



National Newsletter

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Newsletter for Parents of SAMA Member Schools

The month of August represents the last month of winter. The days are slowly becoming warmer and longer. In South Africa we paid tribute to the Women who played an important role in the making and shaping of our history by commemorating them on Woman's Day, the 9th of August.



August, however, has a different importance to Montessori Schools around the world as we celebrated Maria Montessori's birthday on the 31st. Although she died in 1952, her ideas have, and continue to have, a profound and growing influence on education around the world. She was influenced by many great thinkers and her theories brought together the knowledge and science of her time. Her theories influenced the work of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson and Anna Freud.

Although Montessori schools may appear to have a lot in common with other quality schools, Montessori has some very distinctive outcomes.

Firstly it is an education method based on mutual respect and development of the individual. Secondly, the Montessori Prepared Environment is like no other in which multi ages function according to their planes of development. It is bright and exciting; stimulates learning and creativity and encourages a strong sense of community which is managed by children and educators together. This wonderful environment develops leadership skills and independence.

Montessori classrooms make use of precisely crafted hands-on materials to explain abstract concepts. Our children are not forced to learn by memorization but rather by active engagement in their studies. The children have an internal sense of purpose and motivation that is developed through an integrated Cosmic curriculum. The teacher facilitates learning, coaches children and comes to know them as a friend during the three year cycle. This is why I chose Montessori.

So often parents choose a Montessori school because it is a "buzz word", or they've heard about the academic results that are often achieved. Many misunderstand that a Montessori school will push your child academically without realizing that the brilliant academic results are only a byproduct of a well-run school with the individual at heart.

Many parents are flabbergasted by the sensorial, mathematics and cultural material on the shelves, but forget to see their child as a whole individual who, during their growing years, needs to develop holistically not only academically.



In her book, "To Educate the Human Potential", Maria Montessori wrote: *"Our aim therefore is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his inmost core. We do not want complacent pupils, but eager ones; we seek to sow life in the child rather than theories, to help him in his growth, mental and emotional as well as physical."*

Luckily those parents soon realize the far greater impact of Montessori education.

This month we bring tribute to a woman who changed not only education, but our way of thinking of the child. We celebrate Montessori's life work around the world. For you as a parent it is time to reflect back on the journey you have experienced in a Montessori school and to ask yourself: "Why Montessori?" Share your experiences with your friends and help us grow Montessori in South Africa.

It would be great to hear your experiences, feel free to forward any to admin@samontessori.org.za

Regards

Charl du Toit