



Parent Newsletter

March 2013

What day is it?

By Charl du Toit, SAMA President

Shakespeare once said; “What is in a name, if a rose was called by any other name will it still smell as sweet?” Younger children learn the days of the week and sing songs about it. Older Montessori children take it further and study the origins of these names of the week. And, then, there are the extreme ones like myself who look at the calendar of the world to see what day it is.

Montessori believed that she was a citizen of the world and that we need to educate the children as citizens of the world. Montessori used Cosmic Education to show the child the big picture and then breaking the world up into smaller understandable parts for the child. By preparing the environment, making sure that we have an uninterrupted work cycle and classes with mixed ages, we make sure that the child is developed holistically. I make use of a calendar to help and guide me through topics of discussion in the class for example:

- 8 Mar: International Women's Day
- 9 Mar: Commonwealth Day
- 20 Mar: International Earth Day
- 21 Mar: Human Rights Day (South Africa)
- 21 Mar: World Poetry Day
- 21 Mar: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 21 Mar: World Down Syndrome Day
- 22 Mar: World Water Day
- 23 Mar: World Meteorological Day
- 24 Mar: World TB Day
- 29 Mar: Good Friday
- 1 Apr: Family Day
- 2 Apr: World Autism Awareness Day
- 4 Apr: Child Labour Day
- 7 Apr: World Health Day
- 22 Apr: International Mother Earth Day
- 23 Apr: World Book and Copyright Day

- 25 Apr: World Malaria Day
- 27 Apr: Freedom Day (RSA)

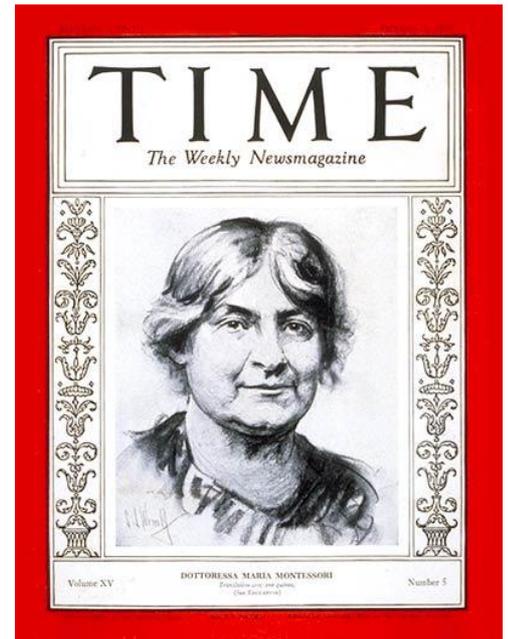
As you can see the choice is rather large. Recently, one of my children asked: “What day is it today?” I realised once again how important it is not to lose direction of what is really important to you.

We celebrated Human Rights Day in South Africa on the 21 March, and not long after that the Christians celebrated freedom of religion by celebrating Easter and those of the Jewish faith Pessac. I am fortunate to teach at a Montessori school where we not only have the early childhood (3 – 6) environment, but also cater for children up to age 18. During the few days before Human Rights Day we discussed the rights and responsibilities of the children. Being a Montessori School, the children were very familiar with their rights and responsibilities. They had a clear understanding of their responsibility and could elaborate on the idea of freedom of choice as well as respect.

What was really shocking to me, was their misunderstanding of the past. The children had no idea how privileged they are to be educated in a system of choices.

We as parents grew up in the years where our choices were limited. We did not have the choice in what we wanted to study and had to suffer through the boring facts of The Great Trek, while others did not even have the choice of the language of education. I was raised with the idea that if we know our past, we will be able to understand the future and use the knowledge not to make the same mistakes. But so often we want to protect our children that we do not share the mistakes we made with them in an open and honest manner. We sugar coat the baddies and try to protect them instead of being honest.

What day is it today? Today is not World Malaria day, nor is it National Toad Day. Today is not the day that is named after Thor. Today is the day that I am going to tell you about your past, about your country and about your freedom of choice. We cannot celebrate each and every day on the calendar, but we are fortunate that we have the freedom to choose.



11th National Conference: Sustainable Montessori – The Natural Child

Book now to join South African education professionals as they gather to explore the universal themes and unique facets of Montessori. Trainers, teachers, and administrators from every province will be united to celebrate, learn, and connect on their shared commitment to the work of Dr Maria Montessori.

**Renowned international Guest Speaker and Author
Lynne Lawrence (Executive Director of AMI)**

- **Conference Dates: 28 and 29th April 2013**
- **Management training 30th April 2013**

All welcome, special rates for SAMA members.

Registration closes 12 April!

