



# Parent Newsletter

September 2015

## Letter from the President



The climate in the South African educational field is one of confusion and uncertainty with protests with ANA's; schools mistakenly believing that they have to follow CAPS in achieving the learning outcomes of the National Curriculum Statement and the mushrooming growth of new schools and their differing ideals. **What type of education should my child receive in an ever changing world?** This is our usual question. And of course we all want to do what is best for our children and families.

The real question you should ask is

how do you envision your child as a young adult in the future, think about what is important to you and your values and this will help define to what kind of learning environment you would like your young child to develop in.

Montessori is not about education per se but about an aid for life. What does this exactly mean: often heard in our Montessori schools the term '**developmental**' is used rather than a set curriculum which is placed upon the child by the teacher. I rather enjoy the phrase; "the child is the curriculum!"

Dr Montessori talks about the task we as directors (not teachers, but rather guides) set ourselves as one of helping the child across the four planes of development to become a "fully realized individual" through understanding as Lynne Lawrence said: of the "constructive instincts of human beings (what Montessori called human tendencies)". (NAMTA Vol 40)

The Montessori Method uses how each of us adapts to our surroundings through our instinctive drives. Dr Montessori wrote about these innate powers in the child which allows for adaption following universal laws of development. Thus it is the child's individual experiences that builds the person they become.

These human tendencies impel us to:

Seek to *orientate* ourselves; extract *order and meaning* from our surroundings; engage in *exploration*; strive to become *independent*; seek out others (to be *gregarious*) and belonging; partake in meaningful *activity/work/play*;

*communicate and express ourselves; give our full attention (concentration); use our creative imagination; develop our capacities (self-perfection); strive for exactness; follow our curiosity; do through repetition and calculation.*

To highlight just one of these tendencies - "to support the child's gregarious and belonging, our environment must:

- be a community where it is possible to contribute to the well-being of the whole;
- provide cultural identity, which helps develop individual identity;
- allow for each child to participate to the extent that they are able (the children help to weave a social fabric that leads spontaneously to what Montessori called "society by cohesion"); and
- allow children to help one another through the sharing of knowledge, skills and tasks.

A group of mixed age and ability creates a social group that evolves without competition and in which the children function collaboratively. They are intrinsically motivated to do what others are doing. They learn from each other and from the appreciation of others and kindness and helpfulness deepens their self-knowledge." (Lynne Lawrence. The NAMPTA Journal. Vol. 40. Spring 2015)

At all levels of the child's growth and age Montessori practice changes in possibility and means, to embrace the child's changing characteristics and interests, within and across each stage of development with a corresponding supportive environment.

In protecting this natural process of child growth and development it is imperative that our discussions with families reflect these ideas in understanding of our work. As too, is the importance of reflective practices to ensure we create spaces for our children to accommodate all of the human tendencies.

Warm regards  
Jacky



The South African Montessori Association invites you to attend the 14th annual conference hosted in the heart of the Mother City, Cape Town, 2016.

**DATE:** SAMA Conference  
30 April (09h30 - 17h30)  
1 May (09h00 - 17h00)

Leadership & Management workshop with Jonathan Wolff  
2 May (09h30 - 16h30)

**VENUE:** Gardens Commercial High School  
Paddock Ave, CBD, Cape Town

**COST:** Early bird discount of R1 000 1 October to 28 February 2016 – book and save today!

**SAMA MEMBERS**

R2 700 (early bird: R1 700) for 2 day Conference (30 April AND 1 May)  
R1 850 (early bird: R 850) for 1 day Leadership & Management workshop

**NON MEMBERS**

R4 500 (early bird: R3 500) for 2 day Conference (30 April AND 1 May)  
R2 000 (early bird: R1 000) for 1 day Leadership & Management workshop

