharmini De Zylva, G.S. Pitigala, Dr. Jerry Duvall and Linda Rusthoven.

## IMAC Meetings Support US Government "Recognition"

On July 13-14, 1994, the IMAC Board of Directors held a series of meetings in Silver Spring, Maryland to further initial organizational work of this umbrella accrediting agency for Montessori teacher education. The Board specifically approved an IMAC initiative to secure official "recognition" as an accrediting agency with the US Department of Education — and to continue to oppose recognition of any "non-inclusive" Montessori accrediting agency, such as MACTE. In August, Lee Havis, IMAC chairman, submitted the official request for such "recognition" to the US Department of Education — and the process of approval is now set in motion.

On July 14, 1994, the IMAC "Advisory Committee" held its initial meeting — to discuss organizational procedures and receive preliminary reports from the various IMAC committees. Sharmini De Zylva presented to the committee a brief introduction to the operation of her Woodlands Training Centre in Sri Lanka. In attendance were Advisory Committee members Dr. Alexander Riddel, Jr., Dr. H. Kent Baker, Dr. Jerry Duvall and Linda Rusthoven.

The Advisory Committee agreed to support the IMAC effort for "recognition" with the US Department of Education — and to oppose any recognition of "non-inclusive" agencies such as MACTE. The Committee decided to schedule its next meeting again in fall, 1994 — to act on review committee recommendations concerning the initial accreditation status of current IMAC programs.

For further information about IMAC activities, contact: Lee Havis, Chairman, IMAC, 912 Thayer Ave., Suite 207, Silver Spring, Maryland, USA 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.

## Romalda Spalding

— In Tribute and Remembrance

The passing of Romalda Spalding on January 29, 1994 calls us to remember this great personality who contributed so much to education over the years. As member of the Society's Advisory Board since 1980 and author of the popular "Writing Road to Reading", she prominently expressed herself as a foremost advocate of a "phonics" approach for learning to read.

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# Responsibility

by Lee Havis

*"Woe to us, when we believe ourselves responsible for matters that do not concern us, and delude ourselves with the idea that we are perfecting things that will perfect themselves quite independently of us!... the profound question arises: what then, is our true mission, our true responsibility?"*

**Dr. Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 6

Montessori teachers must ultimately respond to fundamental laws of nature with children — to "control the environment, not the child". Since such a far-reaching task can only be approximated by our limited and imperfect human efforts, we must constantly ask "what is our responsibility?" in each new problem situation we encounter. While this indirect responsibility for children seeks to control only the child's environment, traditional education attempts to assume responsibility over the child itself — to mold its mind according to the demands of adult society.

## Mind of a Child

*"It is said that the mind of a child is empty — without a guide and without laws of its own. Adults, therefore, are supposed to have the great and complete responsibility of filling it, guiding and commanding it."*

**Dr. Maria Montessori**  
from *Formation of Man*, p. 63

Viewing the child's mind as essentially "empty" and "unguided", ordinary teaching attempts to directly control all essential aspects of the child's intellectual activity. In this way, the child is forced to abandon its own natural path of self-directed learning — to comply instead with the adult's own preconceived instructional goals for the group. Assuming the role of a creator, traditional teachers impose a god-like authority over the child's whole process of learning.

## Role of Creator

*"Adults...have adopted the role of a creator and in their pride have maintained that they are responsible for everything that pertains to the child. They make him good, pious, and intelligent...they refuse to admit that they are exercising any tyranny..."*

**Dr. Maria Montessori**  
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 152

Rigid curriculum requirements, group instruction, rewards and punishments all work against the child's own individual learning through self-directed interest. Within such restrictive conditions, the child must adjust itself to many forms of adult control and manipulation under the guise of "teaching". Such traditional teaching assumes a most formidable task to transmit cultural knowledge which is far beyond such basic skills as reading, writing and arithmetic — to influence the child's whole system of thought and action.

## Formidable Task

*"...it is the teacher who must form the pupil; the development of the child's intelligence and culture are in his hands. He has a formidable task and a tremendous responsibility."*

**Dr. Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 30

In their efforts to "educate" children, traditional teachers must necessarily deny and oppose the child's own natural plan of self-education. Through compulsory schooling and a vast system of government-operated and funded programs, such "education" has become pervasive and well-established in society. Nevertheless, the school as an independent social institution can offer an alternative to the repressive approach of control and prejudice towards children — to create a "new education" for the emergence of the child's true nature.

