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SAMA OFFICE:

Tel 041 367 4936
 Fax: 086 561 8774
 Postal Address: PO Box 5338,
 Walmer, Port Elizabeth, 6065
 Cell number: **072 609 5979**
 e-mail: admin@samontessori.org.za

Website:
www.samontessori.org.za

South African Montessori Association

Message from the President:

Dear Montessorians

Upfront I would like to thank Jacky Price for compiling this wonderful newsletter. Perhaps the traditional education sector and government should read it too, and be inspired by another perspective on our ‘humanness’ and consider alternative strategies for resolving their differences.

Welcome back to Lindsay van den Berg, who has been quiet for so long. I am sure that you will find her contribution entitled, “Peace Education Start with the Adults” very thought provoking. The possible solutions that she suggests are workable, and practical. By trying to incorporate a peaceful attitude towards conflicts and even better seeking peace when we are NOT in conflict would have a profound impact in our world. This action could form a part of what you may consider doing for the ‘LEAD-SA’ campaign.

I urge you to visit the ‘LEAD-SA’ Facebook page to read about the contributions that South Africans from all walks of life are making. The initiative speaks so beautifully to our Montessori philosophy that I am sure you can all contribute to next month’s newsletter with stories from your school regarding peace education, ideas for group work or scenarios that made a difference to your class etc.

Our Montessori community in South Africa is relatively small compared with the rest of the world. We need to work together to keep the name of Montessori trusted and respected. I would love for this newsletter to be like the first period of a three period lesson for you. You are being given the gift of information and ideas. Take this gift and practice it in your daily life and with your children. That will be your second period. ‘Can you include peace in your day’, ‘let’s reach out to the school down the road and invite them to our spring day.’ The ‘test’ or third period will show itself when we start to see, hear and feel the vibe of togetherness and cohesion. Montessori speaks about the 3-6 year olds creating their society by cohesion bound by love. This is a spontaneous and effortless task for them. For us it will require effort and perseverance – but the results will be worth it.

Heidi van Staden
SAMA President

“Be humble, for the worst thing in the world is of the same stuff as you; be confident, for the stars are of the same stuff as you.”
~Nicholai Velimirovic

Peace Education Starts with the Adults

Dr. Lindsay van den Berg

Introduction

We all know that Peace Education, the implementation and understanding of this wonderful part of Montessori Education is paramount to an authentic Montessori School, however, sometimes peace is sadly lacking among those very Montessori Adults¹ who are the first to trumpet that it is in operation in their schools and lives. Where is the gentleness? Where are the alternatives to violence? What we sometimes see is violent solutions to situations between children; harsh voices; loud condemnations.

I would like us all to give some thought to how we can apply aspects of the Peace Curriculum between adults so that we may be able to model it to the children we say we care for every day.

*A new form of morality must accompany this new form of civilisation. Order and discipline must be aimed at the attainment of human harmony, and any act that hinders the establishment of a genuine community of all mankind must be regarded as immoral and a threat to the life of society.*²

Peace and children

We are not attempting to promote world peace with the young child. Rather, we are trying to assist them individually to prepare for their life in the real world and handle the trials and tribulations that come with daily living and thus, one at a time, maybe change the world. Disagreements are a daily occurrence and as Montessorians we want to help children identify the reasons for those differences and ways in which they can be overcome in a peaceful and successful way.

We do this in the classroom by promoting an understanding and interest in different cultures, demonstrating what is similar and what different and why. We use the Peace Table for resolving problems; demonstrate skills for conflict resolution and model problem solving abilities on a daily basis. Our classrooms are supposed to be oases of peaceful activity.

*Those who want war prepare young people for war; but those who want peace have neglected young children and adolescents, for they have been unable to organise them for peace.*³

Adults in the classroom

In spite of all of the above, unfortunately in our search for team teaching practices, we sometimes find ourselves working with colleagues who are not compatible with our way of thinking! All Montessori Adults are supposed to be normalised in the same way as the children they guide. We may be from different cultures; maybe from different language groups or even different generations but normalisation is vital to good relationships in the classroom. Of course, everyone should change and think like us (sic) but the result can be very different. In team teaching we may be easily offended; become aggressive and/or confrontational or just plain contrary, failing to realise that we as Montessori Adults are modelling exactly the opposite of what we want the children to learn.

*Education is enormously important today, because man possesses much more than he knows and much more than he can enjoy. He has everything! He must learn to appreciate what he has, to enjoy what he already possesses.*⁴

Adults in different classrooms

Some schools have several classrooms and it startles me every time I realise the competitive nature of the staff members. One class has more equipment; one has a better view or easier access to the outside. Envy can cause much conflict, albeit it hidden, between so-called normalised adults. Without addressing the problems, we become long suffering and unhappy and the children suffer!

