This has been an incredibly full and rewarding summer (or winter for those that live in the antipodes). The International Montessori Congress in Portland, Oregon was an invigorating experience. If you had to sadly miss it, the vivid and enthusiastic accounts by three of our members will call up the atmosphere of energy and collaboration. Years of preparation went into this Congress and we would like to thank the facilitators, Montessori Northwest, their team so ably headed by Jennifer Davidson and Glenn Goodfellow and the hundreds of volunteers who made this such an impeccable event. Our thanks also go to all who sent in photographs of children at work, in connection to the theme of the Congress, “Guided by Nature”. And lastly, thanks to those of you who volunteered to do a stint at the AMI Pavilion.

Looking forward, please mark Prague in your diaries for the 2017 Congress! Also write in 12 & 13 April 2014, the date when we’ll have the next AGM and Open Forum in Amsterdam.

Some important changes to the Board are imminent, and we ask you to send in nominations for the position of two new board members. (see page 13 for background).

This button was worn by staff and volunteers at the congress. It was not only an invitation to come up and talk to us merely at such a big event: we love hearing from you, and we are always ready to listen and help. Ask us, any time.
Montessori Congress, Portland

Reflections
David Ayer, USA

We were told beforehand that International Montessori Congresses historically had often marked pivotal moments for the global Montessori movement and inspired transformation in the country where it is held. At the 2013 International Montessori Congress in Portland, Oregon, in the United States, that’s exactly what we experienced.

AMI President André Roberfroid’s introduction set the tone for the Congress, inspiring us with a vision of what is possible in Montessori, challenging us to extend Montessori’s work to all children, and uniting us by calling on Montessorians to set aside their differences in service of the child.

From André Roberfroid’s Opening Speech

‘... our task is daunting, but our capacity is endless. Our ambition goes far beyond the school. In a Montessori class we offer the children an opportunity to exercise freedom, while practising mutual respect and stimulating solidarity.

Is there a nobler goal for adults to assist children to construct a society where freedom will be the norm, respect will be natural and solidarity will be the instrument to achieve harmony?’

The Montessori keynotes (Lynne Lawrence, Rukmini Ramachandran, Molly O’Shaughnessy, and Eduardo Cuevas), grounded us in the depth of Montessori’s work and legacy. The four outside keynote speakers put our work in a global context and inspired and challenged in their own ways. Brian Swimme shared his scientific and spiritually profound vision of the universe story. Judith Snow’s stories resonated with her re-visioning of inclusiveness and the deep value of diversity. Paul Hawken helped us see the potential for environmental salvation in the human spirit. And Vandana Shiva literally brought us down to earth with her powerful story of human struggle against greed and exploitation.

Breakouts
The day-to-day, hands-on work of transformation came out in the breakouts. The four days were packed with fifty sessions so full of information and inspiration it was hard to choose among them. Speakers included AMI trainers, the leaders of AMI, AMI-USA, AMS, NAMTA, and the Montessori Foundation as well as Ph.Ds, lead researchers, classroom teachers, and philanthropic foundation board members. Of course, no one person could go to more than a tenth of the sessions. But the big picture tells a big
story. Some breakouts offered material teachers could take right back to the classroom: songs, stories, tomatoes, labyrinths, and mud. Others presented scientific research and child psychology from Montessori and outside perspectives. But nearly half the sessions featured stories of Montessori in action as a social movement improving children’s and families’ lives.

Around the world
So much work is happening around the world: In Haiti. In Spain. In Kenya and the Ivory Coast. In Thailand and Afghanistan. In Kiwirrkura and the Torres Strait. In East Dallas, Denver, Minneapolis and Kensington, Maryland. In advocacy groups working in 23 U.S. states. The work is inspiring, and ongoing, and carried out not just by institutions and organizations, but by individuals taking Montessori into their own hands. In these projects we see Montessori as an international social movement for the rights of the child.

Put the child first
We also saw the effect putting the child first has had in the U.S. In the last few years representatives of a U.S. family foundation, who are also Montessori parents and advocates, created a forum of the major Montessori organizations in a group called the Montessori Leaders Collaborative, or MLC. Relatively quiet up to now, the MLC announced a cluster of new collaborative projects with significant financial support. These include a digital census of the roughly four thousand U.S. Montessori schools, an ambitious three phase, multi-year research project, a Teacher Formation census and study group, and a visionary initiative to open 100 birth to six centres for children and their families over the next 5 years. With the transformational work that Montessori is doing around the world, and the transformation that is happening within US Montessori, the Congress has truly lived up to its promise.

Finally, a word about Portland
Portland is home to Montessori Northwest, an AMI training centre founded in 1979 and now supporting five trainers offering Assistant to Infancy, Primary, and Elementary courses, as well as organizing the Congress itself. More than 100 Montessori schools thrive in the Portland area, including 7 serving 150 or more families with both primary and elementary, three adolescent programmes, and two public charters.

Portland charmed us with its streetcars and its beautiful bridges, its cityscapes and nearby natural treasures, its coffee shops, food carts, and earnest recycling bins. It’s a place that feels free and open, and couldn’t have been a better setting for a quiet revolution for children.
Blue bags marked with “2013 International Montessori Congress” were toted everywhere in Portland, Oregon between 31 July and 3 August. The 27th International Montessori Congress held at the Oregon Convention Center concluded with the strongly inspiring ideas of Eduardo Cuevas and Dr Vandana Shiva; and recorded the biggest number of participants in the history of Montessori International congresses.

The Oregon Convention Center was transformed into the participants’ Prepared Environment, carefully set up by the organizer, Montessori Northwest, and convenor, AMI (Association Montessori Internationale). The overall theme was “Montessori: Guided By Nature”. Strong keynote speakers laid out the texture of the topics for the day and break-out sessions provided a rich array of diverse choices for the participants. The topics represented the operationalization of Montessori’s basic principles of the nature of the child and potential; and how nature is really us and that we are a manifestation of nature. Presentations were arranged by theme, linked to the overall theme and woven together to make a tapestry with a Montessori soul. With almost four years of preparation to its credit, the birth of the 27th International Montessori Congress was near flawless and impeccable in execution.

Proving that enchantment can be found in the commonplace, the most striking Congress paraphernalia was the non-descript Congress water bottle with the simple, subtle, discrete message—“Montessori movers, supporting each small step”. This congress was really about practitioners and advocates of Dr Montessori’s principles who, in their own small ways, moved the approach according to the needs and trends of the times. It was all about small efforts that reflect diversity and the reach of the application of the Montessori approach; and how Montessori can transform non-educational aspects of society, establishing once again the universality of Dr Montessori’s ideas and affirmation of her vision of the child and society. Montessori past continues to speak and have presence in the here and now.

Ideas presented and exchanged moved us, penetrating the heart and served purposes that go beyond cerebral understanding, to foster passion, interest and decision. Meaning is less than meaningfulness. True to the Montessori approach, the participants created their own meanings and went home with their own personal learning. The Congress served as the jump-off point for an ongoing dialogue in which we, the participants are
among a cast of characters. We entered into many conversations, and in the process expanded our ties and communities and strengthened the commitment to collaborate in the interest of fostering unity.

