



CAMT NEWS

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Summer 2008

volume 33, number 4



Dear Teachers,
As the Northern Hemisphere enjoys Summer and all the promise of the new years growth, C.A.M.T. is experiencing growth of its own.

We have taken on an amazing person named Carol Ford to answer and direct phone calls and emails and maintain our web-site. If you speak to her remember to welcome her to the family.

The addition of a professional office person will improve our ability to serve you and give you more of what you need. In retrospect I apologise for all of the lost or slow responses to inquiries.

Please take the time to read all about the workshops and attend them.

Your executive is here to serve you in anyway we can. Tell us what you want, what you need and what you would like to see and we will grow together. Join the executive as a volunteer and help the rest of the Montessori community.

One last request:

Tell your friends to join C.A.M.T. Let us build a bigger, better, more productive C.A.M.T. than has ever been seen. Let us make C.A.M.T. all it can be. They are going to want to attend the Fall Conference this year on Friday, November 7, to hear amazing to hear **Tim Seldin**, our keynote speaker and other amazing people and experience all that is Montessori.

See you in November,
Barton Graff
President

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

CAMT Annual Conference

November 7, 2008

Metro Toronto
Convention Centre

Visit our website
often for updates!

www.camt100.ca

About CAMT



Canadian Association of Montessori Teachers

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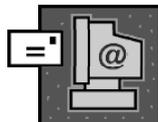
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Reaching Around The World in Montessori Fashion

by Jamie Rossiter and Pam Leudke

The summer of 2007 was a life-changing affirmation of the universality and value of Montessori education. “*Unsaka Suemsuen*” (touching the spirit) was our theme as we traveled to the Mbeya region of Tanzania, Africa. We volunteered for three weeks with The Olive Branch for Children, an orphanage centre that has just begun a Montessori nursery school on site. Our mission was to help further develop its new Montessori classroom and work with local nursery school teachers, introducing the Montessori philosophy and materials.

Deborah McCracken, a woman from Woodbridge, conceived The Olive Branch for Children and is its representative in Tanzania. She is also the Head of the Iwambi Evangelical Lutheran Orphanage in Mbeya, Tanzania. Through The Olive Branch, Deborah founded and opened the ZION Home in May 2006 in Mbeya to help young children who were born with HIV or suffer serious health problems. Her goal is to instill in the children in her care the sense that their future is bright, healthy, and that they can and will flourish in their community, despite being born with HIV. As part of their care, Ms. McCracken provides quality education for all the children. Children below the age of 6 receive their education on site in the Montessori-based classroom. This classroom also serves young children from the local Iwambi



village. Ms. McCracken attended a Montessori school for three years and attributes her inner drive and creative thinking to the foundation that her Montessori education provided her. Her beliefs about the superior value of Montessori education inspired her to offer this method of learning to children under her care. She hired a Tanzanian-trained Montessori teacher who opened the classroom in January, 2007.

We met Deborah McCracken at a public speaking engagement at our church in Richmond Hill, ON. We were immediately drawn to her passion and commitment in giving orphaned children a home full of love and care. We spoke with her after the presentation and it was during this conversation we learned that her new classroom was Montessori-based. Having been looking for a volunteer vacation experience ourselves for several years, we immediately knew this

was a place where we could make a meaningful contribution. During the next several months, preparations were made for our time there. We received a very generous donation of gently-used materials from the Toronto Montessori Schools, in Richmond Hill, ON. We refurbished some of the materials and participated in fundraising events, raising money to pay for shipping them to The Olive Branch. Included in these materials was a donation of hand-made material made

by children of Kendalwood Montessori School, in Whitby, ON. We also prepared notes and presentations about Montessori philosophy and methodology that we would give to local nursery school teachers.

With much excitement, we departed for Tanzania on July 26, 2007. This was no easy task, considering we were carrying eighty pounds of Montessori materials, in addition to our luggage! We arrived after a two-day journey, tired but eager to get started.

When we first stepped into the classroom we had tears well up in our eyes. This simple room was **filled** with Montessori material that had been all lovingly made by hand by their teacher, Sabina. Montessori training in Tanzania is a two-year program that requires one year of material making.

(Continued on page 4)

Reaching Around The World (continued from page 3)

Imagine for a moment, making each piece for the Square of Pythagorus. Each piece was cut from thin plywood, sanded, painted and varnished and placed into a beautiful hand-made box. Sabina even had a full compliment of Golden Bead material, each bead being made by hand! To think that some of us lamented about having to simply illustrate our manuals during our own training. This pales in comparison to the commitment and work that these Tanzanian teachers devote to their training. It is necessary for teacher-trainees to have a complement of Montessori materials when they leave their training institute because many of them take jobs in remote regions of the country where it is next to impossible to get Montessori materials. It was also at this moment that we were struck by the universality of Montessori education, as the materials looked exactly like the ones we use in our classrooms here.