Adults in different schools

Now when it comes to Montessori Adults working in different schools, the conflict can become more open, differences in training; lengths of training; whether the adult is working in an 'Authentic Montessori School' or their principal is a Rational Montessorian or a Classical Montessori can all cause problems that should be reconciled for the promotion of peace within the Montessori community. Agreeing to disagree can prevent the confrontation from becoming serious. Interest in different ways of doing things can lead to more creativity in the classroom rather than the fear that 'our way' will be frowned upon.

1 Montessori Adults, an inclusive term for all Montessori teachers, guides, directresses, mentors.

2 Maria Montessori: Education & Peace. Clio Press. Oxford, England. Preface

3 Ibid chapter 3

4 Maria Montessori: Education & Peace. Clio Press. Oxford, England. Chapter 5

Adults in different training Centres

Surely, Dr Maria Montessori, if she lived in today's society, would be at the forefront of educational research. Her ideas will stand up to today's educational thought, they can even be added to! It disturbs me when I realise how many so-called educated and normalised Montessorians do not realise how much of what they hold on to with tenacity, Maria Montessori did not propose or implement herself!

Montessori training houses are all slightly different, the same as our schools are all different, and usually they reflect the personality and passion of the principal. We should be co-operating with each other not competing.

Yes, there are certain basic tenants of Montessori Philosophy which make a school an 'Authentic' one, but honestly, arguments never change the minds of anyone and 'cold shouldering' of someone because of diverse opinions may be because of a lack of understanding or reading! Get over your anger for a supposed offense or slight, it may exist only in your mind. If there is a supposed or real problem, face it head-on, not aggressively but with confidence that it can be resolved, it probably will be.

There are so many books written by Dr Maria Montessori herself that are not available to the average Montessori student. Every genuine Montessorian should be reading and re-reading all her works on a regular basis to get the full picture. Even Montessori changed some of her ideas as her research continued throughout the years.

Adults in families

Finally, aspects of the Peace Curriculum, especially that of conflict resolution should be presented to and encouraged to be utilised in families to demonstrate to others that Montessori is more of a philosophy of life or a lifestyle and not just a static method of classroom education.

Possible Solutions

First and foremost we should all learn the simple "I apologise" statement, said with meaning! Saying 'I am sorry' is only part of it, together should be the question: "What can I do to make it better?" Real apologies are powerful and deflect many a volatile situation. Do it face to face. It might be that offense was taken when none was intended we can all be so thin skinned. If the apology is not accepted, it then becomes the other person's problem, no longer yours.

Maybe the Peace Table and 'I Statements' should be employed during staff meetings or in private although, if we expect children to have an audience when they use the Peace Table, then why shouldn't we? I have personally used the 'Peace Table' mechanics with dissenting board members with much hilarity and final successful resolution as we all learnt to listen to each other instead of shouting louder! Those same board members continue to use the facility in their homes with their families with feelings of accomplishment. Dialogue is important when we disagree with others, not argument however eloquent we think we are! The more we listen before we talk to each other, the more we will learn about our differences in cultural backgrounds; difference in training; differences in experiences the more similarities we will find.

Parents are intrigued with the whole successful conflict resolution process and if it is presented during parents meetings, it can be introduced at home with the resulting more peaceful home life.

Dr Montessori saw the introduction of Peace Education in schools to be the foundation of a more peaceful society. Are we as the knowledgeable adults promoting this by our attitudes and outlook? Are we modelling these attitudes with our colleagues, friends, and families? Are we able to approach those colleagues who disagree with us in a peaceful way which might ultimately resolve the issue and allow the classroom or staffroom to be harmonious? Are we able to live in a peaceable way with those who are not yet ready to be a participant in the resolution process?

Please think about these things and examine your classrooms, schools and behaviour to see if you are really participating in the Montessori Peace Curriculum.

Peace is a goal that can be attained only through common accord, and the means to achieve this unity for peace are twofold: first, an immediate effort to resolve conflicts without recourse to violence – in other words, to prevent war – the second, a long term effort to establish a last peace among men. Preventing conflicts is the work of politics; establishing peace is the work of education. We must convince the world of the need for a universal, collective effort to build the foundation for peace.⁵

5 Maria Montessori: Education & Peace. Clio Press. Oxford, England. Chapter 2

What do Jane Addams, Maria Montessori and Muhammad Yunus have in common? All are exemplary social entrepreneurs, leaders who have identified sustainable solutions to social problems that have fundamentally changed society.