With 2,500 participants representing 60 countries, and around 2,102,400 minutes of careful thought and planning...what is the true measure of the success of the congress? The underlying tenor of the Congress was conveyed simply yet strongly by André Roberfroid’s opening and closing messages—take action or our movement will die.

Eternal ideas, beauty of expression, concern for values and the human scale of Montessori’s vision, give education a soul; and our soul continuing education. They address not only the mind but also the heart. It is what we do henceforth—the decisions that we make, the opportunities we offer, the risks we take, in the interest of the universal child and Montessori’s vision of peace—that will determine the success of this Congress.... with each small step we take.
Expanding My Montessori World
Yoshiko Kono, Japan

Portland was my first experience of an International Montessori Congress, and it topped anything I could have imagined. It brought inspiration and I returned home to Japan feeling truly empowered. From the keynote lectures I took away wonderful messages, and the importance to value the relationship between children’s development and nature.

The school tour on the first day provided us with a great opportunity to observe children’s environments in another country and to exchange ideas with other participants. It gave me all sorts of new and fresh ideas about my classroom and my children.

Lunch time was fun. As we could take our seats freely, it was very easy to make friends with Montessorians from all over the world. The vendor fair was also great for an inspirational walk, giving me lots of ideas to make materials!

Children working in the Corner of Hope environment, Kenya
As for the breakout sessions, the “Corner of Hope” (CoH) project truly opened my eyes to what

Montessori is meant to do and can do. CoH is a project in Kenya, where a Montessori environment has been established in a transit camp. I was moved by watching both the adults and the children who had experienced many changes because of the project. People have regained self-respect, independence and self-motivation. It was a great lesson for me to see that Montessori principles are effective in such an adverse situation lacking apparently satisfactory resources. Also, I was surprised to learn about the wide range of all of AMI’s activities.

This congress gave me a chance to reconsider our role as Montessorians. I have realized that just being a children’s guide is not enough. Taking a proactive role in spreading and deepening the idea of Montessori education in society is a meaningful and necessary responsibility. At the congress, I met many Montessorians that feel that deep responsibility and act on it. Although it’s a small thing, as a first step, I would like to call on all my colleagues who have never attended an International Montessori Congress to join the next one.

Thank you very much for organizing such a wonderful event.

The Outreach Pillar at the AMI Pavilion
where meetings between interested people and EsF partners were facilitated.

For more background on the work of EsF, we suggest you visit the web site of Educateurs sans Frontières: www.amiesf.org, where a number of outreach projects are described and you’ll be able to find contact details.
Many of the Congress Breakout presentation documents are available online. Below are the descriptions of presentations which can be accessed via: http://montessoricongress.org/program/documents/

**OUR WORLD, OUR LEGACY**
Eduardo Cuevas
Activists have sounded an alarm call in response to ongoing environmental destruction, citing both the individual and the cultures they create as the cause and the cure of the problem. Our lives are becoming increasingly disconnected from the natural world. As children’s lives become more and more dominated by media and visual images, they are losing the understanding that nature exists in their own backyards and neighbourhoods. The consequence of this disconnection may be generations coming to see themselves as separate, and not as inter-dependent, parts of the planet Earth, seeing Nature as something to be controlled and dominated rather than loved and preserved (full description here). PowerPoint / Transcript

**NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH AND MONTESSORI**
Dr Adele Diamond
Adele Diamond, Ph.D., Canada Research Chair Professor of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia, presented on the most current neuroscience findings as they relate to Montessori education. Her creation of the immensely popular international “Brain Development and Learning Conference: Making Sense of the Science” presents exciting scientific findings in neuroscience and child development. Dr Diamond also reminds us that dance, play, storytelling, art, and music have been part of human life for thousands of years and are found ubiquitously in every culture, and that perhaps we have discarded their wisdoms too lightly. PowerPoint / Video

**ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY WITH THE VALUES THAT NURTURE A HEALTHY AND RESPONSIBLE CHILD, COMMUNITY, AND WORLD**
Dr Sharon Maxwell
Dr Sharon Maxwell is a clinical psychologist, adolescent specialist, and nationally recognized author of the award-winning book, *The Talk: A Breakthrough Guide to Raising Healthy Kids in an Oversexualized, Online, In-Your-Face World*. Using current brain development research, this presentation examined the effects of the cyber world on our children’s spiritual, social, and intellectual development and present guidelines for creating a healthy relationship with communication technology. Handout #1 / Handout #2 / Handout #3 / Handout #4 / Handout #5

**SOCIETY & NATURE**
Rukmini Ramachandran
Adults shape society, making decisions and prioritizing a culture’s relationship to the natural environment. Societies can cultivate or impede values such as self-regulation, empathy, and stewardship of the earth, and consequently perpetuate those behaviours through their children. Montessori questioned if it is perhaps the child who should be guiding society. For lessons on social cohesion and independence, as well as to satisfy our longing for balance between our surroundings and our fundamental tendencies, adults need only look to the “universal child” for inspiration. PowerPoint / Transcript / Image

**MONTESSORI EDUCATION AND THE ROOTS OF SUSTAINABILITY: REMOVING “UNFREEDOMS” AND DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL AGENCY**
Uma Ramani
Uma Ramani, AMI Primary Trainer, AMI Primary and Elementary diploma holder, and consultant to the Hartford Public Schools Montessori Initiatives program, presented a fresh look at fundamental Montessori principles of freedom, development, and education for peace, especially as they apply to sustainability. Explore the implications for our work as
OUTDOOR EDUCATION AS A STARTING POINT TO IMPLEMENT MONTESSORI EDUCATION IN PUBLIC PRESCHOOLS
Diana von Rosen
AMI Primary diploma holder, school founder, University of Stockholm Montessori lecturer, and current Head of School, Diana von Rosen shared the story of how four preschools in Sweden increased the quality of the educational environment by combining Montessori education and an Eco-School program. PowerPoint

FROM BROWN STAIRS TO TOMATO LADDERS, DEMYSTIFYING MONTESSORI GARDENS
Sara Rosental Rosenbaum
AMI Primary diploma holder Sara Rosenbaum helps children develop purposeful gardens as an outdoor guide at two San Diego Montessori schools. In this interactive session participants explored their personal connection with nature and its legacy on their path as educators. Using case studies, guided meditation and a design challenge, participants explored the fundamental elements of creating a prepared outdoor environment. PowerPoint

INCLUDING THE NATURAL CHILD: REACHING CHILDREN WITH SIGNIFICANT LANGUAGE NEEDS IN A MONTESSORI ENVIRONMENT
Pam Shanks
AMS Primary diploma holder and special education/inclusion expert Pam Shanks presented on developmental delay, autism spectrum disorder, and sensory processing disorders. She offered easily implemented techniques that enhance the development of spoken language for children at all levels of ability. Slideshow

CULTIVATING CHILDREN’S INTEREST IN PLANTS
Dr Priscilla Spears
To appreciate plants, children need to see them as dynamic living organisms. Learn to help children understand plant structures, get new ideas for structuring botany explorations, and learn several less conspicuous features of common plants that you can share with children. Dr Priscilla Spears is a Montessori parent, biology Ph.D., and founder of Montessori science materials maker, Big Picture Science. Handout

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A TRADITIONAL SCHOOL OF A THOUSAND STUDENTS INTO A MONTESSORI SCHOOL THAT FOLLOWS THE CHILD
Daniel Canigueral Viñals
This presentation explained how a large school of a thousand students has gone from traditional schooling to following the Montessori Method whilst giving extreme importance to environmentalism, that is, the full understanding of the work of Nature. We must assist the child’s self-construction in order to develop not only the individual and social responsibility but also the responsibility of creating a natural, peaceful and sustainable world. PowerPoint / Video #1 / Video #2 / Video #3 / Video #4 / Video #5

If a programming component is not included in this list, it means that a certain presenter has either elected not to share their documents, or has not yet provided them to the Congress.

