



National Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2015

Letter from the President

By Jacquelyn Price

Dear Members

How busy we have all been already this year! A small delegation of Montessori principals and myself recently met with Umalusi to continue our discussions regarding the future accreditation of Montessori schools. You will find more on this in the newsletter, as well as news from NAISA regarding SA-SAMS (South African School Administration and Management System) and CPTD (Continuous Professional Teacher Development) points for you and your staff.

Mariana van Niekerk has been busy with IQAA regarding quality assurance for our Montessori schools and we hope to see this come to fruition in the near future. On that note; I urge principals to ensure their school's registration is up to date and their policies, with proper governance structures, are in place.

I was fortunate to recently spend a day observing at a school which is barely a month old and share with the staff some ideas of what one should, or can expect, to find in a Montessori primary class. It is truly exciting for me to see the positive growth in Montessori schools. Saying that though, I caution everyone to constantly reflect, read and do your homework on the fundamental principles of what constitutes a Montessori classroom.

I am appreciative of the D6 communicator which gives me quick access to SAMA news and important information, as well as our two new newsletter editors, (Lilandi Furstenburg and Laura Callard) who will take it in turns to help prepare our newsletters.

We would like to announce that Michelle Wareham resigned from SAMA EXCO at the end of November 2014.

Applications for a CEO for SAMA are still open to anyone who has the necessary skills.

Here's to a wonderful year ahead!

Kind regards

Jacky

"And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in virtue of experience in which the child acts on the environment. The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child." Maria Montessori - The Absorbent Mind

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The Importance of the Three Year Cycle

"BIG FISH – little pond"

By Stacey Holmes

There is a reason why kids go to "big school" when they are six years old.

They are emotionally ready, in most cases, able to adapt to their new surroundings and fulfil the expectations presented to them.

Reaching this milestone is the result of the child's own labour. In a Montessori environment, children are given the freedom to develop at their own pace, guided by their natural instincts. In the unique, vertically grouped Montessori classroom, children entering preschool at the age of 3yrs. are the 'little fish in the big pond'. By the time they are ready to leave at age six, they should have had the opportunity to be mentors to their younger classmates, the so called 'big fish in the little pond'.

When children are removed from the environment before the three year cycle is complete, they are robbed of this opportunity; especially if they enter a traditional schooling system – such as a Grade R class with children all of the same age together in one group.

The final year of preschool is very important in the young child's life. It is the consolidation of all that they have learned, not only academically but also socially and emotionally. The boost in confidence that a 6yr old gets when he or she **just knows things**....well enough to teach these things to a younger classmate, whether it is how to set the table for lunch or flawlessly calculate the square of ten...is absolutely priceless!

So, as a final word I would like to say that if a child does not complete a 3 year cycle in a Montessori environment, that they are not getting the full benefit of the Montessori experience. At the end of the day, it is the parent's choice, but Montessori educators have an obligation to let parents know the importance of what their child is missing...the chance to be the big fish in the little pond.



"Parents have asked me why their child would benefit from staying in their Montessori classroom for the child's Kindergarten year. I tell them, you have built a house with strong foundations, an excellent structure, and a beautiful interior. You wouldn't decide to finish your work without building the roof, would you?" (Polly Goode; Kinderhouse Montessori School)

The 3 year work cycle – Social Development

By Nicky Rodseth (Principal)

The Three year work cycle does not only refer to the time the child should optimally spend in a Montessori setting. I feel an important part of that cycle, one of the greatest benefits in fact, is the relationship that the child develops socially with the children in that environment over the three years and - most importantly - with the directress.

The long period allows for a good solid relationship to build and for the directress to get to know her charges well and thus meet their emerging needs even better. Don't you find it remarkable that so many of us can identify a child by his cry? Even while we are inside and he or she may be outside. I know, personally, that I can differentiate between the pitches of each child's cry and know, almost instinctively, if there is reason for alarm – or not.

It takes about two months for a child to settle into an environment and to a new adult, so by then 20% of the year has already passed and the teacher is only understanding the needs of her charge then. He or she is only feeling comfortable then. So you can imagine how productive and efficient it is to begin the next year in a familiar space with a familiar adult and thus not have to deal with a settling in period at all.

This wonderful relationship that develops between child and directress alerts us to opportunities for introducing new work to a child almost effortlessly. Like most good things, it cannot be rushed and can only develop over time itself.

