



Parent Newsletter

May 2013

Dear Parents,

As I step in to fill a new role as the president of SAMA, I ask: what do parents of our Montessori community want to read about in this letter? I could ramble on about how passionate and dedicated I am to the principles of Montessori education from birth to adulthood, or I could lecture on the demise of our children's language skills as they spend more time on screens, or something like that.

What I do have to say is that as an expanding association with much work ahead of us, we need all the support we can get to grow Montessori education beyond preschool into sound, self-sustaining educational whole school campuses, from birth to adulthood.

While I congratulate you on choosing the Montessori way for your children, I do question why the majority of parents only choose this for their preschool-aged child when Montessori education is an aid to life. Some answers could be: "There is no choice offered for Montessori primary in our area," or "I never gave it any consideration."

For years, the Montessori community has been driven by educators who teach, train, parent, and build new classrooms singlehandedly. It is the right time now to broaden this picture and ask the parents of the children we guide each day to ask themselves how much more they can do to enrich their children's lives and the future of their children's children, so that we offer excellence and the best of Montessori education from birth to 18 in sustainable environments.

Some of the ways we can do this is through training and strengthening quality Montessori teachers and appealing to our parent body's skills and expertise in supporting, building and managing schools. We need to get

behind our schools and see that the right teachers are sent on good primary and high school training programmes. We can collectively and collaboratively bring in experienced Montessori trainers and consultants and build Montessori-styled campuses, by using your specific knowledge and skills for each of the detailed tasks this requires.

We ask you to ask the following questions when investigating your choices for a school for your children:

- What educational system will suit my child and our family, and therefore what can I expect?
- After your children's educational journey, what would you like them to remember?
- What attributes will my child require for their future?

This is just a thought – planting some seeds, nurturing the growth of what we know works well for our children and thus for our society.

Reading through old documents, I came across a relevant quote by David Kahn, the executive director of the North American Montessori Teachers' Association, which I thought it prudent to reproduce here:

“There is a possibility for Montessori to lead education in South Africa. There is a vacancy to be filled; let it be filled with a vision that is true and clear. Montessori principles are life principles. If South African Montessorians are willing to accept the birth-to-adolescence Montessori continuum, they may find that Montessori is a comprehensive solution for lifelong learning. The whole of human life includes the social and the economic, the resolution of conflict, the overcoming of fear and prejudice – that is why the whole of Montessori is so important to South Africa.”

David Kahn: Taken from his conclusion in a written document on Montessori in South Africa, 1995 (available from SAMA office)

I look forward to my term in office, communicating, appreciating and guiding the dedicated team of SAMA's Montessori member schools.

Warm regards
Jacquelyn Price

HAVE CHILDREN'S NEEDS CHANGED?



1909: Italy



2012: South Africa

DID YOU KNOW?

21%

of the national budget of the South African government is spent on education

53%

of the total population of South Africa are women.

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