AMI would like to thank the Organizers, the staff and board of Montessori Northwest, but particularly Jennifer Davidson, Glenn Goodfellow, and Jeffrey Friedman for the amazing job they did.

We would also like to thank all the participants who came together from 60 countries of the world to give “voices, hands and feet” to the Montessori movement and strength to AMI’s mission — which is to give all children the opportunity to experience a quality Montessori education.
Who attended the Congress? Some infographics

- **WHO WERE WE?**

- **WHEN WERE YOU BORN?**
  - 6% prior to 1947-1957
  - 22% 1948-1957
  - 22% 1958-1968
  - 26% 1969-1978
  - 22% 1979-1989
  - 2% after 1989

- **HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION**
  - 8% High School Diploma
  - 3% Some College
  - 38% Associates Degree
  - 45% Bachelors Degree
  - 4% Graduate / Professional Degree
  - 2% Doctorate Degree

- **MONTESSORI TRAINING**
  - 0-2 years: 8%
  - 2-4 years: 45%
  - 6-12 years: 14%
  - 12+ years: 1%
  - Multiple Levels: 19%
  - Not Trained: 13%

- **WHICH TITLE BEST DESCRIBES YOU?**
  - Teacher (0-2): 27%
  - Teacher (2-6): 15%
  - Teacher (6-12): 12%
  - Classroom Assistant: 6%
  - Teacher Trainer: 4%
  - Consultant: 2%
  - Other: 2%
  - Graduate Student: 1%
  - Student in Montessori Training: 4%
  - Retired: 1%
  - Training Center Staff: 1%
  - School Board Member: 2%
  - Head of School: 1%

- **YEARS WORKING IN MONTESSORI**
  - 21+ years: 20%
  - 1-5 years: 15%
  - 6-10 years: 11%
  - 11-15 years: 14%
  - 16-20 years: 14%

- **COUNTRIES REPRESENTED**
  - Aruba
  - Australia
  - Austria
  - Bhutan
  - Brazil
  - Burkina Faso
  - Canada
  - Chile
  - China
  - Croatia
  - Czech Republic
  - Dominican Republic
  - Ecuador
  - Egypt
  - Finland
  - France
  - Gambia
  - Germany
  - Greece
  - Guatemala
  - Haiti
  - Hong Kong
  - India
  - Indonesia
  - Ireland
  - Italy
  - Japan
  - Kenya
  - Laos
  - Malawi
  - Malaysia
  - Mexico
  - Nambia
  - Nepal
  - Netherlands
  - New Zealand
  - Nicaragua
  - Nigeria
  - Norway
  - Pakistan
  - Peru
  - Philippines
  - Puerto Rico
  - Romania
  - Russian Federation
  - Rwanda
  - Singapore
  - South Africa
  - Spain
  - Sri Lanka
  - Sweden
  - Switzerland
  - Taiwan
  - Thailand
  - Tonga
  - United Arab Emirates
  - Uganda
  - United Kingdom
  - U.S.A.
  - Vietnam
Evelyn Greenberg

What better place to be surrounded and guided by nature than Oregon? For this Montessori advocate at the United Nations it was clearly essential to become acquainted with an unfamiliar area of the United States reinvigorating an involvement with nature as well as international Montessori connections. Majestic Mt. Hood, Crater Lake, the remains of volcanic eruptions surrounded by lava fields, the magnificent Oregon Pacific coast with mounds of rocks striking out of the shore, the lush Willamette Valley with crops of hops for local beers, hazel nuts, peaches, apples, cherries, Pacific salmon returning to spawn in the rivers of Oregon and the Northwest. Tillamook cheese factory which grew and thrived as a cooperative welcomed visitors. Lessons learned from the fur trappers who opened up trade with Native Americans. Channel Lewis and Clark mapping the Northwest Territory arriving at the Pacific. Let us not forget the looms of the textile industry which formed the economic driving force in the small village later capital of the state of Oregon, Salem less than fifty miles from Portland, the large and very beautiful city and the appropriate setting for the Montessori Congress. Placing a foot on the Pacific Rim, gazing at the Columbia River Gorge, partaking in the delights at the luscious Portland Market, admiring the Rose garden were experiences providing the dessert to the Montessori Congress “Guided by Nature”. What better place to be surrounded and guided by nature?

Perhaps it was my husband, Bert, a Montessori parent and friend responsible for the group photograph of the nature hike led by Eric who said it best, ‘Eric, a local Montessorian with a special interest in the local geology guided a group of over one hundred conference on a three-hour nature hike through Forest Park, one of the largest urban forest preserves in the United States. He had the participants directly experience the beauty of the park and he pointed out the value to his students of travelling on public transportation and exercising concern for others and for the public good. It was a rich experience guided by Eric and by nature.’

A highlight of the Congress was seeing the glass classroom of the past century recreated in the centre of Portland. In the early twentieth century that classroom was much talked about. Watching youngsters engaged in their activities without regard to onlookers remains a timeless wonder to the casual observer. How wonderful that we could share this experience once again with a new audience.

Oh, to have been a fly on the wall listening in to some of the presentations missed. Colleagues from the Torres Straits to Mexico, from India to Nara eagerly shared some of the presentations I had missed. Fortunately, the other presentations and breakout sessions are available to us online and via discs. Welcome to the twenty-first century!

How appropriate to see infants carried by their parents attending parent education and general sessions at a Montessori Congress. They belonged there, carried and nurtured by their intense parents. Their presence served to remind us of why we were participating in the Congress. The local well known bookstore Powells was well supplied with books by and about Montessori, some authored by several of the presenters. Michael Gurian, whose books I leaned on during my child-rearing days, reiterated the necessity of working with the nature of the child. Adele Diamond and Stephen Hughes provided evidence for how the Montessori environment advances not just academic but also life skills often referred to as executive functions. Paul Hawken and Brian Swimme maintained a hope for the future and a belief in a universe of potential. Lynne Lawrence provided the lyrical and moral support to Montessorians.

At the United Nations I am often welcomed as a kindly advocate for children. Truly we must, as André Roberfroid said, ‘increase the clarity of our message’. Judith Snow, a keynote speaker spoke of her hero, her father, who asked by his physically challenged daughter why he wanted her to live said that she might be the one to make a difference.