- Jane Addams founded Hull-House in 1889, a social settlement to improve conditions in a poor immigrant neighbourhood in Chicago, then expanded her efforts nationally. Addams gained international recognition as an advocate of women's rights, pacifism and internationalism, and served as the founding president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Her work ultimately resulted in protective legislation for women and children.
- **Maria Montessori**, the first female physician in Italy, began working with children in 1906 and created a revolutionary education method that supports each individual child's unique development. Montessori schools allow each child to realize his or her full potential by fostering social skills, emotional growth and physical coordination, in addition to cognitive preparation.
- Muhammad Yunus revolutionized economics by founding the Grameen Bank, or "village bank," in Bangladesh in 1976 to offer "microloans" to help impoverished people attain economic self-sufficiency through self-employment, a model that has been replicated in 58 countries around the world.

As the actions of these historical figures illustrate, the term "social entrepreneur" may be relatively new, but the phenomenon is not.

"Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionized the fishing industry."

— *Bill Drayton, CEO, chair and founder of Ashoka, a global non-profit organization devoted to developing the profession of social entrepreneurship*

Just as entrepreneurs change the face of business, social entrepreneurs act as the change agents for society, seizing opportunities others miss and improving systems, inventing new approaches and creating sustainable solutions to change society for the better. However, unlike business entrepreneurs who are motivated by profits, social entrepreneurs are motivated to improve society. Despite this difference, social entrepreneurs are just as innovative and change oriented as their business counterparts, searching for new and better ways to solve the problems that plague society.

Social entrepreneurs are:

- **Ambitious:** Social entrepreneurs tackle major social issues, from increasing the college enrolment rate of low-income students to fighting poverty in developing countries. These entrepreneurial leaders operate in all kinds of organizations: innovative nonprofits, social purpose ventures such as for-profit community development banks, and hybrid organizations that mix elements of non-profit and for-profit organizations.
- **Mission driven:** Generating social value-not wealth-is the central criterion of a successful social entrepreneur. While wealth creation may be part of the process, it is not an end in itself. Promoting systemic social change is the real objective.
- **Strategic:** Like business entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs see and act upon what others miss: opportunities to improve systems, create solutions and invent new approaches that create social value. And like the best business entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs are intensely focused and hard-driving-even relentless-in their pursuit of a social vision.
- **Resourceful:** Because social entrepreneurs operate within a social context rather than the business world, they have limited access to capital and traditional market support systems. As a result, social entrepreneurs must be exceptionally skilled at mustering and mobilizing human, financial and political resources.
- **Results oriented:** Ultimately, social entrepreneurs are driven to produce measurable returns. These results transform existing realities, open up new pathways for the marginalized and disadvantaged, and unlock society's potential to effect social change.

Today, social entrepreneurs are working in many countries to create avenues for independence and opportunity for those who otherwise would be locked into lives without hope. They range from Jim Fruchterman of Benetech, who uses technology to address pressing social problems such as the reporting of human rights violations, to John Wood of Room to Read, who helps underprivileged children gain control of their lives through literacy. They include Marie Teresa Leal, whose sewing cooperative in Brazil respects the environment and fair labour practices, and Inderjit Khurana, who teaches homeless children in India at the train stations where they beg from passengers.

Whether they are working on a local or international scale, social entrepreneurs share a commitment to pioneering innovation that reshape society and benefit humanity. Quite simply, they are solution-minded pragmatists who are not afraid to tackle some of the world's biggest problems.

Ubuntu

In thinking of cohesion amongst us within communities and with others in the South African perspective, it would be very foolish to ignore one of our basic tenants of the South African Constitution and governance and that is **UBUNTU**, within our Montessori communities.

To define this word is not simple as it refers to a way of living and life or human happiness and well-being and when interpreted from the Nguni expression: "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" it says; *a person is a person through others*.

I have further added to this from Thabo Mbeki's speech as reported by Themba Gadebe 26 September 2005 at a Heritage Day celebration: [*"What are the characteristics that inform the manner in which a South African approaches a variety of matters and challenges?" he asked. Mbeki said South Africans had a heritage that helped them face more than challenges, and a value system that guided their behaviour at the individual, family and community level. However, he pointed out that it may not be possible to speak of a single South African character and identity, because of the country's cultural diversity. "There is no dispute that we are a diverse society," he said. "All of us have consistently urged that we use this diversity as strength to unite our people."* But within this diversity, he said, are dominant values that bind communities together and ensure social cohesion. These values drive communities to act in solidarity with the weak and the poor, and help community members behave in a particular way for the common good.]

<http://www.southafrica.info/about/people/ubuntu-260905.htm>

When the term *ubuntu* is used it refers to a large, rich and positive values language system; one that builds rather than competes against individuals. "*What I do here is because of you and because of you I am here*". Words are: respect, dignity, trust, social cohesion, community, forgiveness, caring, family, sharing, compassion, humility and on it goes.