After three years both adults and children in a Montessori environment know each other so well, feel safe and fulfilled and thus achieve so much more – only if a child is truly safe and comfortable emotionally can he actualize cognitively. I feel that is exactly what our children do. The social relationships are thus of monumental importance and a critical element of the 3 – year work cycle.

I have included some pictures that speak of the easy intimacy of the children with their teachers.



Directress on a hike with
her class.



Directress and her class's
boys in fancy ties!

Open letter to current and prospective school owners

I feel I need to share the following as it truly dismays me to hear how school owners negatively criticize others or even go to the lengths of making the lives of their nearby/neighbouring Montessori schools difficult. I find this practice particularly odious given that we supposedly subscribe to a nurturing Montessori philosophy.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's a number of established Montessori schools spawned the birth of new schools nearby to their own. This practice appears to have died. But, competition is good, from a business point of view. Let me elaborate. When you go to a large shopping centre nowadays one finds the banks all in one area. One finds the fast food takeaway restaurants all in one area which we call these banking halls and food halls. Why do you suppose McDonalds is right next to Something Fishy? Simply because competition is good. The big companies all know this but as Montessorians we ignore this. The reason for this is that if a customer is in a big mall and wants something to eat, they go to the food hall. Easy to find and a big selection. Same with the banks. You want it to be easy to find and so the four major banks are next to each other in every single big mall. Ever thought about that?

So what is the lesson? You want competition. You want it close to you. The better your competition down the road is, the better it will be for you. You will together attract more parents seeking out Montessori education. One will feed off the other and vice versa. So rather build your neighbouring Montessori school up in the true Montessori spirit. Help each other. Generate new schools. If you own a school already, start another one in the next suburb. The more Montessori schools we have the better it is going to be for all of us.

In the next short while the SAMA executive will be exposing you to a new strategic plan for Montessori in South Africa. SAMA consists of a little over 160 member schools. We know that for every school as members with us there are another two who are not. For Montessori to grow in this country we need as

many member schools as possible. We need to spread the movement rapidly. We run the risk of becoming obsolete unless we grow the movement.

I ask you to view Montessori in a totally different light. To look outwards and not inwards as all schools need to offer quality, and help each other to achieve quality, for us all to grow.

Peter Williams (Treasurer)

Coming together
is a beginning.
Keeping together
is progress.
Working together
is success.

Henry Ford



BUSINESS

Umalusi

There are many questions around Umalusi and their mandate to accredit independent schools. Presently Umalusi are unable to do so for schools who offer an alternative curriculum. E.g. Montessori.

We recently presented to Umalusi the adapted AMI Montessori curriculum with the National Learning Outcomes at Grade 3 and 6 alongside the Knowledge, Skills and Understandings of this document. In addition we have drawn up a new document regards assessment protocol for Montessori schools. (These are available from our office should you wish to have e-copies of these.)

We were asked in this meeting to demonstrate how the Montessori curriculum articulates to the national curriculum statement and show evidence of meeting the minimum requirements. This we have done, without referring to CAPS of which we have previously stressed we do not use or follow.

At this meeting with Bhavna Bhagattjee, Heidi van Straaten, Bukelwa Selema, Sam Streak and myself were asked various questions regards Montessori pedagogy, classroom management, teacher qualifications and training, assessment processes and record keeping and reporting so that an understanding could be adequately formed. Umalusi will confer with the provincial departments before coming back to us. We have also requested that a Montessori practitioner be part of the advisory evaluation and accrediting team.

However; Umalusi still stick by their mandate to only accredit schools that follow CAPS. They are asking that our Montessori schools comply with their online registration of saying we use the CAPS curriculum (as there is no other choice on the electronic form).

Unfortunately this takes us back to square one with them. NAISA is supporting us on this and will be discussed in our next meeting.

Double Trouble

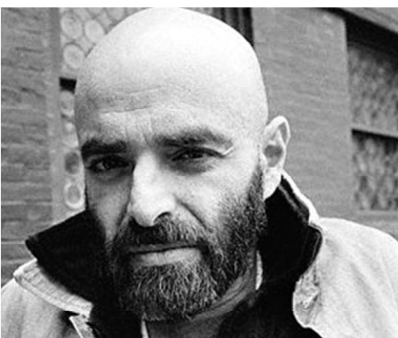
At the beginning of the year (when the old children were still at the stage of giving the new children a rather wide berth and observing them from as vast a distance as possible with very round eyes and haunted expressions) I was talking about how we now had two children in our class named Danielle.