Almost daily we see young people coming to visit the UN as tourists, students, presenters. Excitement and hope are reflected in their eyes. We see pride in seeing their art work and projects displayed in the public areas. Above all else we would like each youngster to see the world as a place where they can make a difference, and help fight child labour. Almost a year to the day when Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced US $1.5 billion to Education First seeking universal school enrolment, the UN will hold a high level forum on the Culture of Peace. During the panel discussions that follow it is to be hoped that some of the issues touched on during our Congress will be brought to the fore. Stay tuned.
evelynrg@gmail.com
Victoria Barrès
Two new UNESCO institutes whose mandate involves the promotion of a Culture of Peace were created recently. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, a joint initiative by UNESCO and the Government of India, opened in November 2012 in New Delhi. The second is the International Institute for Peace at Rutgers University. It was co-founded by actor Forest Whitaker and Assistant Professor of Anthropology Aldo Civico, both new UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors for Peace. This institute will concentrate particularly on urban violence among youth.

We hope these two institutes will enable opportunities for AMI collaboration both regionally and internationally.

For the first time in 2013 the UNESCO Youth Forum, a bi-annual event held at UNESCO in October before the General Conference, has launched a ‘Call for Action’ on “Youth and Social Inclusion: civic engagement, dialogue and skills development”. Fifteen youth-led action projects, three per region, will receive a UNESCO Youth Forum Label, to concretely recognize their quality and feasibility. It should also facilitate project implementation, by helping to mobilize support, funds, partnerships and international visibility.

Montessori children from the ‘Corner of Hope’ in the New Canaan community created from a transit camp for displaced people (Nakuru, Kenya) prepared a short skit for the 2013-2014 Peace Event, “Marionettes get involved for Peace”, organized by the NGO Working Group, “Culture of Peace” at UNESCO that includes over 20 international NGOs. All the videos can be viewed at Vimeo: http://vimeo.com/user16438782. Corner of Hope is #48.

A selection will be screened at the International Festival of Marionettes in Charleville-Mézières on September 21, International Peace Day, at the Mayor and Festival President’s invitation. A large event with live performers and children will be held in September, 2014 at UNESCO.

On June 6-9, 2014, an international Peace event will be held in Sarajevo, organized by many local and international NGOs, including the Mayors for Peace, the International Network for a Culture of Non-Violence and Peace member organizations (of which AMI is a founding member) who represent several million people, and others. A Youth Forum will also take place. For information, contact AMI at secretariat@montessori-ami.org, vsbarres@aol.com and the International Network for a Culture of Peace, at www.npnetwork.net.

One important task to promote the “culture of peace” among Montessorians and others is to develop and maintain regular media connections about our collective “culture of peace” initiatives. They can also be shared on AMI’s “culture of peace” page and/or the International Network for a Culture of Non-Violence and Peace web sites. Social media like Facebook and Twitter can also be effective, particularly with young people. “Shared initiatives” that bridge levels from the local to the global, together with other partners, increase visibility, and synergy. The children’s version of the proposal for non-violent education and education on peace and non-violence, a “reading game” for young readers, can be downloaded soon from the updated AMI site’s “culture of peace” page. It exists in 8 languages, including Chinese, and Vietnamese. Any help to translate it into other languages is most welcome. This reading game is an inexpensive way to reach many children and youth through libraries, community centres and local organizations.

Thank you in advance for your interest and hopefully your commitment.

vsbarres@aol.com
On August 3, 2013 the International Montessori Congress in Portland, Oregon closed with the announcement that the next global gathering of Montessorians will take place in Prague, the capital city of the Czech Republic. Prague is most honoured to have been entrusted with the organization of the next International Montessori Congress, the 28th in our chronology, and looks forward to welcoming educational professionals and parents from many countries of the world. The Congress will be a wonderful tool to strengthen the educational reunion of Eastern Europe with the rest of the pedagogical world and will be a great platform to welcome back with fanfare modern education in the wider community.

In the heartland of Europe and considered to be one of the world’s most beautiful cities, Prague was founded 13 centuries ago. It is home to a number of famous cultural attractions, which include the Castle, the Old Town Square, the Jewish Quarter, and the Lennon Wall. As of 1992, the historic centre of Prague is part of the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites.

Since the reign of Charles IV, Roman Emperor of the 14th century, Prague has played a major role in European culture and education. It may therefore be no surprise that the Czech Republic boasts the birth place of world famous 17th century educator and innovator John Amos Comenius. He was the first to introduce pictorial textbooks in the native language instead of Latin. He applied effective teaching based on the natural gradual growth from simple to more comprehensive concepts, supported lifelong learning and development of logical thinking by moving from dull memorization, presented and supported the idea of equal opportunity for impoverished children, opened doors to education for women, made instruction universal and practical. By all means a source of inspiration, also to Maria Montessori, whose work has been enjoying increasing attention and is gradually becoming a steady factor in the educational landscape.

In short, Prague will be a fascinating venue and their planning team has already started work, and will keep the AMI membership updated via this bulletin, and newsletters.
AGM 2013
This year’s Annual General Meeting lived up to the expectations this traditional weekend gathering in April has started to create in recent years. It is going from strength to strength.

The societies meeting drew participants from more countries than before: 32! The meeting’s main focus was on generating publicity and attention for Montessori from the local and national community. The participants received many clear messages that can easily be implemented in their own situations. There were many practical tips on media and press coverage to create awareness, stressing that publicity is better than advertising. The participants were encouraged to be very focused and creative in turning any (small) event into a publicity moment.

The key speaker, Michael Morpurgo, treated us to a moving, and insightful story — recounting how a hard to reach young boy spent a week at the Morpurgo’s Devon charity, Farms For City Children. Their organization has helped more than 60,000 children since its establishment in 1976. Listen to his speech on our soon to be launched new website.

Sunday’s theme was Children’s Rights, one of the defining factors of Educateurs sans Frontières. The members greatly appreciated the presentation by Gerrit Jan Pulles, a practising lawyer specialized in children’s rights. They enjoyed the in depth talk by Nicolina Montessori on how Peace Education can be offered through practice oriented research.

Alison Lide spoke on how she and her husband founded the House of Flowers orphanage in Kabul, Afghanistan, guided by the inspiration of Montessori philosophy.

Peter Hesse showed his film on how Montessori has started to fight its way back in Haiti after the earthquake of 2010, and finally David Kahn shared insights into his work with adolescent communities 12-15 and 15-18 with land based, place based orientation around the world since 1982.

We are currently exploring ideas for an appealing theme for the Open Forum for next year. Your suggestions are welcome at publications@montessori-ami.org.

AGM & Open Forum 2014
Mark your calendars: April 12 and 13
At the 2014 AGM, the Board will be seeing some changes as the following positions become vacant.

- Pedagogy (Molly O’Shaughnessy is due to retire)
  This position is only open to AMI Trainers
- Funds development (Randi Yoder has retired)
  or
- Partnerships (this position may become vacant if there is a board reshuffle)

In line with the Strategic Plan, vacancies on the Board will be filled by seeking candidates with a specific field of expertise. Nominations and profile forms may be requested from the AMI Secretariat (info@montessori-ami.org).

Nominations should specify the position for which the nomination is being made. The nomination committee is made up of three AMIBoard members: Philip O’Brien, Molly O’Shaughnessy and Guadalupe Borbolla.

Closing date nominations 31 December 2013

Bonnie Beste following the footsteps of Virginia McHugh Goodwin

The Board of Directors of AMI-USA has recently announced the retirement of Virginia McHugh Goodwin taking effect July 2014. As of this month Virginia will work alongside Bonnie Beste who will be succeeding her as Executive Director of AMI-USA.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to Virginia for all her hard work in the USA, promoting Montessori education and her commitment to the mission of AMI. Virginia has done much to develop a professional organization in the USA to further our shared goals.