Connecting this with the Montessori community makes very obvious sense because this is exactly our choice in life as guides or facilitators of young children, role models to parents and inspiration to students, peers and colleagues. With Heritage Day upon us in September what activities can we specifically share as Montessorians with our children and families?

Jacky Price

Please share your thoughts or ideas with us here next month.

"...is no small undertaking, it involves the spiritual development of man, the enhancement of his value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live."



Dr. Maria Montessori
Education and Peace – Address in Copenhagen May
1937

Grace and Courtesy - From Childhood to Adulthood

The theme of this month's newsletter – cohesiveness – directed me back to last month's theme on grace and courtesy. I just can help seeing the connection, and I feel so strongly that this area of Montessori philosophy is what connects us and our schools. Grace and courtesy can be considered as a respect of the protocol that is part of human communication. It includes civility. We cannot introduce rights, privileges and responsibilities without including grace and courtesy. As the Montessori educator, our deep spiritual work is seeing beyond the surface of the people. In spite of everything, can we look beyond the ego we are presented with and find the child within? We need to find that place where the goodness lies and help the child to bring it out.

Consider the following aspects that may fall under the development of grace and courtesy, not only within an individual, but also a classroom, a community and even a nation.

- Respect
- Protocol
- Civility
- Justice
- Acceptance
- Generosity
- Open heartedness
- Common good
- Citizenship
- Compassion

Considering that grace and courtesy is a lifelong effort – how many of these aspects could we share with our children? By using age-appropriate scenarios, we can introduce these concepts over and over again. An understanding of, and the practice of these ideas can only bring us together and develop cohesive societies.

Consider the following example from our list above: **CITIZENSHIP**

From www.educationworld.com comes the following regarding the five themes of citizenship:

- Honesty is the basic theme of good citizenship. A person must be honest with others, and with himself or herself, in order to be a good citizen.
- Compassion is the emotion of caring for people and for other living things. Compassion gives a person an emotional bond with his or her world.
- Respect is similar to compassion but different in some ways. An important aspect of respect is self-respect, whereas compassion is directed toward others. Respect is also directed toward inanimate things or ideas as well as toward people. For example, people should have respect for laws. Finally, respect includes the idea of esteem or admiration, whereas compassion is a feeling people can have for others they don't necessarily admire.
- Out of honesty, compassion, and respect comes Responsibility, which includes both private, personal responsibility and public responsibility. Individuals and groups have responsibilities. Responsibility is about action, and it includes much of what people think of as good citizenship. You may wish to point out that one of the main responsibilities of students is to learn. They must educate themselves so that they can live up to their full potential.
- Finally, the theme of Courage is important to good citizenship. Human beings are capable of moving beyond mere goodness toward greatness. Courage enables people to do the right thing even when it's unpopular, difficult, or dangerous.

Here are a few simple ideas for each age group within the Montessori schools to introduce citizenship as a way of instilling grace and courtesy and cultivating cohesion.

3-6 YEARS	6-9 YEARS	9-12 YEARS	12-15 YEARS
Respect for self, others and the environment.	Responsibility to self, others and the environment.	Truth in friendship. Compassion towards others.	Responsibility to the community.
<p>Role plays work well here. Create scenarios where you demonstrate respectful behaviour towards someone or something (e.g. the material in the environment). Discuss this with the children and encourage them to see how they can show respect in the same way. This role-playing needs to be repeated often. Directresses in these environments should be patient and ‘have faith that the child will reveal himself through his work’. Respect should be modelled in the way we as adults speak to and guide these little ones.</p>	<p>Create work for the children that highlight responsibility. Have chores that the children can participate in. For example, separating recycling waste into plastic, tin and paper. Discuss the word responsibility. What is our responsibility to ourselves? Do we have a responsibility towards others? If so, how could we fulfil that responsibility? Share with the children the responsibilities that you as their teacher have. As this is the age for ‘fairness’, they will respond well to understanding that we all have our share of responsibilities.</p>	<p>The 9-12 year group in my experience moves into a much more mature understanding of friendships and need guidance and nurturing regarding their social groups. Use the theme ‘truth in friendship’ as writing prompt and then let the children use their writing to have a seminar discussion on what this topic really means. Compassion towards others will probably flow naturally from the discussion on friendship and truth. Honest and open discussions where the teacher includes some of the life-lessons s/he has learned over time would be valuable.</p>	<p>The adolescent can go out into the community and research the needs it has. The can then take responsibility for come community service where they are expected to make a commitment for a certain period of time. Working through a term works for us, but you may find that a six weekly cycle is more appropriated for your environment. Ideas here could include service at an retirement village, wet-nose centre, children’s homes or volunteering through church or similar organisations for charity functions.</p>

We should never be afraid of working with profound ideas with our children, because we are in fact working with profound human beings. We are educators of the human potential.

