Dear Montessori friends!

“Within the child lies the fate of the future.” In today’s turbulent times it is easy to become disheartened with our ability to help the children we teach be prepared for the world they live in and will live in. It is during these times we must continue to focus on our mission to educate the whole child. We are entrusted with the future leaders, future citizens, and future family members of the world. Along with math facts, reading practice, geography research and science discovery we need to continue - character development, community responsibility, environmental care, self-confidence and autonomy. With this inner strength our children can make their dreams come true and move forward in creating a better world. Montessori children are the entrepreneurs and innovative thinkers that can make it happen. We need to take heart, and continue to give our time and commitment to a great future and a better world. TEACHERS HOLD TOMMORROW IN THEIR HANDS.

To support you in your mission this October we are hosting a workshop with Maren Schmidt who will focus on challenging behaviors. Please take time to read our newsletter and visit our new website. We look forward to seeing at workshops and hearing from you. TAKE HEART.

My hands to yours ~ Heidi Gauger

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This group of passionate volunteers has been busy working on behalf of all of you in the greater Michigan Montessori community to ensure that Montessori programs are included in and protected by any legislation and regulation that will impact them.

Two members of the advocacy group, Kay Neff and Sue Fitzpatrick, attended the National Montessori Public Policy Initiative retreat in Alexandria, Virginia Sept. 30-Oct. 2. There, they learned tips to shape our messaging for pro-active advocacy.

One of the sponsors for the MPPI retreat is the Trust for Learning. A federally recognized funder collaborative https://trustforlearning.org/who-we-are/ Trust for Learning has been supporting the MPPI for over five years. Identifying and accelerating the supply of high quality early childhood learning programs and informing the public of why these programs reflect best practice is a large part of their mission. Through their Ideal Learning Roundtable, a document entitled the Principles of Ideal Learning has been compiled to help inform the QRIS oversight systems in each state (in Michigan the Great Start to Quality program) as to how to define quality and to help influence policy decision making that affects early childhood education providers. Their work has helped find funders for some of the current research studies on the benefits of Montessori education for all children.

The Trust for Learning’s approach is collaborative and seeks to bring all high quality providers to the table, appreciating each other’s strengths and the various practices each meet the principles of ideal learning. Their efforts were instrumental in bringing AMS and AMI to work together towards advocacy for Montessori education with one voice. A united voice is most powerful and understandable when communicating to our family communities, our policy makers and funders.

Tips for all to advocate for Montessori education:

- Speak with one voice. Unify our efforts.
- Be aware of current research and news of Montessori in the press.
- Form relationships with your local and state policy makers. Be proactive!
  - invite them to your programs!
  - articulate how your program could benefit them and the community (children prepared for the 21st century workforce..., an opportunity to be more aware of early childhood education..
  - offer to help inform them about best practices in education and why they are so,
  - share stories of you successful students as alumni
New MMS Administrative Assistant ~

Kathy Smoko

My name is Kathy Smoko and I am the new MMS Administrative Assistant. I am originally from the Chicago area where I worked for a small software developer. I met and married my husband there, but his job soon took us to Detroit where we settled in Farmington Hills. We have one daughter, Erica, who is now grown. Erica spent her early years at Children’s Place Montessori where she flourished and I fell in love with the Montessori philosophy. It felt like a place I wanted to be, too, so I began working at the school. Over the past fifteen plus years I have had many roles including lunch time assistant, classroom assistant, art coordinator and most recently, office/administrative assistant. I still enjoy doing art with the children, baking with them and being the candid school photographer. In my spare time I volunteer on Saturday at our local Farmer’s Market and am involved with Special Olympics. In addition, I enjoy baking and making crafts at home. While Shelley and I worked together this past summer to make the transition seamless, I’m sure there will be some glitches. Please bear with me as I continue to acquaint myself with this new role. I am looking forward to all it brings. I attended my first MMS Board meeting last month and left with a joyful heart, happy to be working with such talented, passionate and energetic women. If I can be of any help, please don’t hesitate to contact me!