Thank you, Virginia, for all your work and for ensuring that the work of AMI-USA will be continued with dedication.

And we welcome Bonnie; we are sure that with her background in Montessori advocacy in Washington she will have much to offer and be a strong voice for AMI Montessori in collaboratives and government networks.
Outreach Projects

Mexico
Coral Ruiz and Teanny Hurtado

Children working in the streets in Puebla, Mexico can go to the Centro de Dia, a centre run by the local authorities offering them help, and education. The Montessori teacher training institute in Puebla (Instituto Paolini de Puebla) is hoping to introduce and integrate the Montessori approach to the programme of Centro de Dia, so the children may discover their talents, feel validated and develop abilities to lead different and satisfactory lives, besides surviving and learning how to read and write.

Teanny Hurtado and Coral Ruiz are working with the authorities and adults in charge to review, reconsider and eventually change the way of connecting to these children. They are currently changing the set-up of some of the existing workshops and giving some new ones. The children will be in charge of their "home", maintenance, cleaning, cooking, growing their food, etc. and so develop a sense of community based on their recently recovered self-esteem through work. The first activities were greatly appreciated by the young people.

Teanny and Coral welcome any ideas, suggestions and input so the children may benefit.

You can contact them via informes@montessori-paolini.com.

MISP and Cycles in Nature
Jacquie Maughan, Elizabeth Henke

The Montessori Institute for the Science of Peace (MISP) was established to provide a programme for empowering the adolescent, their teachers, and schools, constructing a vision of peace and sustainability locally and globally. The goal of MISP is to connect the theory and practice of Montessori with the wider field of peace education. The first endeavours of MISP have served to underscore the potential of the power of the youth to gather around an issue or a need and begin to make a difference.

Highlights of the activities: MISP and the Friends of the Children's Eternal Rainforest (FCER) in collaboration with The University for Peace (UPEACE) have designed an authentic learning experience that incorporates tropical ecology, peace education, activism, scientific study, and travel abroad in Costa Rica especially created for Montessori adolescents. For more info go to http://friendsoftherainforest.org/ecotravel/montessori-school-trips/

International Summit: MISP hosted a 4-day event in New York for students to work alongside experts dedicated to creating a just and sustainable food system, culminating in a student presentation of their recommendations from the iconic podium in the UN General Assembly. Inspired by the goal to think globally and act locally and by the 2013 International Montessori Congress with its theme “Guided by Nature” and with a desire to celebrate May as national bike month, students from all parts of the globe set off on bicycles to explore their favourite places in nature. Four continents were represented in this international day of “Cycles in Nature.” That inspired several students to bicycle from Seattle, WA to Portland, OR to participate in the Montessori Congress. Once there, they were joined by students from Florida, Michigan, California, British Columbia, and Mexico. The students left the Congress with the beginnings of an international network of Montessori youth, inspired to expand their network and become a voice for Montessori youth around the world. The Cycles in Nature will also grow. We look forward to next year when we invite all children in Montessori schools around the world to celebrate Cycles in Nature during the month of May.

MISP www.constructingpeace.org info@constructingpeace.org
Fourth Assembly
Educateurs sans Frontières

6-20 July 2014
Inpawa Hotel Ban Phai, Khon Kaen, Thailand

Announcing the Fourth Assembly of Educateurs sans Frontières

At its inception, Educateurs were defined as "a new corps of workers in the Montessori Movement, cæteris paribus, of Maria Montessori's education reform with its vision of deep ecology."

Educateurs sans Frontières "travel the paths Maria Montessori followed as she sowed seeds of knowledge, awareness and understanding to the natural laws of human development."

You can be part of this corps of Montessorians taking the work beyond the usual borders, bringing about the intrinsic unity and interconnectionness of the Montessori movement.

Join us for a life-changing experience by spending two weeks in beautiful Khon Kaen, Thailand. The development of Montessori in Thailand over the past 10 years will provide the foundation for our explorations and studies of Montessori principles as we come together to envision a future that will make a difference to all children’s lives.

Register your interest with us today or go to www.amies.org
Finland: lecture by Barbro Stenlund, AMI Primary Trainer  
"To Educate the Human Potentialities"  
29 September, 2013

The rest of the day is devoted to discussing multiple intelligences and the human tendencies and in how far they correspond.

Venue: Ruusutorrpa School  
Leppävaarankatu 24, Espoo, Finland

Admission: € 70 + 24% VAT  
Programme runs from 10-16 hrs

Lecture language: English  
Discussion languages: English, Finnish, or Swedish.

Registration and info from  
Marja Leena Tyrvainen at tyrvainen@gmail.com  
Registration closes on September 18.

France: lecture by Prof. Bernard Golse  
"Today's adolescents, tomorrow's adults"  
Paris  
5 October, 2013

Venue: Amphithéâtre Richelieu de la Sorbonne  
17 rue de la Sorbonne - 75005 Paris

Start programme: 14 hrs  
Register before 30 September: amf@montessori-france.asso.fr  
Admission: Members AMF: € 10  
Non-members: € 20

Payment is due before the conference.

USA: NAMTA  
The Montessori Oasis: Prepared Pathways for a Sustainable School Community,  
Baltimore, MD  
3-6 October, 2013

Montessori Institute for the Science of Peace (MISP) Event  
Using Costa Rica as the Montessori Prepared Environment: Integrating Sustainability and Peace for Adolescents  
Cleveland, Ohio  
18-19 October, 2013

The Importance of Montessori, Birth to Six:  
Towards a Community Center Approach,  
Minneapolis, MN

The period from birth to age 6 provides the child's best chance for success. Language, movement, independence, self-discipline and social coherence are the unifying principles that address the development of the child under six. The Birth to Six Community Family Center reflects the community in which it is located as it brings together and supports interdependence, diversity and empowerment among the families it serves. The focus of this conference is to consider the characteristics of Montessori centres that view the first plane of education as a whole.

7-10 November 2013

For full information go to the NAMTA web site:  
http://www.montessori-namta.org/Events
USA: 2014 Refresher Course and Workshops
"The Child’s Journey: Navigating the Stages of Development"

February 14-17, 2014

The child’s progression through the stages of development is best assisted by an informed adult, keenly aware of the preparation and guidance needed for each stage of the child’s journey. The child’s passage is marked by what Dr Montessori described as a “continual state of growth and metamorphosis” that exhibits itself in physical and mental changes through each stage of development. The magic is in how it all fits together. Understanding the child’s acquisition of new powers, abilities, sensitivities at every stage is key to optimizing the experience for the child in each Montessori setting.

We must not only understand where the child we receive in our classroom has come from but where s/he is going. It is the guide’s responsibility in a Montessori environment to facilitate the necessary experience a child needs in order to best support the successful continuation of his/her journey. This deeper understanding of the needs of each stage will be explored from both a practical and theoretical perspective.

