



October 2007

Message from the President

Dear Montessori Parents,

The following is an inspirational piece of writing that gives a depth of understanding to Maria Montessori's work and vision. As parents, you know that service to your child is unconditional and on-going. I hope these words offer you an opportunity to reflect on how best to do this each day.

Warm Regards
Sam Streak
SAMA President

Montessori's Vision of Service - by André Roberfroid

(André Roberfroid, a Belgian national, was the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director for Programme and Strategic Planning until 2003. From 1996 to 1999 as director of the UNICEF office in Geneva, he was in charge of the coordination with the main humanitarian agencies. He is the current president of the Association Montessori Internationale, AMI)

**"I did not invent a method of education;
I simply gave some children a chance to live."
(Maria Montessori)**

Let us keep in mind these simple and far reaching words. Let us be inspired by the message while we are trying to define our role in serving the children of the world.

In May 2002, the United Nations General Assembly held a Special Session on children. At this occasion, children from all over the world gathered in a Children's Forum to express their own views on their future. An extraordinary document came out of this forum. They called it "A World Fit for Us" and this is how the children see their world:

In this world
We see respect for the rights of the child.
We see an end to exploitation, abuse and violence.
We see an end to war.
We see the provision of health care.
We see the eradication of HIV/AIDS.
We see the protection of the environment.
We see an end to the vicious cycle of poverty.
We see the provision of education.
We see the active participation of children.
We are not the sources of the problems; we are the resources that are needed to solve them.
We are not expenses, we are investments.

We are the children of the world, and despite our different backgrounds we share a common reality. We are united by our struggle to make the world a better place for all.

You call us the future, but we are also the present. We want a world fit for children, because a world fit for us is a world fit for everyone.

The legacy of Maria Montessori is not just a method. The Montessori contribution to the global movement is a practice and a call for action. Our movement is not made of a group of specialists sharing, developing and discussing a theory, it is made of practitioners. It is made of people who are not just talking about children, but people who are actually serving the children.

The Montessori vision of service is the one of a mission, a mission of a life time, a mission driven by the children themselves and by the confidence in the future of humanity.

Maria Montessori expresses it very clearly:

"...humanity can hope for a solution of its problems....only by turning its attention and energies to the discovery of the child and the development of the great potentialities of the human personality."

A mission worth serving, is not it?

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In an article on Language Acquisition in infants, published in the Montessori Today Magazine January 1989, Dr Montanaro offered us this advice:

"...It is of crucial importance to train the adults who will be with the children during this period to understand that there is a 'sensitive period for naming things' and if they can respond to this hunger for words, they can then give children a richness and precision of language that will last a life time and which will represent a relevant, qualitative difference in their comprehension of reality. The knowledge of appropriate words provides internal security and allows for the right control of the environment..."

By Dr Silvana Montanaro
Director of training of AMI Assistants to Infancy