



25<sup>th</sup> International Montessori Congress  
*Champion the Cause of all Children*

## *Congress Feedback*

*Anne Marie Brown, Parent, Farmhouse Montessori*

Three weeks ago I shared a table with an elderly lady in a food hall. We made pleasant conversation about her life, children, difficulties and triumphs. Then as we said good-bye she turned to my son who was sleeping in the stroller and said “I just hope these little children don’t have too much of a terrible time with all the horrible things going on in the world.”

“Oh no! These are the ones who will save us, these children are going to build a world of peace.” My response was so fast that it took me by surprise. I realised, however, this is one of the legacies of my attendance at the International Montessori Congress.

Thanks to the tenacity of one of our parents we were able to attend on a daily basis. I only had the one full day of sessions (along with the opening) and yet I am already planning to attend the next one in full. It was such an interesting and inspiring experience. The calibre of speakers was incredible and the range of topics diverse and at times challenging to the way we see and do things. I look forward to sharing in full, the topics and insights gained from these wonderful speakers, for each topic deserves full elaboration. But for now I just wanted to address four big points that came screaming out to me. The first of these is:

**Building a peaceful world.** What an enormous idea! We can build a peaceful world. We don’t have to wonder what our future will be like, we have our future right here. These little people who surround us and often consume us are the answer.

If we can allow children to become adults who look beyond social and cultural boundaries, who see themselves as just a part of this very big universe (instead of the centre of it) and adults that are connected to every part of the universe, i.e. they care for those who are weaker, smaller or disadvantaged. If we can allow this to happen and then there are others all over the world allowing this to happen, then just imagine the world we could end up with. WOW, Big Idea! “Revolutionary idea!” One of the delegates suggested.

My second point is just how simply this can happen. **Every step you take every move you make.** We have to do very little to make the big picture a reality. It is the little things in our day to day that make a real difference.

Helping a child to use their words to overcome a playground difficulty. Or letting them wait until someone has finished with the thing that they really, really want right now. Often it is just standing back while they find the resources to solve the problem themselves. (I find this one really hard, I want to show them how it supposed to be done). It is also removing our ego and being open to being taught by them. But mostly it is modelling the behaviour that you wish them to obtain. They see every move and absorb every attitude we convey. It is simple things that have a ripple effect.

The third of these points is **Our Directress.** One of the hugest revelations to me was how much I take for granted the person waiting at the door to greet my son each morning. I know a directress must have had to do some course or some sort of formal training but that’s about all the thought I gave it. I was amazed to sit and listen to these delegates who have dedicated their life to a philosophy.

They spoke of the virtue of the directress, the dedication of Montessorians and the quiet observation that it takes to be lead by the children. They also laughed a lot about all the time and

practice of presenting the equipment to the child. Practice in presenting the equipment, who would of thought?

But that's just the point, these directress' we have on our staff are all dedicated Montessorians with years of training, a wealth of knowledge and many many hours of observation behind them and a very big picture behind that. They can offer us a whole new viewpoint to some very simple scenarios.

Lastly I would like to share about **Global Reality**. Over the years I have joked "It's only pre-school" and time and time again I have discovered this is sooo much more than just pre-school. Well this was the first glimpse for me, at how much more, than just pre-school. I was one parent from our little school on Sydney's northern beaches sitting in an auditorium with nearly nine hundred people from all over the world. I am connected to at least fifty families through our school. So it occurred to me, how many other families were being represented here? And how far around the globe does this reach? Could it be, that this idea of building a peaceful world is already a global reality?

In summary; I hope that I have conveyed my absolute enthusiasm for being able to attend this congress. Mostly I hope to have become a ripple in the pond, sharing the idea, that we as a community, are part of a really wonderful movement. That this little pre-school and the educators in it are an incredible resource, a place that will help and encourage the wholesome development of each child's human potential.

*Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!*  
**Anne Frank**

*Anne Marie Brown  
Parent, Farmhouse Montessori*