Speakers include:
Annette Haines, Ed.D.
Silvia Dubovoy, Ph.D.
Molly O’Shaughnessy
Allyn Travis
Jenny Höglund
Janet McDonell
Alison Awes
David Kahn
Katy Myers
Mary Zeman
Connie Black
Debby Riordan
Ginni Sackett
Bonnie Beste
Jaye Espy


Netherlands: 2014 edition of the Montessori Summer Seminar
Amsterdam

August 11-15, 2014

AMI, together with AVE.IK, is delighted to announce that the next Montessori Summer Seminar will be held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, from August 11-15, 2014.

The programme offers a unique mix of in depth lectures and dialogue with speakers of international repute, and guided tours to Montessori landmarks in Amsterdam and elsewhere in the Netherlands. It is a fabulous intellectual and cultural experience.

To help create an atmosphere of true exchange and collaboration, we are limiting the group to 25 participants, representing Montessori around the world.

One of the participants from an earlier seminar thanked us to say, ‘this is the best thing I ever experienced’.

Info and registration summerseminar@ami-org.

More Montessori Events on offer
Training Group News

Congratulations to New Auxiliary Trainers

Teenaz Reporter, India and Ann Velasco, USA have reached the level of auxiliary trainer at the Primary Level. Kyla Morenz, Canada, is now auxiliary trainer at the Elementary level, and Nancy Lechner, USA is auxiliary trainer at the Assistant to Infancy level.

Many, many congratulations and wishing you continued joy in your work.

A-I Seminars end...with smiles and certificates

The last (of four) seminars for the participants in the Training of Trainers Programme at the Assistants to Infancy Level was held in Amsterdam. They loved their time at AMI, did a lot of hard work, but also enjoyed some delicious sunshine lunches in the garden.

On the final day of the seminar there was an official moment in Maria Montessori’s study where the three trainers responsible (Judi Orion, Maria Teresa Vidales, and Patricia Wallner) made a lovely presentation to the participants, and gave them their “certificate of completion” indicating they had attended all four seminar sessions. At the moment the participants are working hard on the other aspects of their training before the title AMI trainer can justly be conferred on them. Good luck with the last stretch of your studies.

Based on the success of the seminars of the Training of Trainers Programme so far the Training Group is pleased to announce six Elementary Seminars at the Washington Montessori Institute at Loyola University, Baltimore, USA starting in October 2013 and six Primary Seminars to be held in Hyderabad, India starting in December 2013. (Applications for the Primary Seminar are accepted until 15 October.) For full info, contact Aisling O’Connell at trainingoftrainers@montessori-ami.org.
Material Committee

The Material Committee welcomes your comments about materials in the interest of maintaining the highest standards and quality. A record of comments is compiled so that common issues and patterns can be identified and communicated to the AMI approved manufacturers.

Please email the Material Committee directly: AMI Material Committee@montessori-ami.org.

Montessori best-sellers in the making

The 2013 International Montessori Congress tied in beautifully to Maria Montessori’s first trip to America in 1913. This hundred-year theme was reflected in two new publications brought out by the Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company, launched in Portland by two of Montessori’s great grandchildren: Alexander Henry, who manages the publishing company and Carolina Montessori, archivist and Montessori editor. She is responsible for the moving and delightful Maria Montessori Sails to America, a private diary. The second title is The 1913 Rome Lectures, a selection of lectures delivered on Montessori’s first international training course, attended by many Americans whose interest and determination had made this happen. Eminently edited by Dr Susan Feez and Dr Larry Quade, this book gives a brilliant insight into the evolution of Montessori’s ideas on the science of pedagogy. Both books were keenly sought after at the Congress. They can now be bought online from:

http://www.montessori-pierson.com/
http://amiusa.org/products-page/books/
http://www.montessori-namta.org/Books-by-Montessori

Títulos publicados en Español

The past few years many Montessori titles in the Spanish language went out of print and were discontinued by their previous publishers, something deplored by the growing Spanish-language Montessori community. The Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company is currently working to remedy this lack, and as a first step has just published a reprint of El Niño.

http://www.montessori-pierson.com/
AMI Trainers in Portland, on sweeping staircase

A few days prior to the Congress many of our AMI trainers gathered in Portland for a three-day meeting of trainers and auxiliary trainers. Trainers, seasoned and recent, joined in break-out sessions, and open discussions.

They heard Karen Shaw lecture on Adult Education whilst Irini Fafalios presented a very rich lecture on Keys to the World.

The final day of the Trainers Meeting was devoted to Music. Trainers Judi Orion, Jean Miller and Alison Awes delighted their peers with insightful observations on Music Education. Their presentations also incorporated many practical aspects and participation, when the trainers were all invited to share in songs and dances.

Monte Kenison was constantly on duty to make sure all AV aspects functioned properly and filmed the entire meeting. Thank you, Monte!

On the final day there was a proper “photo shoot” on the sweeping staircase of the Hilton Hotel. More photos of trainers at the reception at MNW on AMI Facebook.

Brenda Striegel-Fox
The Trainers Meeting closed with a delightful and moving ceremony when the trainers, auxiliary trainers and the members of the Training Group said goodbye to Brenda Striegel-Fox, who had been at the hub at AMI head office for the Training of Trainers Programme ever since she joined the organization in 1979. Thirty-four years of being the anchor for the trainers-in-training going through the programme has meant that Brenda can claim a strong sense of connection to the training faculty. The fact that these feelings are fully reciprocated by the trainers and auxiliary trainers was evidenced by the presentation of a book comprised of personal messages, and an “envelope” with a secret content — anyway it will enable Brenda and her husband to enjoy some lovely walking holidays in her retirement. Brenda was extremely moved by these expressions of true appreciation and affection, and would like to thank all with whom she has worked during her AMI time. In her own words, ‘I feel enriched by having had the opportunity to get to know so many extraordinary people, first as “pen-friends” and later meeting them in person. In my work I have been ably guided firstly by my own trainer Hilla Patell for more than twenty years, and more recently by Annette Haines, Janet McDonell and Judi Orion’. Brenda would like to thank the training corps for the great (working) relationship over all those years, and for the many presents so thoughtfully chosen.

We all know it is not goodbye, but “au revoir”.

Brenda Striegel-Fox
Newly Affiliated Societies

Friends of AMI Nippon are signing an affiliation agreement with AMI: in the middle Mrs Matsumoto, president; behind her Hiroko Hartley, trainer Judi Orion, who has given many courses in Japan. To the left AMI President, André Roberfroid and Megan Tyne, AMI societies liaison. To the right AMI Executive Director, Lynne Lawrence.

Contact Friends of AMI Nippon at:
2-20-2, Unomori, Minam-ku
Sagamihara City Kanagawa Prefecture
252-0301, Japan
Phone: +81(0)42 705 6160
amitomo@arion.ocn.ne.jp
http://www7.ocn.ne.jp/~amitomo/1301.html

Luis Jorge Garcia Dueñas and Anna Julia Barnadas of Asociación Montessori Española are shaking hands on their affiliation agreement with AMI, with André Roberfroid and Lynne Lawrence.

Contact them at:
Colegio Parque Conde de Orgaz
International Montessori School
C/ Gregorio Benitez 23-25
Madrid 28043
Spain
asociacionmontessori@gmail.com
http://www.asociacionmontessori.net
Montessori Centenary in Russia

Anna Pugacheva, Montessori Public Fund

This year the Russian Montessori community celebrates the centenary of the Montessori movement in Russia. On 10 October 1913 the first Montessori school opened in Saint Petersburg. Its founder, Julia I. Faussek, went to Rome, visited Montessori schools, and attended some of Maria Montessori lectures at the international training course and personally met Dr Montessori.