The Danielle closer to me muttered frostily, "Ek's die regte Danielle."

We also had two Abigails. Five year old Abigail was getting annoyed with two year old Abigail, and complained, "Teacher Cake, That Abigail keeps touching my work."

There were two Camerons too. Cameron Senior was looking at our pyramid and asked me about real pyramids and before long we ended up on the subject of mummies and mummies. Then I was talking about how one word could mean completely different things.

"Like Cameron..." she murmured, thoughtfully.



Listen to the musn'ts child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn't haves, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me. Anything can happen child. Anything can be. (Shel Silverstein)

LURITS

- Please ensure you are using a LURITS programme for your schools and one that is compatible with approved third party programmes.

The Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) aims to collect unit record data for each learner in the country from grade R through to Grade 12. The system also tracks the movement of each learner from school to school; even inter-provincial movements of learners can be traced. Each learner is to eventually be assigned with a unique learner tracking number which remains with the learner throughout their schooling.

Individual educator records are also housed on LURITS

The system has been developed by SITA. The system works with SA-SAMS which is run at a school level.

Submission of Data to LURITS

The LURITS system is dependent on receiving data from computerized school administration systems as the source for the unit record data of educators and learners. SA-SAMS (South African School Administration and Management System) is made available to all schools free of charge, giving equal access to a computerized administration system. <http://sasams.co.za/>

It is planned that Schools that do not have electronic school administration tools should be assisted to capture on LURITS using the LURITS capturing functionality.

Support: Each province has one or more dedicated LURITS administrators who are responsible for the ground level support and implementation of LURITS. A school can acquire assistance and services of these system administrators by contacting the district/province.

SACE

- All teachers who have face time with children must register with SACE. For example; sports coaches. They will get conditional registration. Teachers who are in training for their degree in primary schools with get provisional. But all must be registered.
- **CPTD** – Please ensure that all of your teachers and principals are registered with SACE for their professional development points. www.sace.org.za

NAISA is finalising schools associations (type 3 providers) ability to offer CPTD type points. Some Montessori training centres are offering courses for CPTD points as well, so you can check with them.

Please let our office know of any difficulties with registration of schools, queries regards Umalusi, your Provincial Education Department or SACE so that we can support and follow up.

Autumn Art Idea: Handprint Tree



Parents love capturing their child's handprints as they grow, making this autumn craft a decorative and colourful keepsake.

What You'll Need:

- White construction paper
- Brown, red, yellow, and orange tempera paint
- Large paintbrush
- Cotton swabs
- Paper towel

Directions:

1. Pick one of the child's hands to create the trunk and branches of the tree. Use a large paintbrush to gently coat her hand and arm, up to her elbow, with brown tempera paint.
2. Place the white construction paper in front of your child, and then press her hand and arm onto the paper.
3. Allow to dry before beginning the next step.
4. Squeeze a teaspoon of red, yellow, and orange paint onto a paper plate. Offer the paint to your child along with a few cotton swabs. Now your child can dip the cotton swab in one of the colours of paint and then create lots of dots all around the tree, just like autumn leaves.
5. Add a few dots of colour at the bottom of the paper to finish the craft.

Feedback from Gauteng Joint Liaison Committee

by member Kym van Straaten

The JLC are representative of associations on a provincial level. Should an association have a national footprint they then hold a seat on NAISA. If not, they are represented at NAISA by the representative of the appropriate JLC.

The rights and responsibilities document is the framework for engagement between NAISA and the Government. NAISA has principled and constructive working relationships with the DBE, UMALUSI and SETA's.

Concerns raised with the DBE:

- The registration process for independent schools and that when the laws regarding the process were promulgated, corrections and comments made by NAISA were neither noted nor accommodated.
- The following concerns were raised in regards the regulations as set by the DBE:
 - Unannounced visits are for subsidized schools. As a courtesy and to make the inspection process run smoothly it would be appreciated if the department could announce when they expect to visit to ensure the documents are all in order. These visits are meant to determine leadership and management of the school.
 - It was agreed that independent schools would not withhold reports or expel students in the academic year due to parents not meeting their financial obligations. However they are in a position to refuse to re-enrol the child for the next academic year.
 - There is a concern that inspectors are too prescriptive with independent schools in demanding that the prescribed time for lessons in each subject area are met. There needs to be some flexibility.