During the next three weeks we worked in the classroom every day, slowly introducing the donated materials to the children. Observing Sabina’s presentations and the children working with their new materials was like what we imagine it must have been like for Maria Montessori in her early days of that first San Lorenzo school. One could have heard a pin drop in that room! The children were completely absorbed in the materials, handling them like they were made of gold. Their eagerness to learn new lessons and the ease with which they grasped new

concepts was truly amazing. Similarly, we were surprised by how familiar these children seemed to our own students back

“A primary goal for the school is to teach the children in English which will provide a critical academic advantage and opportunity for higher education.”

home as they practiced pouring, spooning or language and math exercises in English. A primary goal for the school is to teach the children in English which will provide a critical academic advantage and opportunity for higher education. We learned how to give simple 3-period lessons in Swahili but had to rely on the Montessori materials to “speak for themselves”. We remember being told this during our training years ago but it wasn’t until this experience that we truly understood how these materials really do ‘speak’ to the child. We as teachers only have to offer the occasional guidance. After school, we had an opportunity to shop for Practical Life materials in Mbeya’s open air markets. This was a fun challenge as we made our way through the crowds of local shoppers and haggled over prices with Sabina’s help. We

surely missed the variety and prices offered in our Canadian “Dollar Stores”. They would be a huge hit if introduced in Tanzania!

The more we worked with Sabina, the deeper our respect for her grew. One example of this was watching her prepare snack daily for the eighteen children. Snack in Tanzania was not simply opening a package of prepared food and serving it on plates. It involved Sabina going out to the wood pile, gathering wood and starting a small fire from the main cooking fire that burned all day. Then she would collect water in a large pot from the single tap that served the 70-plus children and adults that live at The Olive Branch. To it she would add ground corn, rice wheat and a little sugar and place the pot on the fire, stirring it constantly until it became a thick porridge. She would then call the children who had been running around playing. They would all gather in the gazebo with their plastic cup and receive their snack. For some of the children from the local village of Iwambi, this was their first food for the day. The entire snack procedure took about an hour. We couldn’t imagine having to do this every day!

During the afternoons, we conducted a ten day “Introduction to Montessori” seminar for a group of nursery teachers from the surrounding region. For each session, we were supported by an interpreter who would help with translation between English and Swahili. We presented a broad

Reaching Around The World (continued from page 4)

overview of topics including: planes of development, characteristics and needs of the child, creativity, problem-solving and peace education. Despite language differences, we all enjoyed the thoughtful exchange and reflection, comparing classroom experiences, unique challenges and humorous anecdotes. Many times we found we could relate and identify with their stories both of the joy and challenges in teaching. Although the educational system in Tanzania faces significant obstacles, we all concurred that Montessori offers many valuable and viable alternatives. Each day, materials from the various curriculum areas were presented and explored. At the end of our seminars, the local teachers enthusiastically chose to dedicate an extra day to material making. Great ingenuity and practicality were demonstrated using limited resources to fashion teaching materials such as the Small Bead Frame or the Mathematics Finger Charts. At the end of the ten days we hosted a Graduation Celebration with a feast and we gave each of the teachers a Peace Rose to take back to their classroom. Hitting children is still an acceptable way to discipline children in school and demonstrating how a Peace Table can work, gave these teachers a positive alternative to corporal punishment.

In addition to our volunteer work for the classroom, we had several opportunities to engage in other projects designed to foster greater sustainability within the

community. One unforgettable experience involved our participation in a mobile medical clinic which the Olive Branch provides for remote villages lacking in medical services. In one day, we assisted in serving over 600 villagers as they were interviewed, diagnosed and provided necessary medications. Other work included building a garden for a permaculture program and guided mountain hikes with the children. A couple of the children who accompanied us are HIV positive. Hiking in the mountains was undeniable proof that HIV is not necessarily a death sentence. The goal of Deborah McCracken and The Olive Branch for Children is to instill in the children in her care the sense that their future is bright, healthy, and that they can and will flourish in their community, despite being born with HIV.

Our relationship with The Olive Branch for Children continues to grow after our return home to Canada. We have thoroughly enjoyed visiting different schools and groups to speak about our Montessori friends in Tanzania. Now, more volunteer teachers are traveling to Mbeya bringing even more knowledge and materials particularly to support the language program. Book bags made by the older girls at the orphanage are being sold here in Canada to directly support their sewing program, Malaika Designs. All in all, our trip was an uplifting, hope filled month. We reaffirmed our understanding and appreciation for the Montessori Method and its applicability for children of any time and place. If you would like to learn more about The Olive Branch for Children or join us in such an inspirational endeavour, visit the website, www.theolivebranchforchildren.org.