I would like to encourage schools to try and implement some of these themes in your environments and share what worked fro you for the next newsletter. It would be like passing your light on to the rest of the Montessori world. Don’t hide it under the proverbial bushel – share it so that Montessori schools can become known as places of grace and courtesy!

My thanks go to Pat Ludick from the Hudson Montessori School in Cleveland, Ohio for walking her talk, and being the embodiment of grace and courtesy.

Heidi van Staden

There is power in work that is freely chosen, and should never be underestimated in the child. There is work that needs to be done for the community or school or environment, and that work has to be done. Some work is freely chosen, while other tasks are essential. In having to do that kind of work, though, there can be choice, such as in community work like weeding, repairs, or other projects. Chores, however offer no choice, and have to be done as they are assigned and rotated. Choice is offered in work for the daily class work cycle. The three period lesson forms part of the work experience, where the adult introduces the activity and demonstrates any necessary steps or lessons. The student goes to the work in the second period after the imagination has been struck by a key lesson or experience. The student can work uninterrupted for a long period of time, and they are happy to do it. They need practice and sometimes suggestions in choosing work, and even in carrying out the work to and through the third period.

Lead S.A

What is Lead SA?

Lead SA is a Primedia Broadcasting initiative, supported by Independent Newspapers, that aims to highlight the achievements of the nation and celebrate the efforts of ordinary South Africans who continually seek to do the right thing for themselves, for their families and for their country.

Lead SA encourages individuals to stand up and accept responsibility for the challenges they face. The Lead SA initiative is a long term project that is set to be rolled out over the next few years. Through the small steps of individuals the nation will improve and prosper.

Why Lead SA?

The ability to change your life and your country is in your hands. Rather than feeling helpless, Lead SA encourages you to feel hopeful about your future and play an active part in unlocking the potential of your country. South Africa is filled with passionate people and the nation's achievements are endless, but we need you to use your leadership potential and move the nation forward.

The real question is why not Lead SA.

How are we going to Lead SA?

Initially, Lead SA will celebrate South Africa and its leaders from Nelson Mandela, to the ordinary people who make a difference to our country through their everyday actions. It's through the seemingly insignificant actions of others that a nation is built and we will highlight the positive steps people are taking in order to improve the lives of those around them.

We will also challenge issues and behaviours that undermine our country. We will hold those in positions of power accountable for their actions. As the excitement about leading our country develops, we will be guided by listeners and continue to grow our involvement.

How can I get involved in Lead SA?

It's quite simple. It starts with you. Your actions have an undeniable impact on those around you. By positively changing your behaviour, you are able to positively change the world you live in. Even your seemingly insignificant behaviour, like smiling at a stranger or not littering, has an effect on people's lives.

By choosing to promote the positive and standing up against the negative, you can lead South Africa.

www.leadsa.co.za

Ways of taking the lead

Lead SA offers a number of ways in which ordinary South Africans can become part of the initiative:

- **Stand up for what's right. If you've had a glass too many, let a designated driver take you home.**
- **Stand up to corruption. Don't bribe.**
- **Stand up for morality. Report crime.**
- **Stand up for your community. Get to know your neighbours.**
- **Stand up against indifference. Take an interest in those around you.**
- **Stand up for free speech. Listen to the other side.**
- **Stand up for your future. Respect the environment.**
- **Stand up for education. Read to your children.**
- **Help instead of Hinder. Say yes when asked to do a favour, don't look for excuses.**
- **Acknowledge goodness. When you have something good to say, say it.**



“I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think”

Socrates

101 Ways To Build a Stronger School Community

By **Tim Seldin**,

From www.montessori.org

Create an atmosphere of warmth and caring

Smile at everyone you meet. Make them feel welcome

Stand in front of the school every day and chat with people as they arrive.

Greet every student, parent, and, hopefully, grandparents by name.

Encourage the entire community to get to know one another.

Establish an open door atmosphere

Whenever possible, administrators and even teachers should welcome anyone from the school community who wants to see them.

When they need to set another time to speak, they should do so graciously.

Send your students a birthday card.

Organize programs for families with very young children.

Respond to every family tragedy and crisis with warmth and caring.
When tragedy strikes, call, visit, send cards, and lend a helping hand as a community.

Create a tuition-funded financial aid program. Set a goal that no child will have to leave your school because of financial problems.

Ensure that your financial aid process is warm, friendly, and strictly confidential

Always have name tags at parent gatherings

If you have a computer that can do this, prepare permanent nametags that are kept at school and include the parent's name, their children's names and ages, the number years that they have been at the school, and any special roles that they play around the school.