Words of Flowers

“Maria Montessori was a woman of vision. In a remarkable life spanning eight decades, Maria Montessori challenged convention to pioneer a radical new system of education; one which focused on the child as an independent learner and which spread to all corners of the world, affecting the schooling of millions.” Thus begins the riveting story of Maria Montessori’s life beginning as a young medical student, through her time of political activism, and then to the discovery of her life’s work. BBC’s series on Extraordinary Women episode #13, titled Words of Flowers explores the life of Maria Montessori. This 48 minute film is available on YouTube.
Addressing Challenging Behaviors

with Maren Schmidt

Maren Schmidt is a certified Montessori teacher with the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and holds a Master’s in Education from Loyola College in Maryland, as well as a BA from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in Interpersonal and Organizational Communications. Maren founded a Montessori school and has over thirty years’ experience working with children.

The workshop she has planned for us will help you understand and deal effectively with the behaviors that disrupt the peaceful environment we attempt to create in our Montessori classrooms.

Over the past few years more teachers and school leaders report dealing with children’s behaviors that they haven’t previously seen and challenges they are struggling with.

- Parent’s denial about the behavior
- Lack of strategies on how to assist a child with difficult behaviors
- Too much time spent supervising a child
- Handling the stress and frustration of dealing with those children
- Disruption of the entire class
- Inappropriate interactions, such as hitting, yelling and tantrums
- Lack of parent follow through
- Other children perceiving the child with difficult behaviors as disrespectful
- Montessori elementary being seen as the “catch-all” of children who have had poor experiences in other school settings

During this workshop, Maren will share with us strategies that will support our objectives.

- Two resources for behavior and skills training that help parents and teachers work together for the child’s benefit.
- A simple yet effective strategy to help you clearly communicate expectations for behavior in your classrooms and school.
- Three communication tools that can help you create more peaceful classrooms and schools.
- The essential Montessori principles that must be implemented consistently throughout your school if you are to deal effectively with difficult behaviors.
Fall Celebrations

At the most recent MMS Board meeting, the topic of fall celebrations was brought up. We thought we’d share some of the activities celebrated in the area’s Montessori schools.

September 21, 2018 International Peace Day

As celebrated by Grand Blanc Montessori and 18 other Michigan Montessori schools.

Shared by Simone

Peacefulness, kindness, and tolerance are all values that every Montessori student learns and lives. The International Day of Peace is simply a wonderful reminder that by working together and enjoying our lives and each other, we truly can change the world for the better.

To celebrate, Grand Blanc Montessori participated in “Sing Peace Around the World” along with more than 150,000 children from over 50 countries. This historical event first took place on September 21st, 2009, when the Montessori world came together to celebrate peace.

For Montessorians, practicing peace and kindness is an important cornerstone of the method and worldview. We strive every day to express the Montessori values of peace, grace, and courtesy in some way, and the International Day of Peace is the perfect time to focus on peace in the Montessori classroom.

The yearly event begins with the song, Light a Candle for Peace, being sung precisely at 11 am on September 21st by children in New Zealand, and is continued around the world; traveling from school to school, country to country, and time zone to time zone until it reaches the Hawaiian Islands 24 hours later. In Michigan, schools began singing being 10 and 11 am.

For 24 hours the voices of children will sing for peace. Peace in our governments, peace in our neighborhoods, peace in our homes and peace in our hearts. For one day we will sing one song, and for just one moment, all of us who want and love peace will be one.

If you are interested in having your school participate in 2019 please sign up here: http://singpeacearoundtheworld.com/real-sign-up/

As celebrated by Waterford Montessori Academy

Shared by Amy Dressler

Special activities inside and out made Peace Day a memorable experience for all involved. Activities and exercises found in Sonia McFarland’s book, “Honoring the Light of the Child” were a part of the presentation highlighted by an assembly featuring local musician, Guy...
Louis. Louis’s song, “Light of the World” directed at “the light of the child” was especially meaningful. An incredible morning of activities that the entire school participated in and the fine weather helped make the outdoor portion of the day a great experience. The inside assembly started with Louis sharing “Light of the World” followed by other songs, movements, hands-on activities and more that continued their celebration of Peace. A very nice slideshow to go along with the program was put together, and helped deliver the message. The final song, "Peace Is” had everyone singing together with a global vision in the Waterford locality: “Peace is a flame in your heart, it burns like a candle to light up the dark, Love lives inside you wherever you are, Peace is a flame in your heart”.

**Oct. 31 – Nov. 1, 2018 Day of the Dead**  
*A Day of the Dead Celebration That Won't Kill You!*  
*Montessori Center of Downriver*

*Shared by Shannon Tyrybon M.Ed.*

The Day of the Dead, also known as El Dia de los Muertos, is a Mexican holiday celebrating and honoring the remembrance of those who have died. It is celebrated between Oct. 31 and November 2, a date close but unrelated to Halloween. Day of the Dead traditions vary from region to region, but their intention is always to open a sort of communication with the dead, allowing them to hear the prayers and tributes offered to them. The occasion is celebratory rather than dark.