Classifieds

DO YOU KNOW A MONTESSORI TEACHER WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH ...

- Normalization?
- Teaching the Montessori way?
- Classroom management?
- Starting the year right to maximize success?
- Presentations and activities?
- Establishing rules and routines?
- Classroom design and setup?
- Record keeping?

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The K-W Montessori School Inc., established in 1972 requires a dedicated Lower Elementary teacher for September 2008. The candidate must be AMI or MACTE certified. KWMS has a campus in Kitchener and Waterloo and has been a CCMA accredited school since 2000. The programmes include both Casa & Elementary for children 2 ½ to 12 years of age with a strong commitment to Montessori pedagogy. Experience an asset. Must have Infant/Child First Aid and CPR.

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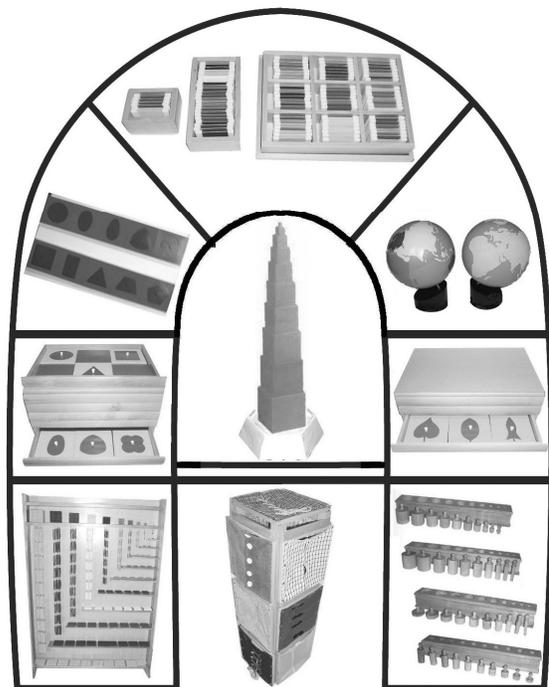
School District #71, Comox Valley, in British Columbia, Canada has job postings for elementary teachers in its Montessori program.

More information on our program can be found at www.cvmontessori.com.

The job postings can be found at: <http://sd71.bc.ca/sd71/job/postings/Round%20Three%20Prelim%20Repost.pdf>

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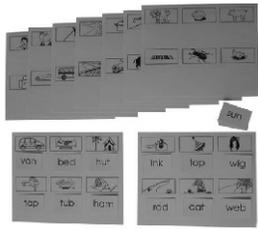
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3.07.1 Pink Picture Sheets (9) With Word Cards (54), laminated - \$49



3.08.1 Blue Picture Sheets (9) With Word Cards (54), laminated - \$49

The whole set includes 9 laminated blue cards with beautiful pictures and 54 matching word cards.



3.09.03 Green Phonogram Word List Cards - \$76

This set includes 65 green laminated cards with the phonogram highlighted in red

Pink, blue and green wooden boxes are exclusively sold by E & O Montessori. The size of each box is 10.6 x 10.6 x 2.5cm. You can put our Picture Cards and Word Cards, your own cards (up to 8.5 x 8.5cm in size) or objects into our boxes.

3.07.3b Set of 10 Pink Wooden Boxes - \$65

3.08.3b Set of 10 Blue Wooden Boxes - \$65

3.09.01b Set of 15 Green Wooden Boxes - \$97

3.09.01 Green Picture Cards & Word Cards with Wooden Boxes - \$180

Complete Set of 15 Phonograms includes:

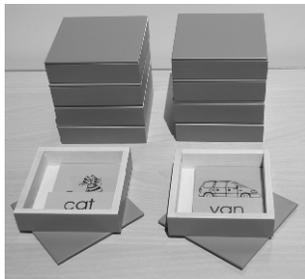
- 90 green laminated picture cards
- 90 green laminated phonogram cards with the phonogram highlighted in red
- 15 green wooden boxes with lids (10.6x10.6x2cm)
- 2 sets of phonogram stickers for boxes and lids



3.08.3 Blue Picture Cards & Word Cards With Wooden Boxes - Complete Set - \$115

Complete set includes:

- 60 blue laminated picture cards (7.5cm x 7.5cm)
- 60 blue laminated word cards (7.5cm x 4cm)
- 10 blue wooden boxes with lids



3.07.3 Pink Picture Cards & Word Cards With Wooden Boxes - Complete Set - \$115

Complete set includes:

- 60 pink laminated picture cards (7.5cm x 7.5cm)
- 60 pink laminated word cards (7.5cm x 4cm)
- 10 pink wooden boxes with lids

To place an order please:
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7.53.4 Motor Skills Set - \$180

Great for balance coordination and further development of motor skills. Includes 4 bricks, 4 half-bricks, 4 poles & 4 balance beams.

