



The Montessori OBSERVER

TRUST

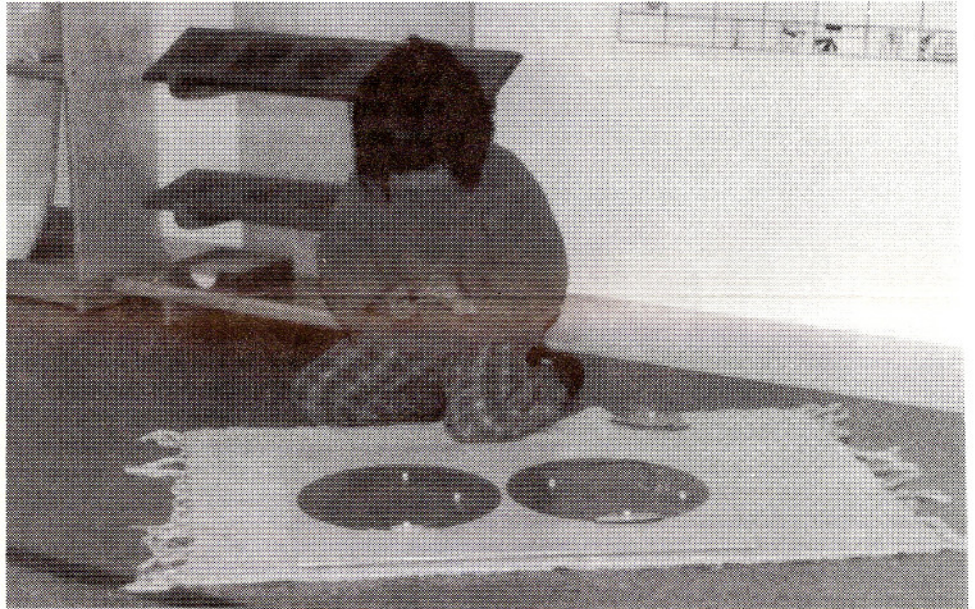
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Election Victories for Public Assembly

On November 3, 1998, elections for many public offices were held in the state of Maryland, where the *Maryland Public Assembly* has been actively working in support of public interest politics. Candidates who were endorsed by the Assembly and who were elected are: **Montgomery County, County Council**, Blair Ewing and Isiah Leggett; **State's Attorney**, Douglas Gansler; **Baltimore City, State's Attorney**, Patricia Jessamy, **Frederick County, State Senate**, Alex Mooney. These persons will now have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to service in the public interest in their respective elected offices.

Committed to Montessori principles, the *Maryland Public Assembly* has been providing a focus and support for voting in the public interest since its formation in

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Child working with map puzzle at the Ecole Montessori International in Montreal, Canada

The New Ecole Montessori in Montreal, Canada

In August, 1998, **Jeannette Kechichian** established the *Ecole Montessori International* in Montreal, Canada. This French-English bi-lingual school serves children aged 2-5, and will soon provide an elementary Montessori program as well. Ms. Kechichian states that the program has expanded its enrollment so much now that new teaching personnel must be employed, and larger facilities obtained.

Ms. Kechichian's extensive educational background includes a degree in education from the University de Lyon in France. Since 1991, she has held teaching positions in various schools in Lebanon and Montreal. In 1997, she set in motion her plans to open her own Montessori school in Montreal. She believes strongly that the "new education" must be made more widely available in her region, and that her background in both English and French will be very helpful in many respects.

The *Ecole Montessori International* offers a full-day Montessori program for children aged 2-5, which has been receiving a strong support from parents in the area. The program also includes bilingual French-English language development, after school care to 6:00 pm

daily, and swimming classes in a nearby YMCA facility.

In September, 1998, Ms. Kechichian attended the Society's "Creating the New Education" conference in Annapolis, MD, and is now coordinating registration and local participation for a similar conference in Montreal, Canada for the weekend of April 17-18, 1999.

For further information, contact: Jeannette Kechichian, *Ecole Montessori International*, 1432 Rue Poirier, St. Laurent, Quebec, H4L 1H3, Canada, tel. (514) 744-0606.

