



Southern African Montessori Association

August 2007

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Message from the President

Dear SAMA Members,

Welcome to the (nearly) spring edition of the SAMA newsletter. The theme of this newsletter is Nature and Eco-Schools which is perfect timing...hopefully winter starts releasing her grip on us and we can start to enjoy our amazing African sun! As someone who grew up in Durban, I cannot wait!

When we look at Maria Montessori's writings on Nature in Education, we are again reminded of how far ahead of her time she was. Essentially she was one of the first people to actively advocate eco-education in schools. Now more than ever, we need to ensure the children in our lives experience nature each day.

News from Exco is that we are all still working hard, and at times it proves to be quite a balancing act for some. News of the 100 Steps was sent out to everyone and we hope to have lots of schools participating. A small sub-committee made up of Heidi van Staden, Sharon Caldwell and I have begun working on a draft document related to Montessori Best Practice. There is some further information within the newsletter for you to read and hopefully contribute to.

As always, if there is anything we can do at SAMA to help you, please let us know. We appreciate the positive feedback we have been receiving from members and are very encouraged by increased membership – both new and renewals. Until next time, enjoy the emergence of spring.

Warm regards
 Sam Streak



Nature in Education

Excerpts from The Discovery of The Child (Clio Press Ltd, Oxford, 1988)

“At the present time, however, and in the circumstances of modern society, children live very far from nature and have few opportunities of coming into intimate contact with, or having any direct experience of, it...As a matter of fact, a child need to live naturally and not simply have a knowledge of nature. The most important thing to do is to free the child, if possible, from the ties which keep him isolated in the artificial life of a city.” (p69)

“...Let the children be free; encourage them; let them run outside when it is raining; let them remove their shoes when they find a puddle of water; and when the grass of the meadows is damp with dew, let them run on it and trample it with their bare feet; let them rest peacefully when a tree invites them to sleep beneath its shade; let them shout and laugh when the sun wakes them in the morning as it makes every living creature that divides its days between waking and sleeping.” (p71)

“Education in school can fix the attention of a child on special objects which will show exactly how far he has been able to stir up within himself a feeling for nature or will arouse within him latent or lost sentiments. Here, as in every other kind of activity, the function of the school is to supply him with interesting information and motives for action. A child, who more than anyone else is a spontaneous observer of nature, certainly needs to have at his disposal material upon which he can work.” (p73)



Nature and Infants...A Treasure Basket

One of the best ways to help infants become more familiar with their world, even before they are mobile, is to create a treasure basket. At home, parents can build a "Treasure Basket". It is a box or basket filled with common objects found in the home and surroundings – using as many natural objects as possible. The activity is especially stimulating for infants old enough to sit independently.

The objects are ones used by people everyday. They will give child full sensorial experiences during a time when the infant is not yet fully mobile but with an Absorbent Mind eager to learn new things. The objects stimulate the senses by allowing the child to see, touch, hear, smell and taste. Some objects have specific uses while others just look or feel a certain way. They will lead the child to ask their questions of 'what is this?' and 'what can I do with it?', thus laying the foundation of understanding the world they live in.

As the child becomes more mobile, they can participate in collecting their own items for their treasure basket. Older siblings can also be involved in the process for example: a trip to the beach can start with an empty basket and be filled with “treasures” for the younger sibling.

(Be careful not to include objects that can easily come apart into smaller pieces and everything should at least be able to be explored in the mouth! Avoid objects with strong sensory experiences i.e. not too rough, scented etc). Enjoy observing your infant exploring his world with a beginner’s mind...