Size of balance beam: 32.4" x 5.4" x 1.6"
 Ages 2-5 years

7.53.8 Wavy Tactile Path - Blue - \$275

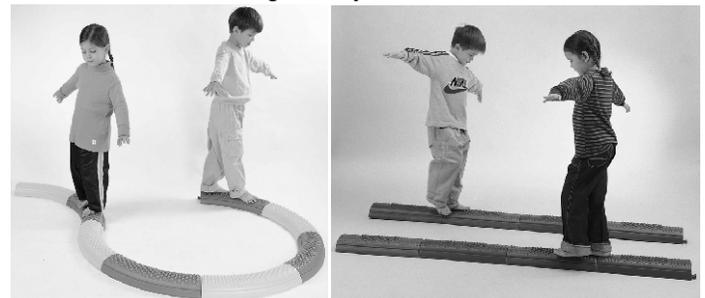
This tactile path is ideal for balance and development while walking. It can be arranged into curvy or linear patterns. The slopes on each piece are designed to fit the arch of a child's foot, offer balance control for both front-back and left-right movements and the textured surface provides both grip and sensory stimulation.

Each piece measures 27.25" x 7" x 4" 8 pieces per set. Ages 2-5 years.



7.53.9 Rainbow River Stone - \$160

This 6-piece activity set includes stepping stones of three different sizes. Each stone features a different slope and texture that challenge balancing skills while providing sensory stimulation to children's feet. The game's difficulty level can be adjusted through 3 directional points and the ability to stack two stones together. Size of largest stepping stone: 16" x 15.75" x 5.5"
 Ages 2-5 years.



7.53.6 Tactile Curved Path (8 pieces) - \$145

7.53.7 Tactile Straight Path (8 pieces) - \$135

These tactile paths are ideal for balance development while walking. The textured surfaces provide both grip and sensory stimulation. These two sets can be combined to produce a multitude of different shapes for children to walk on!

Each piece size: 19.5" x 5.25" x 2.75"
 Ages 2-5 years.

Montessori Math and Brain Research

Presented by Michael Duffy

Michael Duffy gave a lively and thought provoking workshop on the way children's brain develop when exposed to math. Unfortunately, some teachers give in to the pressures of parents, the need for tests and other factors such as governmental input and abandon the Montessori approach to math. It is simply because math in the Montessori classroom is so material based, that it is very critical to all-round development and brain stimulation in children.

Math is multi-sensory – that is, it is three dimensional. It is hands on; children have to manipulate the material, and as the hand feeds the brain, movement facilitates learning. Math provides for active or discovery learning. It is about understanding, not memorizing; it is about the child being engaged in constructivism, not about writing on a blank slate. It is about student choice, it is not under the control of the teacher.

Mr. Duffy further explained how all lobes of the cerebrum are engaged when children work with the math material in a Montessori classroom. The occipital lobes are engaged because of the visual stimulus, the temporal lobes are engaged because of the auditory stimulus, the parietal lobes facilitate controlled movement, and the large frontal lobes are engaged in problem

solving and abstraction. By constantly engaging the brain, children become so much more aware of the processes involved in math and therefore have a greater understanding of the whole course of action needed to problem solve.

If you are interested in further reading on this topic, here are some excellent references Mr. Duffy used in his workshop –

1. Angeline Lillard: "[Montessori: The Science behind the Genius.](#)"
2. Robert Sylwester: "[A Biological Brain in a Cultural Classroom](#)"
3. Eric Jensen: "[Teaching with the Brain in Mind](#)"
4. James E. Zull: "[The Art of Changing the Brain – Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning.](#)"

Michael Duffy is an Elementary Practicum Phase Coordinator and Media Education Specialist. He has experience teaching 6-9 and 9-12, as well as running the school media center. Before Montessori, Michael was a journalist for 21 years with the Associated Press and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. He holds a B.A. in Philosophy, an M.A. in Theology, an M.Ed. in Media Education and an AMS 6-12 credential.

Book Talk

We are launching a new column all about books.

To get us started, with your help, we are going to compile a top ten list of favourite Montessori-related books. *Which Montessori book do you love to re-read? Which book inspires you? Which book continues to educate you?*

Vote for your choice at CAMTtalk@hotmail.com or mail to CAMT Book Talk, 1297 Clark Blvd. Milton, ON L9T 6L4.

Your views on the books are welcomed and may be published.

One submission will be selected to receive a \$25.00 gift certificate from Chapters.