**Good books to start with:**

**Good foods to make and eat:**

**Sugar skull cookies**  
Decorate sugar cookies with frosting and gel or visit your local or Detroit’s Mexican bakery to purchase actual sugar skulls. Cookies can also be ordered online.
Tortillas - Prep with small group of students...

Mix together:
2 cups all purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 tablespoon unsalted, soften butter
3/4 cup lukewarm water

On your food prep shelf:
A bowl with small individual balls of dough. A rolling pin and mat. A small bowl of flour

At the counter:
Space for student to roll out their tortilla
Warm electric griddle
Tongs or spatula, plates napkins, butter with knife
Enjoy!

Steps:
Spread a pinch of flour on rolling mat, place dough ball and roll to desired thickness
Place on griddle using tongs or spatula, once dough bubbles flip.
Cook on other side until a bubble forms then remove from skillet and place on plate
Add butter if desired…and enjoy!

Guacamole
Introduce vegetables, fruits and herbs in their whole form to students.
Cut and place in individual bowls.
Show students how to smash the avocado with fork and scoop desired ingredients into their bowl.
Enjoy with corn chips or tortillas.
Suggested ingredients but feel free to experiment:
Avocado
Purple onion
Tomato
Cilantro
Fresh lime juice
Good art work:

Face painting

Day of the Dead Masks

Other good ways to commemorate:

- Share good stories of family members and pets that have passed
- Take a quiet walk to where your past classroom pets have been laid to rest
  - Drop flower petals on the path on your way
  - Leave a gift of that pet’s favorite food on their grave site
  - Talk about good memories of that classroom pet

Nov. 7, 2018 Diwali

Diwali (Di VA lee) Hindu Festival of Lights (often celebrated in October)
Children’s Place Montessori
Shared by Karen Lumsden

Diwali symbolizes the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Days before Diwali, people clean their houses and on the day of the festival they decorate their homes with lights and candles. Goddess Lakshmi is worshipped on that day and prayers are offered to the goddess of wealth for materialistic abundance and prosperity. Later, fireworks are set off followed by offering sweets and exchange of gifts among families, friends and relatives.

Our school population includes many Indian families. We often have both a children’s celebration during the day and an evening party with parents featuring spicy Indian food, dancing and fireworks. Our celebrations include crafts and activities that celebrate Indian culture.

Creating rangolis using stencils and sponge brushes.
Bingo games and puzzles with symbols of Diwali...creating rangolis with shapes and gems.

Henna, dancing and diya

We make Indian sweets and.....Mango Lassee

NEED: Mango pulp, buttermilk or buttermilk mixed with plain yogurt (to thicken), sugar, 2 ice cream scoops, 1 teaspoon, a small pitcher and a rotary whisk. This is a stationary activity. The children add two scoops of mango pulp, one scoop of buttermilk/yogurt mixture, one teaspoon of sugar. Using the rotary whisk, the children mix the drink in the pitcher, then pour it into a cup to enjoy. A great treat anytime, but especially nice during Dewali

Oct. 31, 2018 Halloween Goes Literary
Dearborn Heights Montessori
Shared by Kay Neff

Children love to dress up, but having the theme of dressing as a character in a favorite book engages them and promotes literacy. The children are encouraged to bring their books to this Halloween event.
Grand Blanc Montessori is a private, non-sectarian school with an international clientele from countries all over the world. Founded in 2015, the school offers a primary program for children 3 to 6 years of age, and this fall opened their lower elementary program for children 6 to 9 years of age. GBM is an AMS Full Member school which nurtures the whole child in a prepared environment based on respect, individuality, a love of learning, and freedom with responsibility.

Co-Owners, Mindy Forsythe and Simone Culley, bring their passion and dedication for Montessori education to the Grand Blanc area. A longtime dream of creating an authentic Montessori School has come true for the duo; both are certified through the American Montessori Society, with a unique philosophy developed as the result of 30 combined years of Montessori experience.