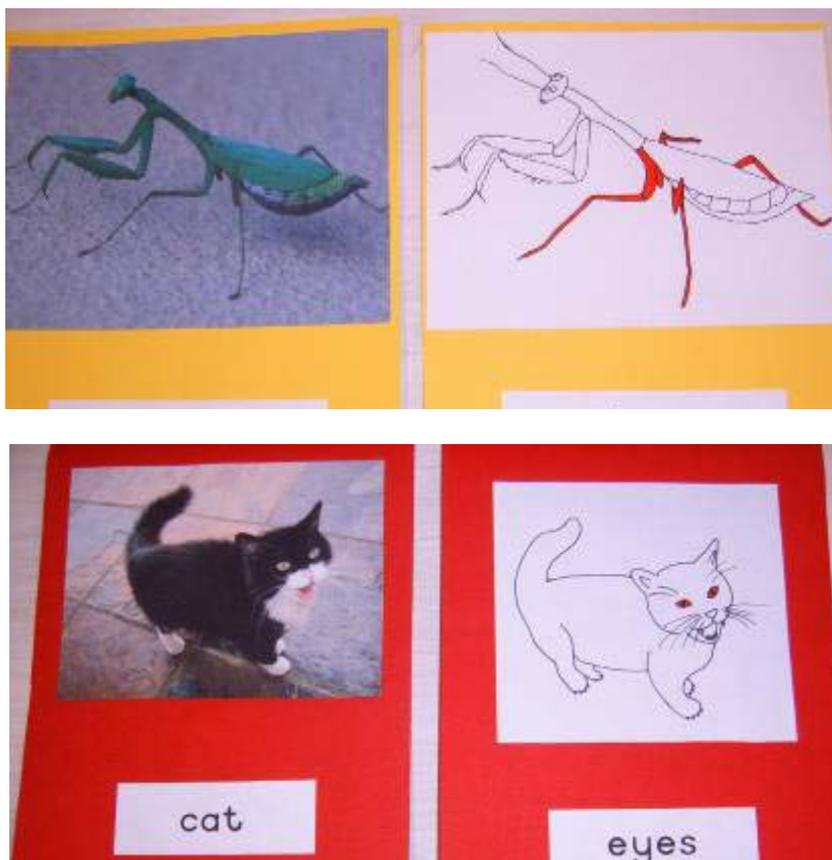
-Sam Streak

Making of nomenclature materials

Tired of looking at the same old photocopied samples that get rehashed year in year out from your student days! Well....make your own by using your very own environment.

Your unique environment should be the resources you are looking for. Take a digital photo of the garden chameleon, praying mantis and spider, your indigenous flowers, plants and trees, even the school dog. Use the photo as your full coloured picture and trace a repeated outline for all the other parts. You then have your very own nomenclature cards for biology and zoology distinctive to your school. These are what your children encounter, so use them by bringing meaning to what they are experiencing first hand!

Jacky Price



Created by Montessori student, Suzie Jirachareonkul, from Headstart Mercy Montessori Cape Town

“Nature restores our sense of peace and allows us to feel life touching us. The more-than-human world soothes and nourishes our spirits and sometimes frightens us with its power. We make this gift available to our children as we teach them to respect nature, to walk with awareness, to speak softly, to listen well, to disturb nothing, and to leave no destructive record of their visit.”

***10 Principles for Spiritual Parenting* Mimi Moe with Marsha Walsh**

100 Steps in Swaziland

– Sam Streak

Thanks to a warm invitation extended to me by Shida Sinaei of the Montessori International School in Mbabane, Swaziland, I had the pleasure in participating in the first 100 Steps Walk held in Africa (that we know of!).

Despite raging veldfires and very strong winds, a wonderful day was experienced by all. The school community from staff, parents and children, were so welcoming and it was easy to feel part of their Centenary celebrations.

Shida has a very supportive parent and staff body and this was evident with many turning out for all the events. The 100 Steps Walk was well organised at the Prince of Wales Stadium and lots of people braved an icy wind to join in the spirit of things. With a police presence for safety, TV crews to film the event and newspaper reporters covering the Walk, it made everyone feel important and special.

The children at school had used the Metal Insets quatrefoil to make medals for all who completed the 100 Steps. Of course we all did many more

than 100 Steps but those first 100 taken together, with everyone counting them, was one of those “lump in the throat” moments. To hear the beautiful little voices of children counting so studiously and knowing this will be happening all over the world during this year was an unforgettable moment.

After the Walk, everyone joined in a fundraising, fun day at school with games, face painting, a jumping castle and excellent food. A special finale to the day was the releasing of 10 pigeons for peace.

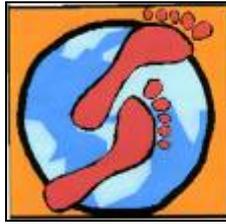
Thank you Shida, her family and all involved for the welcoming reception, kindness and true example of the Montessori spirit at work. It is definitely a highlight of my year so far and inspiration to get our own 100 Steps Walk going here in South Africa.



34 Montessori schools commissioned together a billboard on the Houston highway in the USA to advertise the Centenary of Montessori

Centenary Celebrations

“100 Steps for Montessori” is a sponsored walk to raise awareness of Montessori during the Centenary year. It is an invitation to every Montessori school in the world to take part in a global sponsored walk.



