National Newsletter

July 2007

Message from the President

Dear Montessori Parents,

Maria Montessori emphasised the importance of creating opportunities for children to reach out to others and be of service to their communities, particularly in the primary, middle and high schools.

If each member of a school community – the teachers, children and parents – adopted an attitude of accepting social responsibility, we may be able to realise Maria Montessori's vision of a new world.

We are fortunate to live in a world where the information and resources available to us, educate and challenge us on a daily basis to make a difference.

We need to extend our sense of social responsibility so that our children learn to do this as a matter of normal human behaviour. Helping our fellow humans live a deserving life often requires the smallest gesture.

An article published in Montessori International magazine by a young man, Craig Kielburger, reminded me of the significant impact parents have on their children. Craig is the founder of Free The Children organisation (one of the world's leading youth leadership organisations). They help provide education, health care, water and sanitation to thousands of children in Africa. Craig started this organisation in 1995 at the age of 12.

The aspect of the article that struck me was about the choice parents have to teach their children to be pro-active or teaching them the "bystander effect" - teaching our children, through our lack of action, to become powerless to affect change. Craig thanked his mother for not teaching him to be a bystander by the simple gesture of talking to homeless people while others avoided eye contact at all costs. He said "I didn't realise at the time, but this small act of kindness provided an important learning opportunity." (You can read more about this amazing person on www.freethechildren.com)

Perhaps we all need to reflect on what we are doing each moment to create children who realise they have the power to change the world.
Sam Streak
president@samontessori.org.za

Fostering a Love of Learning

The Montessori educator is more of a guide and facilitator respecting the concentration and varied learning styles of the children. The innate creativity of the child is realised in all areas of the curriculum.

Montessori education is about learning to balance responsibility with freedom of choice. It offers all children the opportunity to develop their full potential in a non-competitive environment.

Montessori Educators strive to promote:
- Self-confidence and self-esteem
- A sense of achievement and self worth
- A sense of responsibility for themselves and their actions
- Independence and adaptability
- Co-operation with others and a sense of community
- Respect for the rights and needs of others
- Concentration and perseverance in task completion\Initiative and self-motivation

Taken from: A Handbook for Parents - SAMA

> **"Deep concentration is normal for human beings. Because it represents a normalized state, it results in relaxation and contentment in the individual. Montessori described children after periods of this type of work as peaceful and happy, even rested and refreshed, showing a marked generosity of spirit that was not apparent before."**
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> Paula Polk Lillard - Montessori from the Start.

"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 **12 – 14 October is set to be the South African 100 Steps weekend, ask your school for more details. (Dates are flexible though!)**

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