The DBE MEC suggested that either side not be rigid, but rather establish a middle ground that is to the benefit of the child.

(continued)

The five year, 10 pillar education programme as discussed at the JLC:

1. Curriculum and Assessment development
2. Teacher Provision and Support
3. Leadership and Management
4. Infrastructure Development and Maintenance
5. Planning, Finance and Resourcing
6. ICT in Education
7. Social Cohesion
8. School Functionality including Community Involvement
9. Skills Development
10. Access to Quality Early Childhood Development

The DBE MEC reminded us that we are all on the same team and that the child is the centre of all we do. We should not deny a child education because of circumstances beyond his control. The MEC would like to see Gauteng compete with our world counterparts in terms of education and performance. Therefore performance of schools is important. He is reluctant to continually subsidize independent schools that are not performing. He is charged with protecting state resources and as such independent schools must be monitored. If we are unable to regulate ourselves then he would step in and regulate us on our behalf. He is not the minister for public education, but rather the minister for EDUCATION. He stressed that public, private and independent schools can co-exist and even assist each other. All our conversations should revolve around the child and the performance of the child. We should be willing to share ideas and work together for the growth of education in SA and the future of the country.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the conference are as follows:

The sharing of local and international experiences, lessons and techniques in understanding how children learn and accommodating developmentally appropriate methods in our teaching techniques.



To promote networking and business opportunity development.



To encourage the study of Montessori methodology.



To assist self-development.



To provide a forum for education, knowledge transfer and the development of new skills and professional development.



To facilitate the meeting of diverse cultures in sharing and learning from each other in the quest for quality education for all children.

The South African Montessori Association invites you to attend the 13th national conference to be held in the beautiful garden province of KwaZulu Natal.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Steve Hughes



Dr Steve Hughes consults with organisations about educational programme evaluation and speaks to groups around the world about developmental education, neurocognitive disorders, parenting, and other topics of interest to parents and educators.

He will answer your questions on how children really learn and why the Montessori Method is the optimal support to offer the developing child.

If you weren't at the regional meetings – here is what you missed!

JHB (Gauteng South)

We would like to thank all the people that joined us for the Term 1 Gauteng South Regional meeting. It was a wonderful morning, where we all had a chance to share in fun team building exercises that were facilitated by the 'Nutty Scientists'. They took us through inspirational experiments that demonstrated the importance of team work; what can be achieved when working as a team; to have a goal and aim for it with all your might, and finally a vital reminder that we need to have fun while we are working.

We look forward to the Term 2 Regional meeting which will be held on the 30th of May 2015.



Kwa-Zulu Natal

The KZN SIG meeting went off without a hitch – it was super for KZN Colleagues to see each other and we had a representative from as far afield as Pietermaritzburg!

We chatted about the importance of making literacy exciting and interesting and made our own literacy letter wheel – a really favourite extension our children love to use.

We chatted amiably while we worked and enjoyed a special “Montessori Life” cake, baked by one of our own teachers.

Nicky Rodseth, Montessori Life Principal



Pretoria (Gauteng North)

The SIG meeting for Gauteng North held at Hatfield Montessori on 7th February, 2015 was a wonderful time of sharing ideas combined with a lot of fun and discussion.

Lauren Ellis opened with a welcome for all present – about 15 came including 5 staff from Hatfield Montessori. Lauren also read out the apologies.

Lauren presented a practical life African hand washing activity. A lively discussion ensued as to how this custom of washing a guest's hands is so relevant to many societies in Africa today unlike the exercise as we read about it in Dr Montessori's journals of using a china bowl and jug. The "oldies" at the meeting reminisced on the difficulties we used to have in obtaining the china jug and bowl which was regarded as almost an essential item for the classroom but actually oh so fragile and far-away from real life. How much better to adapt our environment to the present culture.

Bush Babies Montessori brought a spice grinding exercise. On the same lines, Heather Napier from Hatfield Montessori presented a Coriander seed grinding activity, both as a practical life activity for the child and as an act of giving something to the mother.

Ronel from Zonki Montessori talked of how the conference being in Durban this year had made her think of Bunny Chows as Bunny Chows come from the South African Asian workers in 1912 in the Durban area. She suggested that one could use it as a practical life activity in schools, using little buns and have a mild curry to put into them. Children could make their own.