100
steps for
Montessori



12 – 14 October to be the South African 100 Steps weekend

Centenary Song

The following Centenary song by Yvonne Donnelley was sung by the children from Marin Montessori School at the AMI/USA Gala.

English:

We are the children, we are the children.
We are the future of the world.
We are the children,
We are all your children.
We will do the great work and celebrate the world.
(Written and composed by Yvonne Donnelley)

Italian:

Siamo i Bambini, siamo i bambini.
Siamo il futuro del mondo.
Siamo i Bambini,
Tutti i vostri bambini.
Foremo il lavaro grande, e celebreremo il mondo.
(Translated by Mel Sibony)

Japanese:

Bokura wa kodomo, bokura wa kodomo.
Bokura wa sekai no mirai.
Bokura wa kodomo,
Min-na no kodomo.
Bokura de tsukuro sekai no wa.
(Translated by Miho Hatfield)

Taken from the message board of
www.montessoricentenary.org

Spanish:

Somos los niños, somos los niños.
Somos el futuro del mundo.
Somos los niños,
Somos todos sus niños.
Haremos el gran trabajo, y celebraremos el mundo.
(Translated by Mel Sibony)

Swahili:

Sisi ni watoto, sisi ni watoto.
Sisi ni kesho ya dunia.
Sisi ni watoto,
Sisi wote ni watoto.
Sisi tutafanya kazi nzuri na kusherekea dunia.
(Translated by Joseph Omwamba)

We Are The Children



We are the chil- dren we are the chil- dren We are the fu- ture
of the world. We are the chil- dren We are all your chil- dren
We will do the great work and cel- e-brate the World.
©2006 ydonnelley

Eco-Schools

What is the Eco-Schools programme?

The Eco-Schools programme is designed to encourage curriculum-based action for a healthy environment. It is an internationally recognised award scheme that accredits schools that make a commitment to continuously improve their school's environmental performance.

When schools register with the programme, both teachers and learners commit to an ongoing process of developing lesson plans and learner-centred activities that are in line with Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). They choose at least three focus areas, develop lesson plans and school improvement plans and record their progress in a portfolio. Portfolios are assessed at the end of a year, and successful schools gain Eco-School status and are awarded a green flag. Schools may keep their flag and status for a year, after which another portfolio is submitted and assessed.



For further information, please contact national Eco-Schools co-ordinators, Bridget Ringdahl or Caroline Conway-Physick at WESSA on (033) 330 3931 or email ecoschools@wessa.co.za

The Giving Tree

– An inspiring tale for all ages.

A friend recently showed me a copy of *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. It is a simple but beautiful story that touches the heart. (It is available on the internet along with some great ideas. Just Google it – it is for all ages!)

I immediately got my own copy and read it to my Upper Primary class and this led to one of those wonderful discussions. I am always in awe of the wisdom these children hold!

What Would Happen? (Written by Nina Osmond, 12 years old at PE Montessori School)

What would happen if there were no trees?
None of the birds, none of the bees?
None of the flowers, but polluted seas?
None of the fishes having sweet dreams?

What would happen to the bird's sweet tune?
All of the flowers starting to bloom?
None of the wolves howling at the moon?
But with pollution, its coming too soon.

People are starting to destruct the land,
Turning beautiful forests into sand.
Not giving animals a helping hand,
I really don't think it is all that grand!

Mother Nature (Written by Jade Badier, 10 years old at PE Montessori School)

She hears the cries of trees falling, being
chopped by an axe.
The cries make a pain in her head and give her
a broken heart.
Because we can't hear the cry of trees as they
fall to the ground.

A tear of sadness falls down her cheek – the tree
is gone.
Mother Nature hurts a little more inside.
Inside the pain – I can't explain how much it
hurts her.

Each time one cry, each time it falls, the tree
cries and cries.
And we know each time it hurts her a little more
inside.
Its like her heart is fading. She is the one who
feels guilty
But it is all actually us...

One of the children, Danielle Heath (12 years old in a week's time!), wrote her own version inspired by the Giving Tree which I promised to share.