MONTESSORI CONFERENCES

Creating the New Education
Inner Preparation for Montessori teaching

Montreal, Canada
April 17-18, 1999

Louisville, KY
May 22-23, 1999

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
July 17-18, 1999

Singapore
July 24-25, 1999

Register 8 weeks before conference
date for maximum discount

The Society's two-day weekend conference employs group discussion, demonstrations, and analysis to illustrate Montessori teaching skills. Lee Havis, IMS executive director, leads the discussion committed to Montessori principles.

For cost and registration form, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel. (301) 589-1127.

News from IMAC

The *International Montessori Accreditation Council* (IMAC) provides accreditation services for institutions which conduct Montessori teacher education throughout the world. Programs in Namibia (Africa) and Singapore (Asia) are currently under review by the IMAC Generic Review Committee (GRC).

The *Headstart Montessori Training Center* in Namibia will be undergoing its first on-site evaluation visit in December, 1998. The GRC authorized this visit after

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by Lee Havis

"Immense powers are being entrusted to teachers, who cannot evade them..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. the Hum Pot.*, p.78

In this modern age, teachers are entrusted with enormous responsibility in the care and education of children. Governments everywhere customarily support a vast system of free public schools — trusting that their massive funding and compulsory attendance laws will somehow assure a higher level of learning and moral behavior in the next generation. However, since these efforts are essentially centered around a very limited concept of the child, we cannot really trust that such an antiquated education will significantly achieve its intended goals.

Antiquated Education

"...if education is always to be conceived along the same antiquated lines of a mere transmission of knowledge, there is little to be hoped from it for the bettering of man's future."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.3

Public education aims primarily to provide a uniform curriculum for all — the individual child being considered as secondary to the transmission of prescribed subject matter. Such an antiquated education prevents the child from fully making its powerful transformational contribution to society. So, we should certainly mistrust this type of educational approach — and look instead for a *new education* which will serve the higher purpose of the child's true being in harmony with fundamental laws of nature.

Mistrust

"In the vicinity of children, mistrust melts away...we feel warmed by that flame of life which is there, where life originates."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.264

Many parents and teachers have come to mistrust the typical public school approach of rigid group instruction, grades and teacher-controlled curriculum — choosing instead more child-centered options, such as home schooling, non-government education and tutoring. Nevertheless, a very traditional education has become well established in society over the years, and still commands a considerable loyalty from many. So, we continue to play out a dramatic struggle with children in education — reflecting a hope in the external world where issues of power and control are generally resolved

through such means as guns, war, prisons and police.

Hope in the External World

"We can thus place...no hope in the external world until the normalization of man is recognized as a basic social need."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.208

Society places its hope for social uplift in an educational system which is typically governed by many restrictive external laws and traditional practices. Such a traditional education tends to bend and mold the child according to the demands and order of a very limited social vision. With remarkable credulity, the ordinary adult still tends to believe that this conventional approach to the child will somehow bring about an end to such longstanding and deeply entrenched problems as poverty, ignorance and violence in society

Credulity

"Credulity is, indeed, a characteristic of immature minds which lack experiences and knowledge of realities..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p.233

Society has not yet come to fully recognize the underlying flaws and limits of ordinary education — preferring instead to sustain a state of credulity concerning its basic effect on children. By contrast, Montessori education offers the more visionary alternative of trust in the child's true nature; i.e., the normal child with its spontaneous self-discipline and harmony with the entire environment. However, this Montessori vision of normal being remains hidden by the popular view of the child as weak, dependent and fanciful — an entity which must be held in check within a constant state of fear.

State of Fear

"...people...take advantage of this state of fear aroused in the child, in order to obtain obedience by threatening the child."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 21st November 1941, p.6

Traditional teachers lack the experience or preparation to look for normal being in the child, and so they tend to teach through fear, threat and manipulation. Such traditional education trusts essentially in a state of fear with children — to force their compliance with the many demands of the teacher's authority and control in the classroom. By contrast, Montessori teaching trusts in a *new education* which aims to discover and free the

child's true nature for full expression in the world.

New Education

"A new education from birth onward must be reconstructed and based on the laws of nature and not on the preconceived notions and prejudices of adult society."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.97

Dr. Montessori's *new education* is radically distinct from the traditional approach of control and manipulation of the child — seeking instead to "control the environment, not the child". This new way of being trusts such fundamental natural laws as (1) "Observation", (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation"
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Look for the
March, 1999 Observer
featuring
STRENGTH

The Montessori Observer
ISSN 0889-5643
published by
INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY
912 Thayer Ave., Suite 207
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Tel. (301) 589-1127 • e-mail: havis@erols.com
Worldwide Web:
<http://www.wdn.com/trust/ims>
Lee Havis, Executive Director

The *Montessori Observer* is mailed four times each year, in March, May, September and November, to Society members throughout the world. The purpose is to provide news and information about the Society's work in Montessori education, and to extend awareness of Montessori principles throughout the world.