Surprise community gatherings with coffee and cake

Send holiday greeting cards from your school

Promote staff smiles

Say "We missed you"

Send each student a valentine. Give your teachers and staff flowers on Valentine's Day.

Don't forget the janitor and part-time after-care staff! Everyone is part of the community.

Shock the staff with flowers on a day when no one expects it.

If your school allows it, bring some wine to a community meeting and drink a toast to the school. Share memories and stories and watch the tears begin to flow.

Open and close the school year with special ceremonies.

Plan special social events for the staff, volunteers, and board.

Be a real person.

Always provide childcare at evening parent meeting.

Plan a theatre party.

Keep a pot of coffee and/or tea going for parents who drop in.

Hold a community picnic.

Plan occasional extravaganzas

Always be kind and gentle to one another.

Send out thank you notes at the drop of a hat.

Be sure that the phone is answered promptly by the nicest, calmest, most unflappable human being that you can find.

Remember that the receptionist/school secretary is in many ways the glue that holds a school community together. Love and cherish this key staff member!

Say "Thank You"

Smile some more

Help your community feel a sense of trust and ownership in your school.

Put out a suggestion box for parents, teachers, and students.

Take time to talk to people.

Hold informal discussions to brainstorm and explore new ideas.

Defend your community against hostile or negative parents, children, and staff.

Recognize that each parent, student and staff member has personal needs and problems. Accommodate them if you can.

Ask your families, teachers, and staff what they think. Do it often.

Hold informal parent gatherings off campus in parent homes. Limit each gathering to a comfortable number. They are perfect forums to present and discuss new ideas.

Hold monthly community meetings with an open agenda.

Never make parents feel guilty if they find it difficult to get free from work to come pick up a sick child.

Take the time to explain things fully.

Publish a well-designed, thorough Annual Report.

Enable and encourage teachers and volunteers to grow on the job.

When the time comes, allow your staff to grow out of their jobs and move on lovingly.

Encourage parents to volunteer in the classrooms

Ensure that volunteers who serve on committees have a positive experience.

Avoid long boring meetings, politics, or wrangling.

Keep volunteer assignments short to allow them to get a sense of completion.

Invite the entire community to Board meetings. Hold meetings on a regular schedule.

Publish a summary of the decisions of the board promptly after each meeting

Help your parents feel confident that their kids are getting a first-class education

Hold at least two "People Nights" a year: evenings where children get to bring two people to school as their guests. The children teach their guests how to do what they do in class.

Make a commitment as a school community to an on-going broadly based program of self-study and school improvement.

Take the time as a community to develop a "Blueprint" for your school

Hold monthly class meetings, preferably on the same nights as the community meetings.

Make sure that no one ever feels threatened or blindsided at a parent/teacher conference.

Encourage your teachers to call parents regularly just to share good news or to touch base.

Allow enough time for meaningful discuss at parent/teacher conferences.

Develop a system of gathering the children's work, stories, and art into portfolios to give to their families.

Remember that parents want and expect frequent and meaningful information about their children's progress.

Consider organizing a system of well-written individual narrative reports.

Periodically hold Parent Forums: open discussions (not parent ed. talks) in which the parents explore an issue of broad interest among themselves with minimal leadership from the school staff.

Proof read every letter, note, newsletter, and handbook that goes out from your teachers, staff, and office. Many, many families will interpret misspellings or grammatical errors as evidence that a school is not capable of providing a world-class education.

Be careful to ensure that you communicate clearly, accurately, and with great warmth. Never allow your school to sound cold and impersonal.

Create an atmosphere of safety, cleanliness, and timeless beauty

Create pleasant surroundings.

Take excruciating care to keep your grounds safe and in good repair.

Be sure that all trash is picked up, that your bathrooms are spotless, that the school smells fresh, and that your buildings and grounds show an attention to detail and beauty.

Establish a very active buildings and grounds committee following Chris Gallagher's "Pattern Language" approach.

Develop a "Pattern Language" for your campus. Follow it carefully.

Establish a safety committee to be on the lookout for potential problems. Listen to them carefully whenever they raise a concern.

Help new members of your community feel welcome

Hold a new parent reception every year.

Establish a buddy system in which experienced families take new families under their wing.

Assign a master teacher to mentor every new teacher who comes to your school.

Be sure that new volunteers are carefully taught how to do the tasks that they've undertaken. Don't let them get confused and frustrated

Consider having your teachers visit each new family at home. The insight that they will glean and the message of caring that it sends are worth the time and energy invested.

Give each other lots of acknowledgment and a sense of pride

Praise parents and teachers to their friends

Send press releases of any and all newsworthy information to the media.

Create in your front hall an Honour Roll of community members who have made extraordinary contributions of time, expertise, and/or dollars to your school.

Publish a weekly school newsletter.