A Late Bloom by Danielle Heath

*With one little seed you can make a big tree
Said the little girl to her mother with glee.
So her mother bought the seed and took it
home
Gave it to her daughter and left her alone.*

*The next day the girl took her seed into the
flowerbed*

*Set it down to rest its seedy head.
She covered the seed with a blanket of soil
She gave it something to drink and didn't
cover it with foil.*

*Years went by and the tree grew and grew
Under the skies of the brightest blue.
Her mother got angry, the tree was way
huge!
She was going to cut it down or they would
have to move.*

*The girl started crying and ran to her room
The mother took a chain saw covered with
gloom
The tree was taken down, just a stump left
The girl thought the rest of the tree was
taken in theft.*

*The girl went to school, sadly ignoring the
stump
Leaving it there in a lump.
One day she looked up a bit soon
And there on the stump was a late bloom*



Photographs of children, courtesy of Sharon Caldwell from Nahoon Montessori School. East London

Whilst in the sand pit and noting the difference in colours between the sand and the soil, this young three old aptly described the earth as “chocolate sand”! ...if given the chance he would have eaten it I’m sure!

Montessori Best Practice

A Call to Members for Your Contributions

Montessori Best Practice – A Reflective Guide to Standards in Montessori Schools

A small sub-committee within Exco has been formed to start working on a draft version of a Montessori Best Practice document. This is intended to become something that every Montessori school can use to guide themselves towards implementing the essence of Maria Montessori's vision. By using this approach, we hope standards can improve in all our schools.

At this stage, we are still in the gathering of resources stage. Once we have a framework developed, based on as much input from members as possible, we will workshop the document around the country so that everyone contributes to its development.

What we would appreciate from SAMA members at this stage is what you consider to be the elements that would define Montessori Best Practice – a list of the things that make us Montessori schools. To give you an idea of where to start, some of the things we are already looking at are:

- Vertical Grouping according to Dr Montessori's Planes of Development
- No use of reward and punishment
- Peace Education
- A prepared environment with developmentally appropriate equipment

We are aware that some aspects of Best Practice would differ for the various planes of development and would like feedback from you on this aspect too.

This may be an excellent topic for a staff meeting – examining the presence of Montessori philosophy in your school each day. Please send your ideas, feedback or comments to president@samontessori.org.za as soon as possible for inclusion in this process. We would appreciate submissions by 1st October 2007.

Regards

Sam Streak, Heidi van Staden and Sharon Caldwell

F.Y.I - What is NAISA?

Naisa is the National Alliance of Independent Schools Associations. Naisa aims to be:

- A voice of independent school associations and JLCs (Joint Liaison Committees) to the DoE
- A forum for discussing matters of mutual concern and lobbying the DoE
- Representatives of independent schools associations at National level in its dealings with government on national policy issues
- Relationship building with other entities in education e.g. SACE, UMALUSI etc
- It is vital for smaller associations such as SAMA to belong to Naisa as it gives us the opportunity to have our voices heard.

SAMA is a paid up member of Naisa and Bukelwa Selema is our representative on Naisa.

An Urgent Request for Your Co-operation

Lorraine Wright is our membership administrator and has worked extremely hard over the past few months to get our databases and membership information as up to date as possible. Together with Susanne van Niekerk (Treasurer), Lorraine is responsible for ensuring we, as Exco, are given accurate membership information so that we are sure we are reaching all our members.

However, there are often situations where membership fees and child levies are paid into the SAMA account (sometimes large amounts of money), with absolutely no references or paper trail to assist them in allocating these to the correct person or school.

We really appeal to you to PLEASE help them by submitting all requested forms, child levy returns etc. We rely on having this information for accurate communication with you and in order to do our jobs efficiently. We also use member information to provide statistics to government and other education bodies so that our Montessori voice is heard.

If you have any outstanding documentation that has been requested by Lorraine or Susanne – please let them have it as soon as possible.

You can fax it to: **0866 958 296**

We thank you in advance for your co-operation
Sam Streak
SAMA President

ELANDSVLEI CONSERVANCY, NESTPARK BAPSFONTEIN AND KALEIDOSCOPE SCHOOL
MONTESSORI; HAVE PLEASURE IN INVITING YOU TO MEET

BYRON – THE CHEETAH

WHEN? SATURDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2007

TIME? 14H00 SHARP

WHERE? KALEIDOSCOPE SCHOOL, PLOT 4 PRETORIUS STREET, NESTPARK AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS (SEE DIRECTIONS BELOW)

BYRON – THE CHEETAH, IS THE AMBASSADOR OF THE DE WILDT CHEETAH AND WILDLIFE CENTRE. HE IS COMING TO TEACH US MORE ABOUT CONSERVATION AND IN PARTICULAR CHEETAHS. HE IS TAME AND VERY HUMAN FRIENDLY. HE PARTICULARLY LIKES TO TEACH CHILDREN

