



February/March 2008

Newsletter for Parents

Dear Montessori Parents

The Southern African Montessori Association invites you to attend our Annual Conference to be held in Knysna.

The event is to be held from the 26th to 28th April 2008 at the Knysna Montessori School and will be run in partnership with the International Montessori Foundation. Our keynote speaker is a world-renowned Montessorian, Tim Seldin from the United States and the conference promises to provide all of us with inspiration and motivation from a Montessori perspective. Further information on speakers, booking etc is available from our website www.samontessori.org.za

I rediscovered a favourite passage in a Montessori book over the holidays and thought it was appropriate to share it with you. Every parent of a child in a Montessori school inevitably asks and worries about how their child will cope once they go to a 'traditional' school. Hopefully this will provide you with some insight as to why Montessori works!

Warm Regards
Sam Streak
SAMA President
president@samontessori.org.za

**A Student's Reflections by Rebecca Makkai
(From Montessori Today by Paula Polk Lillard.
Published by Schocken Books, New York,
1996)**

(This was written by Rebecca a few weeks before her high school graduation – after leaving Forest Bluff Montessori School (in Lake Bluff, Illinois, USA) at 13 years old).

"One of the images that most clearly sticks in my head of my early years at Montessori is the bucket-on-a-string experiment. I remember peeking around the door-frame of my Junior Level One class and watching the 'Older Children'. They had taken a small tin pail filled with water and tied a thin rope to the handle. And now, to my astonishment, they picked up the rope and started swinging the bucket in the

air, in huge sweeping circles. As I was about to run and tell on them for doing such a terrible thing, I noticed something even more amazing – something which challenged my newfound perception that there was no such thing as magic. *The water stayed in the bucket.* A few years later, I tried the same experiment myself and learnt that the only magic there had been something called centrifugal force; gravity had not been defied, but merely obeyed. The magic was in the nature of the water.

Standing by when I learned how to perform this 'magic' myself was a teacher – she had gathered a group of us for a presentation – an event for which we all held the greatest respect...

Since the world had been presented to us, we in turn, presented ourselves to the world. In Montessori I was allowed to delve into venues of creativity, to explore interests, however fleeting, and to develop passions. And amazingly, my teachers were as receptive to my presentations as I had been to theirs.

We were encouraged wholeheartedly to create and experience and explore; I found myself with more freedom in fourth grade than I would have in my senior year of high school!

I figured out early on, as most of us did, that the Montessori teachers had handed us their unconditional trust. We were free to do what we chose, from picking what we would work on to moving freely around the classroom...

In a world where "Give them an inch and they'll take a mile" seems to be the golden rule, this trust is refreshing. The Montessori teachers gave us a mile, and because they respected us enough to do so, we respected them enough to run that mile as hard as we could. This momentum carried me through high school as well. The respect with which I had been instilled remained, as self respect, and I therefore pushed myself to excel – to exceed the goals which had been set for me. I am forever indebted to my Montessori teachers for their amazing 'presentation' of absolute trust to a young child.

They had enough faith to swing the bucket, because they knew that it was in the very nature of the water to remain right there."

SAMA OFFICE: Cell no. 072 6095979 Office/Fax (041) 5812874 e-mail: admin@samontessori.org.za Website: www.samontessori.org.za