The Grand Blanc Montessori philosophy and practices nurture children’s innate desire to learn by offering them a prepared environment that leads toward self-actualization. The curriculum is built on the principles and psychological research of Dr. Montessori and contemporary educational research. Grand Blanc Montessori guides students to mastery of essential academic skills and an inner disciplinary drive toward self-fulfillment and actualization while allowing the ongoing development of each child’s imagination and creative abilities.

It was Dr. Montessori’s vision that a peaceful world, created by children, would make the world a better place. Mindy and Simone know that by involving the families in community service, they are helping develop and educate the whole child. Students learn the joy of giving of themselves and develop compassion because of these real, practical life volunteer experiences. As a part of this mission, the Gillian-Starla Memorial Naturescape was established in honor of the lives of two women who were exceptionally dedicated to their families and community. We continue their legacy of peace with our Peace Pole dedicated in their honor as a meeting place of the heart, bringing together children of all faiths, backgrounds, and cultures to embrace the oneness of our planetary family. GBM has joined noteworthy sites such as the Pyramids of El Giza, Mt. Fuji, and the United Nations to spread the universal message, May Peace Prevail on Earth, to empower, uplift, and awaken the global consciousness of our human family.

It is the wish of Grand Blanc Montessori that every child grows to be a good citizen of the world, which is accomplished by both teaching and modeling global thinking for the children. “We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.” — Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential (1948)

It is an honor and privilege for Grand Blanc Montessori to have the opportunity to serve the children of the Grand Blanc area. To learn more about Grand Blanc Montessori’s program visit our website www.grandblancmontessori.com.
The botany cabinet holds a special interest at this time of year. Leaves are turning beautiful colors and are beginning to fall. Every child is fascinated by the variety of colors and different shapes of the leaves that will soon be piled high. This is a great time to look into utilizing your botany cabinet to give the children an opportunity to explore and identify the leaves all around them.

While the cabinet gives the children a symbolic picture of the many leaf shapes, finding examples of the leaves in the yard gives them a much better understanding of what the leaves may actually look like. Here are several extensions we developed to extend our botany cabinet work.

**Matching Fall Leaves** We gathered some leaves in the fall and used our color copier to make a matching work.

**Summer/Autumn Leaf Match**

The following summer, we gathered the same leaves to make a summer/fall matching work.

**Sorting Leaf Shapes**

Wandering around our playground, we collected several examples of different shaped leaves. We came inside and sorted them by shape. Afterwards, we used our color copier to make copies of the leaves and laminated them for use throughout the year. Utilizing the internet, we found examples of other leaves of differing shapes and made copies to help the children understand that leaves having the same shape don’t look exactly like the example in the leaf cabinet.

**Discovering Leaf Shapes**

Remember that when determining leaf shapes, you’re only interested in the overall shape, as if you connect the tips of all lobes or teeth together and ignore the lobes. The exception would be a sweet gum as it is a stellate (star shaped). Oak leaves can be elliptical, obovate, or spatulate, depending on the species. Another interesting activity the children enjoy is collecting a leaf from the playground, doing a crayon rubbing and then connecting the tips to determine the overall shape.

**Matching Leaf Shapes/Naming Leaf Shapes**

We created a labeling exercise to help the children become familiar with the leaf shape names. While it is essentially a simple matching exercise, including the leaf shape names provides a nice point of interest.
MMS - What’s In It For Me?

Individual membership and school affiliation in the Michigan Montessori Society help you keep in touch with other active Montessorians! Networking with others committed to promoting authentic Montessori programs is vital to your professional growth. Don’t miss the opportunity to join our vibrant organization.

- MMS presents two professional development seminars every year. Members enjoy a significant reduction in seminar fees.
- A newly designed website has launched! We continue to work on ways to make your experience as a MMS member more timely and exciting!
- You can register for seminars and become a member online using your credit card.
- MMS publishes a newsletter online, posts job openings, promotes educational opportunities and disseminates other helpful information.
- Because most MMS communication will be sent electronically, it is imperative that you provide us with your email address. Please be assured that we do not sell or share our electronic list with anyone.
- We have also assumed the important task of advocating for Montessori education at the State level. There is power in numbers; your membership supports our efforts (see MMEAN article above).
- You will be notified when affiliated schools offer mini workshops that may interest your staff.

The Michigan Montessori Society’s objectives are to:

- Broaden understanding of the Montessori method
- Encourage the growth of Montessori education
- Act as an information center
- Support existing schools
- Provide professional development

In order to continue to receive these benefits and more, join MMS today!