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY
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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ADVERTISING
Advertising space is available for services and products relating to Montessori education. Market-place ads are \$7/line. Position and placement ads are \$20 each and will be set and edited by the Society to conform to space requirements. Write for the Society's advertising outline for details about design advertising rates.

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Picking, Poking and Pushing

The teacher here has repeatedly tried to re-direct three year old Richard away from his habitual pattern of picking, poking and pushing other children and objects in the environment (See *Observer*, September, 1998). However, she has failed to achieve any long term success with her efforts to "control the environment, not the child".

In this *moment of peril*, the detrimental influences around Richard may be "physical objects" or "other children", as well as the "adult personality". The rule of thumb here is to control the "physical object" first, if this is involved — perhaps to touch or hold it lightly to get the child's attention. Then, the teacher can offer some positive verbal re-direction — to gently lead Richard away to a more suitable activity elsewhere.

If Richard seems unable to handle any object without a destructive result, the teacher may offer a simple finger play or hand movement — to help the child acquire some basic control and awareness over his body. Perhaps an exercise like careful walking would also help focus Richard's attention to his body.

To remove the detrimental influence of the "adult personality" is more delicate, and certainly will involve some thoughtful inner preparation — to notice and control any words or action of the teacher that bring negative attention to the matter at issue in the situation. The teacher must provide the most positive and persistent communication possible in each situation.

In time, the child's own "teacher within" will call Richard to more attentive, goal-directed activity. Then the picking, poking and pushing activity will disappear, as he returns to his normal state of calm and orderly behavior in the environment.

Fight for Control

Two year old Mary and 4 year old Janet seem to constantly seek out the same object — to ultimately fight over its control in a constant battle for possession. The teacher has been dealing with this fight for control between Mary and Janet by offering herself in the friendly role of mediator. However, Mary's limited physical strength and lack of verbal skills prevent her from engaging fairly with Janet, who usually ends up grabbing the object from Mary's hands. Then Mary cries for help from the teacher. What to do?

Answer in *Observer*, March, 1999

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of the Environment". These three Montessori principles can provide a most reliable inner guidance for the teacher's actions with children from one moment to the next.

Reliable Guidance

"Reliable guidance, and the possibility of checking as we go, are the indispensable conditions for getting anywhere."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.227

Infinite and eternal laws of nature can reliably guide us along a path that will ultimately reveal the reality of the child's true normal nature. This new path of inner preparation challenges us to extend our understanding of the child beyond the prejudicial expectations of our immediate knowledge — to trust in the ultimate perfection of the entire interrelated functioning of the universe. Such a cosmic education allows us to resolve problems with children by expanding our awareness of Montessori principles until the child finally emerges in its ultimate state of true normality.

Cosmic Education

"...all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity...This plan of cosmic education...is received with joy by the child who has been prepared for it in the Montessori school."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. the Hum. Pot.*, p.8-10

Montessori teaching applies such principles as "observation" to see the child's true spirit which is beyond the immediate outward reality of some particular form of misbehavior. This type of cosmic approach allows us to relate the child's actions with those of our own — to gradually discover and resolve our unknown inner errors which are blocking the emergence of the *normalized* child. Montessori teaching therefore does not rest on such external symbols as certification and materials, but rather on our faith in infinite and eternal laws of nature.

Faith

"...the Montessori teacher...must have faith in the child who will reveal himself through work"

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. for a New World*, p.67

The Montessori teacher can trust the child to reveal its true nature as we apply Montessori principles in the environment. With practice and experience, we can develop a real faith in the normalization of the child that will arise from its profound concentration on some object of particular interest. We can likewise come to trust in

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Montessori Observer, November, 1998

Election Victories

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1997. It has pursued this purpose by endorsing candidate and providing information to guide voters in making a proper choice in the elections.