Lilandi, of Dutch background, presented a practical life activity with cheese and a cheese slicer and a second activity leading on from the first of cutting tiny cheese hearts with a little heart-shaped cookie cutter and putting them on a salty biscuit, a little tomato sauce for red colouring and serving them for Valentine's Day. This cheese activity could lead on to tasting other cheese and discussing where they come from, how cheese is made etc.

Lizelle from Centurion Montessori works with 1 – 3 yr olds and she suggested doing a 'peace offering' with a banana leaf or a square of paper and decorating it with flowers, sand, petals etc.

Anna from Montessori Academy gave an example of an old telephone which they have in their classroom. The child can use a coin to pretend to make a call. Children learn to greet in different languages. She has found children 'ringing' the emergency numbers listed on the outside of the phone and heard them speaking to their imaginary person using a greeting in another language.

(continued)



Shan from Hatfield Montessori spoke about how a Japanese mother had first shown the children Origami and this is now included as a folding extension.

Lauren introduced the joint activity of the day – Sushi Making - and introduced Linda Ellis who demonstrated how to make Sushi. Everyone went out onto the veranda and sat around lovely decorated tables and then proceeded to make their own Sushi. Some enjoyed the making more than the eating! A great time was had by all!

At Hatfield we introduced the exercise the next day into our Practical Life area and we now have many enthusiastic “sushi chefs”. By the second day, several were also managing to eat using chopsticks!



Student preparing her own sushi!

‘TOGETHER WE ARE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF OUR PARTS’

Dates to Diarize - Regional Meetings

<u>REGIONS</u>	<u>NAME OF SCHOOL</u>	<u>Term two date</u>	<u>Term three date</u>	<u>Head of school breakfast date</u>
Gauteng North	Hatfield Montessori	Term 2 – 16 th May	Term 3 – 1 st Aug	Term 4 – 14 th Nov
Gauteng South	Modderfontein	Term 2 – 30 th May	Term 3 – 12 th September	Term 4 – 7 th November
Kwa-Zulu Natal	Montessori life	Term 2 – 9 th May	Term 3 – 12 th September	Term 4 – 7 th November
Western Cape	Montessori connect Nutwood forest	Term 2 – 20 th June	Term 3 – 17 th October	Term 4 – 28 th November

“A great teacher never stops being a student”

(Jeffrey Benjamin)

CLASSIFIEDS

WONDEREDUQUIP

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**AARDVARK PUBLICATIONS:
ENVIRONMENTAL EDU-
TAINMENT RESOURCES FOR
MONTESSORI TEACHERS**

Aardvark Publications, a Pietermaritzburg-based publisher specialising in Environmental Education resources for Primary Phase learners has several resources that are perfectly suited to the Montessori environment. All resources available as E-Copies (to be provided on a CD Disk or sent by Email) so acquiring them could not be easier!



M.E.C.
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natalie@mec.za.com

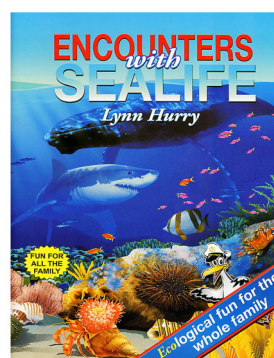
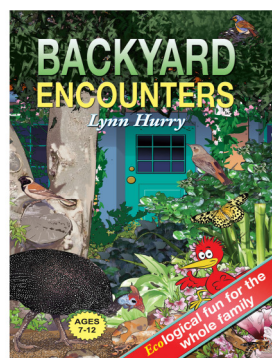
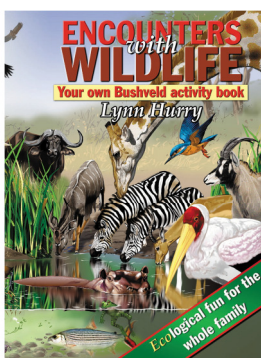
♻️ **JUST RELEASED : *ABYGALE AARDVARK'S GUIDE TO ECOLOGY***

Our latest publication is a beautifully illustrated 15 verse resource – a truly delightful way of introducing Primary learners to the wonders of Ecology. *Abygale Aardvark's Guide to Ecology* can be read by the youngsters themselves or to be read for them so that the message from each verse can be helpfully unpacked.

♻️ ***THE ADVENTURES OF LEANBIRD.***

Delightful stories, beautifully illustrated, of Leanbird who is a very wise long-legged bird who lives in the Magaliesberg Mountains. This first story (for younger listeners) is called: **Sticky Black Mud**. It is a short story about 'keeping your head and saving the day' in which Leanbird gets stuck in the mud while watching the clouds go by and how he keeps his head until the rain comes to free him. His friends Silly Songololo, Gup-Gup the Vervet Monkey and WiseGuy the Eagle Owl and others are all on hand to offer advice.