Although in Russia Montessori education has often met with great difficulties—first the revolution in 1917, followed by the Civil War and later the method was officially banned in the Soviet Union — there has been a revival since the 1990s.

We are glad to report that Montessori education is very much vibrant and alive, and are particularly pleased that in recent years we have done much to promote Montessori and help establish AMI teacher training. Montessori education and schools led by AMI diploma holders are spreading and becoming increasingly available for our children and those who want to become Montessori teachers.

We are also happy with the changes in our community. In connection with our centenary celebrations several Montessori organizations are engaging in joint activities proposed by the Montessori Public Fund, which has taken up the AMI “One Voice” initiative. We have created a common programme which includes events all over the country: celebrations, seminars and conferences on the Montessori Method both for Montessori professionals and parents. We are going to publish Maria Montessori’s book The Child in the Family and a collection of scientific articles and research by Russian scientists with relevance to Montessori education. We are going to open a Museum on the Montessori movement in Russia and are working on a Time Line devoted to the history of the Montessori Method in Russia.

In October there will be a big event in St. Petersburg — an Assembly of all Russian Montessorians. Several distinguished guests who have made a significant contribution to Montessori in our country are going to take part, such as AMI trainers Maria Roth, Patricia Wallner and Madlena Ulrich and AMI board member Peter Davidson.

On the initiative of the Montessori Public Fund several Montessori organizations will sign a Memorandum of Cooperation during the Assembly.
In Australia they also count up to a hundred

Sandra Allen, Australia

On 8 and 9 June, the Australian Montessori community came together to celebrate 100 years of Montessori in Australia with a Centenary Conference and Gala Ball. Taking place in our nation’s capital, Canberra, the Conference was officially opened by The Hon. Peter Garrett, the federal minister for education. In his address, he began by saying that it was ‘a privilege for me to be here to celebrate 100 years of contribution made by the Montessori movement to educating Australians, to acknowledge, not only here, but also internationally, the extraordinary range of alumni from Montessori education and to recognize the contribution that they have made in all the corners of the earth.’

Hosted by Greg MacDonald and Pamela Nunn, speakers included André Roberfroid, Lynne Lawrence, Shannon Helfrich and Steve Hughes. We were honoured to be joined by the Ambassador of Thailand, H.E. Mr Maris Sangiamponsa together with Dr Benjalug Namfa from the Ministry of Education to talk about the growth in this region and to acknowledge the team of Australians working to achieve this. The audience were particularly moved to hear how Montessori is making a difference in the Torres Strait Islands and other Indigenous communities. Some of these speakers were also at the recent Montessori Congress in Portland.

The Conference heralded the official launch of Montessori: The Australian Story, a book commissioned by the Montessori Australia Foundation and written by Dr Susan Feez. The book celebrates the long and remarkable history of Montessori in Australia and stands in testament to the people who were so dedicated to supporting our children. Australia is capping off the centenary year of Montessori with many events, particularly around Dr Maria Montessori’s birthday. Following her well received presentation at the Centenary Conference, we invited back Laura Flores Shaw to give a series of parent talks around the country.
Number of AMI courses breaking records

In General

As the call for Montessori education continues to grow, so does AMI training, in terms of new trainers and auxiliary trainers, new territories and new training facilities, and an increasing number of Montessori schools worldwide.

To meet the demand, many of our affiliated training centres have increased their operations by offering additional levels of training. The result is a strong platform of AMI presence in the local and greater community, which works as a catalyst for further expansion and improved strategic planning required to carry on our work effectively and efficiently. Currently the number of AMI diploma course programmes stands at 126, with several more about to start. This number can only increase as more trainers in training graduate, and as more course proposals are approved in existing AMI strongholds and new regions. So far this year 32 classroom assistants course programmes have been held throughout the world—the “newcomer” being Vietnam. There are more programmes planned in the autumn of 2013.

Elementary (6-12) training

Besides the regular summer elementary course programmes in the USA (in Columbia, Milwaukee, Minnesota and Portland), a new 6-12 programme started in San Diego. Much-awaited elementary programmes have started in Mexico City, Toronto, and across the Atlantic Ocean, in Geneva, Switzerland. The 6-12 course in Thailand (the first to be held there) is ongoing.

Primary (3-6) training

In Scandinavia, there is also an expansion on the horizon. As well as the Primary Course in Helsinki, a second programme will start in Tampere under a new sponsoring body, Tampere University of Applied Sciences. A request for a 3-6 programme has also come in from Denmark. At this level of training new courses have been added to the US list of AMI affiliated centres, namely in Houston, Texas; in Greenville, South Carolina. In India, the Navadisha Montessori foundation in Chennai, will hold an additional satellite course in Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore).

Going from strength to strength are the training centres in Argentina, China, Mexico, Russia and Spain, as are those in the Czech Republic and Romania. In the latter two countries Casa and Assistants to Infancy courses will be held in modules during the academic year.

AMI recognizes and values the contribution of its existing and new training centres, and the important role their staff and graduates play in the dissemination of the value of Montessori education in the hope that in the future it will be available to children everywhere. Thanks to this group effort, and supported by our worldwide membership, AMI is ready to meet the challenges of the future.

All AMI course programmes are listed in the training centre section of our web site www.montessori-ami.org

Country Case: Greece

The Montessori Lab, Athens (previously Montessori Workshop) will be holding its 2nd two-year, part-time evening diploma course in Athens, beginning in October 2013 and finishing in May 2015.

Interest in Montessori is growing in Athens, and a conference is being organized for December 21 at the University of Athens, entitled “The Montessori System of Education, its Validity for The Present and for the Future—The Problems and The Prospects”.

It is the first time that such a conference is being organized in Athens, and AMI Trainer Irini Fafalios has been invited to speak on the training of Montessori teachers. She is hopeful that it will attract a lot of people, raise questions and address some of the issues that currently make the opening of a Montessori school or Children’s House so difficult in Greece.
More courses, in new places

Inclusive Education
Nature creates differences…
society interprets them as handicaps.

Two-summer course: 2014 and 2015

In this supplemental Montessori training course, MISD will offer special teacher training to Montessori educators on the subject of working with children who have mental, emotional, or physical differences that require a unique strategy. Specialists will lecture on selected topics, such as ADHD, the Autism Spectrum, language development and behavioral disorders, with the goal of providing sufficient information to facilitate the identification of certain common special needs. The Directors of Training will guide discussions, examining the various ways we can offer assistance to children utilizing all the elements of the Montessori prepared environment. We will also look at the ways we can direct parents to appropriate outside clinical support. The ultimate goal is to provide each and every child the best opportunity possible to have his/her needs met within the Montessori environment (classroom).

This course runs for four weeks each summer, for two consecutive summers. Examinations will take place during the fifth week of the second summer. An AMI certificate will be issued to those who successfully complete the programme. Applicants must be AMI diploma holders, with three years teaching experience.