If you can't publish every week, consider sending one out every other week.

Be sure that your newsletter looks attractive and is well written.

Include articles in it that parents really want to read.

Use your newsletter to publish pictures of children doing interesting things.

See if you can't join together with other Montessori schools to organize community-wide cooperative programs, special events, celebrations, open houses, or community service projects.

Plan annual ceremonies to celebrate the key points of the year.

Create a special acknowledgment pin to recognize parents and teachers who have made an extraordinary contribution of service to the school

Design a colourful window decal with the name and logo of the school. Give them to parents and teachers to put in the car's rear windows.

Design a terrific school t-shirt. Include at least one in the price of tuition and "give" it to every child.

Consider taking out an ad in the local papers or renting billboard space to acknowledge your teachers, families, and special volunteers for their service to the school

Social Development

In the first plane, Montessori speaks about a society by cohesion that is bound by love. The children have an effortless attraction towards each other – a natural gravitation towards developing their little society. In the second plane, the child's socialisation takes on a new dynamic. These children want to know how the world and society function. They strive for social independence. He asks questions, judges, and begins to find his place in the group. The individual identifies himself with the group to which he belongs. The third plane child is striving for normality. He needs to form his place in society. He is interested in building his community. When this happens, the individual thinks more about the success of the group than of his own personal success.



“Work is man’s fundamental instinct.”

Education and Peace. p. 139

“Social integration has occurred when the individual identified himself with the group to which he belongs. When this has happened the individual thinks more about the success of the group than of his personal success.

From Childhood to Adolescence

Members Pages

We at **Greenwood** reach out to our community in many different ways. One way is by inviting our parents to a Montessori Information Evening whereby we inform them about how we work in the classroom. They all get a chance to be a child for a moment and see the world through children's eyes. We include information on how to be a Montessori Parent. We partake in many community projects – e.g. planting gardens and collecting clothing and food for distribution to underprivileged schools, doing art projects with disabled children, art displays at our local library and cleaning our town and beaches.

Our children have a firm sense of the greater community and that thinking of others is of utmost importance.

Greenwood Preschool

There are non competitive games on the market, where the children have to play together to solve or work through the game.

One that we have is where the children play together to save the dinosaur from drowning as the water rises. Through combining “saving method” cards they can save him, or feed him; the emphasis is on combining resources. These are suitable for ages 5 and up. My group love this game!

Blue Moon Montessori Preschool



Soccer team of Knysna Montessori School

Recommended reads:

29 Gifts. How a Month of Giving can change your life

By Cami Walker

De Capo Press

From the book: *“Healing doesn’t always happen in a vacuum, but through our interactions with other people. By giving, you are focusing on what you have to offer others, inviting more abundance in your life.”*

“Giving of any kind is taking a positive action that begins the process of change. It will shift your energy for life.”

Through her journey to heal herself, this autobiography shares with its readers the gift of giving and it's healing powers.

“In our last newsletter we stated that Sam Streak has resigned from her role as trustee and NAISA representative for personal reasons. Sam has asked that this statement be retracted as she did not state that her resignations were for personal reasons. We thus retract this statement in accordance with Sam's request. Her resignations remain.”

The Exco and editor of the SAMA newsletter would like to apologise to Sam for the error in the previous newsletter as stated above. It was erroneous to assume that Sam's reason for resigning was personal when in fact no reason was given.

Word Search

Another puzzle for you to solve together over your coffee break or in a staff meeting.

ubuntu

m w n g i d t r v x w h r s
c o u r t e s y f h i m e e h
d b t s g l n y p v f c i t a
l z v e f r t e b o o p h c r
r u k u y i s q r n d y w e i
c n v l n t d g c o r f g p n
y o s a w p i i d b s n n s g
r t m v z v l n l u i i w e y
s u i p e i o w g r q f t r n
h u m n a v s u a i c a j y o
f c e t u s v c n b d m y o m
y s i j q t s u r t v i f l r
s o d k m u u i v m j l i j a
n n k e k x x x o s r y z c h
c o m m u n i t y n f h b g x

caring harmony
community humanity
compassion reconciliation
courtesy respect
dignity sharing
family trust
forgiveness unity
generosity values

Answers for July/August Crossword:

Across: 1. isthmus, 3. lacing frame, 4. farm, 8. beadstair, 9. sandpaper capitals, 10. bells, 11. pink tower, 12. binomial cube, 13. spindles, 14. cube

Down: 2. flags, 5. metal insets, 6. Ellipsoid, 7. tellarium, 15. Roman arch

“Morality cannot be regarded in the limited sense in which we usually use the word. Our idea of morality today is expressed in certain number of precepts – not harming others, pursuing justice loving our fellow man as our brother...it must have a positive, practical basis.”