## The School

*"The social problems of the child and the adult are therefore integrated, but can also be separately considered, and the school bears special responsibility for the child."*

**Dr. Maria Montessori**  
from *To Educate the Human Pot.*, p. 120

Committed to fundamental laws of nature, Montessori schools seek to fulfill the true responsibility of education — to free the human spirit to fully express itself in the world. Guided by three underlying Montessori principles, (1) "Observation", (2) "Individual Liberty", and (3) "Preparation of the Environment", this new "normalizing" school follows the educational plan of the "teacher within" the child itself. However, such a Montessori committed program can only function effectively with the close cooperation of

parents — the human authority for children in the world.

## Human Authority

*"Parents today...abandon their children to social customs as if they were inevitable. No voice is raised in their defense, and yet if there is a voice that should defend them it is that of love and the power of love, the human authority of their parents."*

**Dr. Maria Montessori**  
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 216

Distracted by the many detrimental influences of modern society, parents need considerable support to meet their natural responsibility to care for and nurture their offspring. Montessori schools provide this parental support by offering a suitable opportunity for group activity — to

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The International Montessori Society is sponsored by Educational Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized in Maryland, USA. The Society's purpose is to support the effective application of Montessori principles throughout the world.

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## Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

### Group Disorder

A scene of group disorder with children can seem like a "little hell" where even the most determined efforts at Montessori teaching seem impotent and vain (see *Observer*, May, 1994). Distracted from one scene of violent chaos and confusion to another, the responsible adult may have very little idea of where to begin to "control the environment, not the child".

In such a "moment of peril", all the children appear as the "hub" child, and any communication or interaction seems to reactivate the "adult personality" — to simply make matters worse. At such times, the tendency to give vent to angry and impatient words of threat and coercion may seem quite natural and necessary.

When faced with such a "group disorder", the ordinary tendency is to respond to the "group", rather than some individual child — and this appears to be what is happening with the teacher here in this "moment of peril". When all the children seem as "hub", the best approach may be to single out any child, and offer some friendly re-direction or other form of distraction. If the chosen child "refuses" or "declines" to take direction, assume that this is now the "hub" child, and proceed to try another friendly interaction with another child — often, this will be most effective with a child very close to the first "hub" child. The focus of "work" may be nothing more complicated than sitting quietly to look at a book, cleaning up a table area or sitting next to the teacher for some simple body movement or singing activity.

Once the chosen "other child" takes a positive direction and begins to calmly settle down with some work activity, the teacher can get "eye contact" with other children, one at a time, calling them over likewise to sit close to the teacher to watch the first child working — or otherwise to engage in any type of friendly, positive conversation. As more children are brought together in some positive activity, the teacher can comment in a friendly way to draw attention to their positive behavior, and this tends to encourage any remaining "hub" children to respond in a similar positive manner.

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cultivate interests and encourage each individual child to work in harmony with others. In this way, parents and schools cooperate together to serve the higher purpose of the child's true spirit.

### The Child's Spirit

*"The master whom the teacher serves is the child's spirit; when it shows it's needs she must hasten to respond to them."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 281

Montessori teaching views the "child" as an "unknown entity" — a spiritual being that follows its own unique inner plan of development. To effectively "control the environment, not the child", we must therefore carefully distinguish this unknown "child" from its surrounding "environment". The teacher's first and essential duty then becomes directed to creating an effective "normalizing" environment.

### Teacher's First Duty

*"...the teachers first duty is therefore to watch over the environment...it's influence is indirect, but unless it be done well done there will be no effective or permanent results of any kind, physical, intellectual or spiritual."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 278

We apply the principle of "preparation of the environment" by carefully controlling and removing the detrimental influences in the "other children", "adult personality" or "physical objects" around the central "hub" child in question. We must particularly control the "adult personality" by thoughtful observation and inner preparation — to notice how our hidden defects and inner errors are constantly mirrored in what appears in outer form as the "child" itself. Before "normalization", controlling the "adult personality" can be most difficult when the child's outward behavior does not reflect that voluntary self-discipline and love of order we associate with its natural state of true "normalized" being.

### Voluntary Self-Discipline

*"...the staff must take the responsibility for maintaining order until the order of voluntary self-discipline is established."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *From Child. to Adolescence*, p. 120

Before there is voluntary self-discipline in children, we must thoughtfully respond to many forms of misbehavior — to control our most deeply hidden reactive tendencies and negative communication with others. We must then express ourselves with a very personal and positive interaction with children — offering activities and opportunities for real work as opposed to fantasy play. Only when profound concentration signals the beginning of "normalization" does the child itself assume a real commitment of responsibility for the well-being of others.