Gates open at 10.00 am Entrance Fee R5.00

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 - FARMYARD OF CHICKENS, DUCKS AND GESE
 - WALK IN THE SERENE FAIRY GARDENS AND THE LABYRINTH
 - CONSERVANCY AND ECO-SCHOOLS INFORMATION
 - RAFFLE OF A BEAUTIFUL CHEETAH PAINTING AND INDIGENOUS TREES
 - JUDGING OF CHILDREN'S ART COMPETITION AND FACE PAINTING
- A FAMILY AND FRIENDS FOR A FUN DAY OUT

.CONTACTS FOR INFORMATION *JILL 082 320 8607 *ROBIN 083 659 3989 *CAROL 082 454 4007

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| • Pre-primary | 3 – 6 years | 2 year course | R8,500 per annum |
| • Junior Primary | 6 – 9 years | 1 year course | R8,500 |
| • Senior Primary | 9 – 12 years | 1 year course | R8,500 |

One-year courses = 120 credits. Two- year course = 240 credits

These fees all include tuition, marking fees, two textbooks and examination fees

- | | | | |
|--------------|--|------------------|--------|
| • Management | | 6 months' course | R4,500 |
|--------------|--|------------------|--------|

Full-time:

- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------|---------------|---------|
| • Pre-primary | 3 – 6 years | 1 year course | R18,500 |
| • Junior primary | 6 – 9 years | 1 year course | R18,500 |

Both these courses = 240 credits

These fees include tuition, marking fees, two textbooks and examination fees

Workshops:

- | | | | |
|---|--|------------|------|
| • Sensorial Extensions | | (10 hours) | R400 |
| • Integrated Cultural Learning Programmes for Grade R | | (10 hours) | R400 |

Namibia & Gauteng Workshops:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| • Pre-primary workshop: | 5 days | R1,200 |
| • Elementary Workshop: | 5 days | R1,500 |
| • Special needs Workshop: | 5 days | R1,200 |

Enquiries:

to Kay: +27 21 683 3458 (mornings)

email: mmattc@mweb.co.za

website: www.headstartmercy.co.za

Marketing

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For Sale: Wooden boxes and trays in all sizes
(painted and unpainted) for storing and
displaying of Montessori material.

Craft classes offered: relating specifically to the
Montessori curriculum and craft materials in kit
form available for purchasing. Contact Details:
Shahida Asmall – Phone: 0312090675,
0848177867. Email: shaber.asmall@huletts.co.za

Nucleus Toys

Wooden Educational Toys, as seen at Durban
Conference. Cape Town Rep: Jacky Price
021 7978550 or 084 4040447

Email: chandler2@telkomsa.net

For view of products: www.nucleustoys.com

Print your own Montessori materials. I have
permission to sell an unused Classroom
Creations CD containing PDF versions of the full
set of nomenclatures and language cards. Once a
license has been purchased by a school, they are
granted permission to print as many copies as
they wish for the exclusive use of that school
only. Please contact Jacqueline on 083 626 6421
or jacqueline.wetselaar@gmail.com

Vacancies

Chameleon's Montessori School, Durbanville,
Cape Town is seeking an experienced Directress
for their preschool class Please contact
Emma/Claire on 021 913213/976 9611

Or email montessorichameleons@hotmail.com

Wanted: Fast typist to transcribe audio files of
Montessori related talks and lectures. There will
be a small remuneration in \$. Contact Sharon -
043 735 2221 or sharon@freedomtolearn.co.za

The Children's Workshop, Claremont, Cape
Town. Nursery class (age 1-2) classroom
assistant required. Starting October 2007
Experience in dealing with very young children
is essential. Montessori training is preferable but
not a prerequisite. Please contact Jenni or Liesl at
021 6717538 or childwork@mweb.co.za

Posts Wanted

My name is Lois Thembo. I am looking for a
post as an Assistant Directress. I am a
correspondent student, and hope to finish the
course by the end of the year. I am a mother of
two small children and I stay in
Northriding/Randburg area. My contact number
is **076-4636945** or **011-7040399**

For more information on Job Vacancies, Associate
Member(suppliers), Member schools and more, visit SAMA
website www.samontessori.org.za

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

[Please ensure that all your SAMA staff members have the opportunity to read this newsletter.](#)

The following products are available:

- **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 Institutional 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 school members only. All categories of membership may purchase the CDs for R500 per set.

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

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Jacky Price	Newsletter Co-ordinator	admin@samontessori.org.za

All articles were 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 Jacky via: admin@samontessori.org.za