After candidates were endorsed in open meetings around the state in summer, 1998, the Assembly circulated its list of endorsed candidates as widely as possible. Press releases were distributed to the news media and several articles appeared — bringing positive attention to the Assembly and its endorsed candidates. Volunteer help on election day was also provided to endorsed candidates.

Lee Havis, Chairperson of the Assembly, stated that this first election cycle has demonstrated some considerable strength and viability to the Assembly's work in the electoral process. He stated "we have now shown that it is possible to put into practice the concept of commitment to public interest in politics. Our message resonated with many candidates who later included a notice of our endorsement in their printed campaign literature to the general public. Some also expressed interest in printing and distributing a sample ballot with other endorsed candidates. I believe that these hopeful initial efforts will bear fruit in future elections where we can build on the strength of our current position in the community."

Havis indicated that the Assembly now plans to analyze the electoral results and help focus attention on issues and strategies for more successful results in the future. He stated that "education is one important area of local and state concern — and there is much reform that is needed in the laws and regulation. I hope we can encourage candidates to take a bolder position in support of greater freedom of expression and opportunity for competition and choice in this critical field."

For further information about the Assembly, write or call: Lee Havis, Chairperson, Maryland Public Assembly, 912 Thayer Ave., #205, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Tel. (301) 589-0733.

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the child's own deep inner sensibilities for normal growth — to assure for itself a real harmony with the entire environment.

Deep Sensibilities

"The child...grows by means of ... experiences led by deep sensibilities, they are ruled by vital laws."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Voice**, 19 Nov. 1941, p. a

Deep inner sensibilities guide the child to intelligently explore its environment, and achieve a true harmony and complete integration of its personality. The practice of Montessori teaching helps us trust this guiding teacher within the child — to experience the truth of the *normalized* child with its spontaneous self-discipline, order and precocious intelligence. Then we will see in the child a remarkable level of self-confidence — a great capacity to engage in a wide range of constructive, goal-directed activity with others.

Self Confidence

"...confidence must develop in the child from inner sources with which the teacher has nothing to do. The child, once he feels sure of himself, will no longer seek the approval of authority after every step."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.251

The *normalized* child shows a genuine self-confidence in all its actions — deciding and judging what to do for itself without the need for the teacher's praise, direction or control. We can likewise develop a corresponding self-confidence in our own practice of Montessori teaching — to consistently create the necessary conditions for this normalization to occur. Then, the *normalized* child can carry out its vital work of creating a new and better humanity in the world.

New Humanity

"This is the hope we have — a hope in a new humanity that will come from this new education."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Reconstruction in Ed.*, p.14

Montessori teaching trusts in the child's true nature as the essential basis for a more peaceful and orderly humanity. The hope for such a *new humanity* is premised on the reality of the child's being in harmony with fundamental laws of nature — the tangible result that emerges from our Montessori teaching. However, such a new humanity can only come about as we consistently apply Montessori principles with children today — to put into practice our trust in Dr. Montessori's vision of the *new education*.

**Voice* refers to *The Voice of Dr. Maria Montessori*, Joy Hardinge, Ed.



Sara Pileggi (Columbia, Maryland) making presentation at the "Creating the New Education" conference held in Annapolis, MD, September 26-27, 1998.

News from IMAC

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a very comprehensive self-study report was prepared and then later successfully revised by the Headstart institution, according to GRC recommendations. The evaluation team will consist of two experienced Montessori professionals from neighboring South Africa, **Hillary McLeod** and **Gayle Thompson**.

On a regular basis, IMAC has been receiving inquiries about its accreditation from institutions interested in starting a Montessori teacher education program, and from those that are currently operating without suitable Montessori accreditation. A training program in South Africa and one in Malaysia are the latest to inquire. Both of these would fall under the purview of the GRC, and suitable application forms were sent out to begin the process IMAC accreditation.

In other matters, IMAC remains vigilant over the influence and involvement of government in the operation of Montessori education. On December 7-9, 1998, the US Department of Education will convene its advisory committee in Washington, DC to consider matters related to recognition of accreditation in Montessori education. **Lee Havis**, IMAC chairperson, will attend and present testimony on behalf of IMAC — to argue for fairness in the enforcement of the Department's recognition procedures and criteria.

The issue of government recognition of IMAC accreditation has also been brought up elsewhere by various agencies involved in the regulation of Montessori schools. IMAC is therefore seeking to assure that its accreditation is accepted under all pertinent laws and regulations in every jurisdiction.