Education and Peace. p.99

Marketing

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eduequipment@telkomsa.net

If you would like to advertise in the SAMA Newsletter,
please send the relevant information through to
admin@samontessori.org.za

**Focus for September issue: Authentic Record
Keeping and planning
2010 Deadline for submissions: 20 August**

*All articles are contributed by SAMA members. We
would love to hear from our readers. Please send
interesting snippets, valuable insights and amusing
anecdotes to share with others and help make this
newsletter an exciting and interesting one. If you feel
you would like to contribute, please send to Irmgard*

via: admin@samontessori.org.za

Vacancy available for Directress in toddler environment
at Olivedale Montessori. Half day, Starting in October
2010. Please contact Chantel on 08273 3447. or email
chantel@olivedalemontessori.co.za

Vacancies

Western Cape:

2 Montessori Assistants position available in
Southern Suburbs for January 2011. Montessori
tertiary experience is essential. Send CV to
blumoonmontessori@telkomsa.net

Montessori preschool directress needed for
Honeycomb Montessori Preschool.

Available immediately - but 2011 applicants can also
apply. Please call 021 7943725, Speak to Anne /
Annette or email: honeycombpre@telkomsa.net

MONTESSORI DIRECTOR REQUIRED for 3-6yrs class
Jan 2011 in reputable school/training centre nr
Wynberg, Cape Town. Only candidates with a good
Montessori qualification & experience will be
considered.

MONTESSORI PRIMARY SCHOOL, Wynberg, Cape
Town, requires senior primary teacher (grades 4-6) Jan
2011. Preference will be given to candidates with
relevant qualifications & experience in junior/senior
Montessori primary education. High level of
English/literature, life sciences and maths competency
essential.

MONTESSORI DIRECTOR REQUIRED to start and
establish 3-6 yrs class for children at risk, in new
community centre; Muizenberg, Cape Town,
September/October 2010. Applicants must be fluent in
Afrikaans & English, be creative, compassionate and
responsible and have good qualifications &
considerable experience in Montessori education.

Contact Auburn House School ph 0217977872, fax
0217971931 or info@auburnhouse.co.za

Gauteng:

Centurion Montessori School: Position available for a
6-9 year Directress/Teacher or an experienced 3 - 6
year Directress willing to work in the 6 - 9 year
environment. Please email C.V. to
school@centurionmontessori.co.za or call 083 453 1115.

A mature, strong personality, female Administrator required
for the school from 2011—hand over from mid Nov
Person should be proficient in Microsoft office, HR, Pastel
payroll, budgets & accts She will be responsible for
domestic and aftercare staff. Hours 8am-2pm during terms.
Little Oak Montessori School

Maria Montessori House has a position available in
January 2011 for a 9-12 Montessori Directress or
Director. Applications can be made by emailing your
C.V. to anne@mariamontessori.co.za.

Available SAMA Products:

- **The SAMA Recommended Curriculum** – an integration of A Montessori Recommended Curriculum with the Revised National Curriculum Statement. For queries and to order, contact the SAMA office. The curriculum is printed and bound, and is available to paid up SAMA Organisational Members for R250.00 and to all other categories of membership for R1000.
- **SAMA Policies and Procedures CDs** – a comprehensive compilation of government laws, acts, and policies on CD 1 and examples from various Montessori schools and resources to use in school management on CD 2, at R50.00 each. These prices are for organisational members only. All other categories of membership may purchase the CDs for R500 per set.
- **SAMA Parents Handbook** – a full colour, beautiful publication, useful to parents as an introduction to Montessori Education. This booklet covers basic Montessori philosophy and is the ideal starting point for parent education. These handbooks are available to SAMA Organisational Members only at R25 per copy. For orders of 30 or more, additional postage will be added.

For more details contact: admin@samontessori.org.za

NATIONAL OFFICE: Eastern Cape admin@samontessori.org.za		
SAMA Administrator: Irmgard Pringle		
Telephone Cell number 072 609 5979		
	General and Membership Administrator	admin@samontessori.org.za
Heidi van Staden	President and Trustee	president@samontessori.org.za
Sumaya Tar Mahomed	General Secretary and Trustee	firstfriends@live.co.za
Charl du Toit	Ordinary member	c/o admin@samontessori.org.za
Laurelee Parr	Ordinary Member	c/o admin@samontessori.org.za
Ina Smith	Ordinary Member	c/o admin@samontessori.org.za
Noleen Clarke	Ordinary Member	c/o admin@samontessori.org.za
Lana Player	Ordinary Member	c/o admin@samontessori.org.za
Susanne van Niekerk	SAMA Trustee	susannev@mweb.co.za
Michael Wildner	SAMA Trustee	c/o president@samontessori.org.za