Dr Silvia C. Dubovoy and Janet McDonell will direct the course. training@misdami.org

The AMI training centre in Paris, Institut Supérieur Maria Montessori, organized a “satellite” Primary course in Lyon, which was given in modules.

Many congratulations to the first batch of students on this course, who graduated on 23 August.

And another first: Santiago de Compostela, Spain saw the start of a modular 3-6 course last year, which has just concluded on 30 August.

AMI Trainer Guadalupe Borbolla, generally based in Mexico, is breaking ground in Spain, together with Silvia C. Dubovoy who is offering a course that covers the First Plane (0-3 & 3-6) at University Vic, Barcelona.
Official Opening of the ACMS Training room in Melbourne

The 31st of August is memorable as it was the day Maria Montessori was born in 1870 and helped change and shape the way we believe children learn. The 31st of August also marks the end of winter for the Southern hemisphere, and in 2013 the 31st of August marked the official opening of the ACMS training room in Melbourne.

Amy Kirkham, the Director of Training for Melbourne, welcomed visitors and thanked Kalker Montessori Centre and particularly Jill Vizec (the previous Principal), Sangeeta Rao (the current Principal) and Glenda Kett (the Administrator) for their support and vision in making the training room a reality.

Sangeeta also made a short speech acknowledging the importance of ongoing training and the journey the centre has travelled. Megan Tyne then spoke on behalf of ACMS and presented a glass etching of Maria Montessori with the following inscription: Commemorating the opening of the Australian Centre for Montessori Studies in Melbourne on 31 August 2013.

There was a steady stream of visitors through the morning and it was lovely to see students enrolled in the first course due to begin on 23 September, as well as graduates, teachers from the Montessori community and other interested people from the wider community.

The room has already been used for parent information sessions, which will continue to be offered on a regular basis. Plans for professional development and workshops for teachers are also underway.

Vietnam


Vietnam is another country in Asia where Montessori seeds are being sown, which are sprouting, ready to start blossoming.

The first Children’s House Assistant Course was held in May, and there are various efforts underway to prepare Vietnamese translations of primary Montessori texts.
Attic Finds

The 1913 Montessori diploma and course notebooks of Maria La Maestra

On July 27 at a gathering of AMI trainers in Portland, AMI Trainer Silvia C. Dubovoy made a very special presentation. On behalf of Ana Maria Garcia she donated the original 1913 Montessori diploma and course note books of Ana Maria’s great grandmother: Maria La Maestra.

This Maria was born in the Italian province of Messina on September 23rd, 1891, and belonged to a wealthy Italian family. Her father owned a bookstore and her mother was involved in managing the household and raising their three children.

The lives of all the Sicilians changed on December 28, 1908 when Maria was awakened by the tremendous noise and movements that shook her homeland because of the earthquake. Maria rose and opened the door of her room—she saw smoke and nothing else!

Her bedroom was intact but the house was almost completely destroyed. Amid the screams and confusion she heard her father’s voice, and it was she who helped rescuers find him. Unfortunately, when the rubble cleared, her mother, brother, and other family members had already fallen victim to this catastrophe. Maria moved to Rome and completed her secondary education at Queen Margaret College, earning the title of kindergarten teacher. According to the story, she and her fellow kindergarten teachers were the first people to take Dr Montessori’s course in May 1913, and the first to benefit from Montessori’s ground breaking views on early childhood education, which were filtered through the lens of scientific pedagogy.*

Maria was assigned to a school in Reggio Calabria, where she lived at the time. There she met Domenico Sansalone, son of a peasant family, who had returned to his village after serving in the Italian Army during the first world war. On September 23, 1920 Maria and Domenico were married in Messina. This young man would became the father of their six children. The fear of war made them decide to seek other horizons, like many immigrants who relocated to South America.

Full Circle

Now a hundred years on, her great-granddaughter Ana Maria is deeply involved in Montessori education in Argentina. Thank you so much, Ana Maria. This diploma will receive a special place in the Montessori Museum.

* Note: this 1913 diploma testified that Maria La Maestra had completed a practical course in which she had learnt to use the Montessori Materials and work in a classroom. From La Maestra’s course note books, which were also donated, we gather that a few years earlier she had followed Montessori’s theoretical lectures on the national course in Via Giusti in 1910 and 1911. There she must have experienced a special connection to the children, as it was the Casa of Via Giusti that particularly cared for the orphans from the Messina earthquake.

To Mr Edison in Amerika

In October 1929, Dutch Montessori teacher Helena Epping-Vermaas talked to “her” children about the inventions of Thomas Alva Edison. The children spontaneously decided they wanted to thank him for bringing light to the world and set to work, creating drawings with the metal insets, which their teacher sent with a lovely cover note (in German) to Mr Thomas Alva Edison, inventor of the electric glowing lamp, Amerika. It arrived!

Now, after journeys we know not much about, the documents ended up at the Washington Montessori Institute, where they were treasured by Elizabeth Hall, former director of training at this training centre. Now was the time to send them on once more. During our meeting with the AMI trainers in Portland, Liz Hall made a gracious donation of this historical gem to the Maria Montessori Archives in Amsterdam.

Whoever feels encouraged to do some further sleuthing is invited to fill in the gaps of this story! More in the next issue.
Aid to Life truly going global

The web site Aid to Life was launched last year, and is increasingly being discovered by the audience we had in mind: young parents! In addition to the positive feedback we receive we also get quite a few requests for the site to be available in other languages than just English. We are therefore delighted to announce that the site has now been fully translated into Chinese, Greek, Russian, Spanish, Romanian, and Vietnamese. Since it is very time consuming to upload all the translations, this will need to be done according to a regulated time path. At the moment the download leaflets in all these languages on Movement, Communication, Independence and Self Discipline are already available from the main web site on the following page http://aidtolife.org/home/about.htm

Spanish, Romanian and Russian translations have now been uploaded and can be found at: http://www.aidtolife.org/es http://www.aidtolife.org/ro and http://aidtolife.org/ru.

Many many thanks to all who helped realize this effort.

Translations that are in progress are Czech, French, and Polish. Please do contact us at info@aidtolife.org if you wish to translate or co-translate (parts) of the Aid to Life web site. It is very rewarding, and will help parents, and also teachers, in your community.

Feel inspired by the Greek team of four volunteers who in late 2012 set about translating the Aid to Life web site which they completed at the end of June 2013, after a great deal of hard work and attention to accuracy. Not wanting to disband the group, they have decided to explore how they can disseminate this information by using all the contacts they have in the large general, and women and children’s hospitals in Athens. Furthermore they are hoping to apply their love of Montessori and their translating skills to other ventures. Who knows, they may even engage in a much needed new translation/publication of Dr Montessori’s texts — a huge undertaking — but if taken step by step, there is no reason why this should not happen.

**From 0-3 to 3-6 to 6-12 ... to the full spectrum**

At the moment the information on the web site talks about the very young child, from 0-3, and we are now ready to start augmenting the site and cater for the 3-6 children. The four partners of Aid to Life aim to eventually cover all planes of development, right up to 18. In the autumn Aid to Life will be preparing a template for focus groups at 3-6 6-12 and 12-18 - and it is our hope that about 6 people can work at each age level. Would you like to join this wonderful effort? Please contact Louise Livingston at info@aidtolife.org.