### Commitment

*"...the responsibility for one's own actions...represent collective efforts. The basic moral principle requires a commitment from the individual: the commitment of the individual to the group..."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *From Child. to Adolescence*, p. 19

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## Romalda Spalding

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Since 1931, Mrs. Spalding made her positive presence felt with children in the classroom, and later in the development of her unique "phonics" approach to reading. Spalding's "Writing Road to Reading" continues to provide a valuable support and resource for Montessori teachers and others who are seeking to simplify the process of learning to reading. For many years, Mrs. Spalding helped parents and teachers understand and appreciate the regularity of spelling in the English language in various workshops she conducted throughout the world.

Mrs. Spalding's work continues on today in the "Spalding Education Foundation", 5930 W. Greenway, Suite 4, Glendale, Arizona 85306. In a recent letter

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## Marketplace

**Montessori Materials Guide:** Have the most complete and up-to-date list of Montessori materials suppliers in North America. This premiere, 16-page publication presents 74 companies and the material types or services they provide. Mail \$5.00 for one or \$9.00 for two MMGuides (includes 1st class delivery). Send to: **In-Print for Children**, 2270 Mt. Carmel Ave., Glenside, PA 19038. Ask for a free In-Print catalog too.

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### Moment of Peril

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#### Negative Mind-set

4 year old Molly seems to always react with a negative mind-set towards the teacher's direction. Even brief "eye contact" from across the room is enough to spin Molly into a severe "power struggle" with the teacher — as she acts out her defiance against some unknown rage in her life. Despite the teacher's patient determination to keep a friendly, positive communication at such times, the "power struggle" escalates by Molly throwing objects and otherwise disturbing the physical safety of objects and other children. What to do?

Answer in November, 1994, *Observer*.

### John Bradshaw

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subjects of these shows, the latest entitled "Creating Love".

Mr. Bradshaw is presently national director of the John Bradshaw Center at Ingleside Hospital in California — an institution which deals with such problems as dysfunctional human relationships, addiction and drug abuse. For the past twenty years, John Bradshaw has combined the roles of author, counselor, theologian, management consultant and public speaker, becoming one of the leading figures in the fields of recovery and dysfunctional families.

Lee Havis, Society executive director, indicated his appreciation to Mr. Bradshaw for this important relationship of support and mutual cooperation. He stated that "I believe that Mr. Bradshaw's participation on the Board will provide a very useful avenue for development of our shared interests and concerns for greater normality of being in the human personality".

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"Normalized" children show a remarkable commitment to group order and harmony — an individual responsibility which freely cooperates with the collective needs and interests of all. As more "normalized" children emerge in the world, we can better recognize the outer form of harmony and balance between individual interests and those of the larger group. Likewise, these "normalized" children teach us how to accept our own responsibility for continuing skill development and "inner preparation" — to keep expanding our being with children according to the fundamental laws of life.

#### Fundamental Laws of Life

"One can find a reason for what happens basing oneself upon the laws of life..."

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *The Voice of Dr. Montessori*, p. 137

With discerning observation, we can ultimately find the reason for unnormalized behavior in children — following the fundamental laws of life to discover our various defective patterns of thought and action. We ultimately answer the question "What is our responsibility?" with children by our actions — whether we move closer to personally engage a disturbing scene of disorder or remain more detached and passive with a general scanning type of "observation" of the entire group. Since words such as "observation", "individual liberty", and "preparation of the environment" can only approximately guide our actions, we must constantly use all our faculties, intelligence, instincts and thoughtful analysis, to fulfill our ultimate responsibility for the emergence of the "normalized" child.

## Positions & Placements

**Executive Director:** For Montessori school and infant/toddler center. Teaching experience and background in administration preferred. Salary range, \$24,000 - \$30,000, depending on qualifications, plus benefits. Submit resume to: Search Committee, Happy Montessori School, 7360 Alexander St., Gilroy, CA 95020.

### Romalda Spalding

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from the Foundation president, Warren J. North stated that "On many occasions Mrs. Spalding mentioned her respect for Dr. Montessori. Mrs. Spalding believed she and Maria Montessori had much in common as far as teaching was concerned." Mr. North also indicated the honor that Mrs. Spalding felt for her participation on the Society's Advisory Board.

In remembering the special contribution of Mrs. Spalding to the Society over the years, Society executive director Lee Havis indicated that "Mrs. Spalding showed an intellectual interest and genuine support for the Society in many ways — encouraging our efforts with her considerable personal time and attention to our various programs and activities. I believe her good work will continue to inspire educators through her books and through the lives of the many persons she touched with her special dedication and interest in improving education and the process of learning of reading".