♻️ **THE ENCOUNTERS SERIES OF ACTIVITY BOOKS**



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- ♻️ For teachers who are further afield please deposit the necessary amount to our bank account and Email or Fax us confirmation of payment – together with your postal address and contact telephone number. (Don't forget to say which resource(s) you are ordering.)

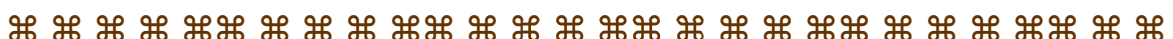
Thank you!

Lynn & Derryn Hurry

The Aardvark Resources Team

Telefax: 033 346 0146

Email: lynn@ecology.co.za



VACANCIES

Western Cape

The Beehive Montessori Pre-School has a position available for a qualified, bilingual (English/Afrikaans) Montessori Directress at the Aftercare Centre. Should have a sound knowledge of the Montessori philosophy and be able to integrate the principles into the aftercare environment. Please send your CV to beehive1@telkomsa.net



Qualified Montessori Directress position offered in Muizenberg, Cape Town

Looking for a **Qualified and preferably Experienced Montessori Directress** in the **3-6 year** age group. Also looking for a Directress to run the Toddlers group. Must love working with children, be hard-working and abide by the Montessori Philosophy. Position available **1st March** 2015. Please send a motivational letter, CV & copy of your Montessori Qualification to: muizenbergmontessori@gmail.com. We will notify successful applicants and arrange for an interview.

Gauteng Pretoria

Centurion Montessori School in Centurion needs a Qualified Pre-school Directress/Teacher with a SACE qualification. To start this term or by the latest in May 2015. Please contact Zinita Bongers at Centurion Montessori School & forward your C.V to our e-mail address: school@centurionmontessori.co.za



Qualified Montessori directress required for small homeschool environment in **Centurion Pretoria** (full time). Specialisation in 3-6 and 6-9 environments. Preferably with B Prim Ed qualification. At least 2 years experience in a Montessori Primary school. Essential qualities self-driven & pro-active (taking ownership). Please send your CV/with references) to chaschoe@gmail.com

Gauteng Johannesburg

Modderfontein Montessori is proud to be expanding our Primary School.

We are looking for a dedicated and experienced 6-12 Directress to join our Primary team.

The suitable candidate must meet the following criteria:

Montessori 6 – 12 qualification

Bachelor of Education an advantage

SACE registered

At least 5 years teaching experience within a primary environment

If you meet the above criteria, please e-mail your CV directly to the Principal on Sunita@modderfonteinmontessori.co.za or phone 0116080902.



Midrand Montessori Preschool is looking for a qualified 3-6 Montessori Directress to start asap.

She must be hard working, dynamic and a good team player with a passion for children. Must have own car.

Please email cv's to sian@midrandmontessori.co.za

Living Montessori Pre-School in North Riding, Johannesburg (close to Fourways, Bryanston, Douglasdale, Olivedale, RandPark, NorthGate) is looking for a passionate, energetic and creative Pre-Primary Directress. A Montessori qualification and experience is essential together with a passion for working with children, good class management skills, as well as accountability, integrity and commitment.

Send your CV's to sabashni@livingmontessori.co.za or call 082 494 2335.



O'Summit Montessori has a vacancy for a passionate, dedicated and enthusiastic 6-12 directress. Montessori qualifications and experience essential. The position is to start soonest. We are also looking for a locum for the 2nd term (4th May – 7th August) for our 6-9 Maths environment. Please send your CV via email to Nikki@montessorischool.co.za



O'Summit Montessori has a vacancy for a passionate, dedicated and enthusiastic 6-9 directress or student. Montessori experience essential. The position is for 2nd term (4th May – 7th August) but to start observation from 30th of March. Please send your CV via email to Nikki@montessorischool.co.za



“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.



Involve me and I learn.”



- Benjamin Franklin

The **May** newsletter will focus on “ Montessori International – How the rest of the world is getting on.” We value your contributions so please send any interesting snippets, funnies, quotes, photos, article ideas and questions to Irmgard at admin@samontessori.org.za or post them on our Facebook page.