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AMI Completes 90 Years!



*Where it all began !
- Kronberg Castle, Denmark*

It has been a long journey for AMI in carrying out Montessori's vision of understanding the natural development of children and enabling them to become confident, young individuals who will transform the society for the better. AMI website will share highlights from the last 90 years, events and celebrations held all over the world throughout 2019, and also look to the future to continue its legacy of work to support the individual and his development.

It makes us very proud to announce that **Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)** is celebrating its **90th anniversary** this year. Maria Montessori undertook the initiative to form AMI at the first International Montessori Congress which was held as part of the Fifth Congress of the New Education Fellowship held at Denmark in 1929.



Over 118 delegates attended the New Education Fellowship Congress in 1929 where Dr Montessori gave an introductory course on the Montessori Method

* Images used from the AMI Website

IMF Events

CHENNAI
- Aditi Ganesh



The growing Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) conducted its first Volunteers Meet on January 26, 2019 in Chennai. Trustees, Event Coordinators of various cities, Editorial Team of the Touch Board and Montessori Matters, Representatives from Coral Group, Website Admin and the IMF office staff all gathered to reflect on the work done so far and to plan for the future.

The different teams brought to attention the various challenges faced in operation for which solutions were discussed. The volunteers also grouped themselves with other cities, bringing in fresh perspectives and charting out a plan for the upcoming academic year. It was decided to henceforth make the Volunteers Meet an annual affair.

BANGALORE*-Kavneet Chadha*

IMF Thursday Talk was held on January 31, 2019 at Touch International Montessori School, Bangalore. Leela Samson, a Bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer, instructor and writer spoke on 'Introducing the Performing Arts to Young Children'. She highlighted the self-discipline performing arts inculcates and the importance of introducing arts early in a child's life.

"The one thing that struck me was the idea that art and music shouldn't be commercialised as it is in competitions and TV shows. People should appreciate the arts as they are, as a cultural asset; to enjoy them and to enable them to bring in a sense of community and peace through their creativity. They shouldn't be made competitive." - Indrakshi Dcosta, Montessori guide

HYDERABAD*-Vidhya Ramalingam*

Teenaz Reporter, Director of Training, Montessori Research and Training Trust, addressed nearly 150 educators and parents from different cities on February 23, 2019 at The Plaza Hotel, Hyderabad. The workshop titled 'Joyful Journey to Writing and Reading' focused on helping educators re-connect, re-examine and re-interpret the Montessori approach to language. Teenaz spoke about developmental principles in education, ways of helping children self-express and several direct and indirect methods of preparing the child to write and read. She pointed out that language is just not utilitarian, but an opportunity to express human intelligence, knowledge, ideas, fear and joy.

"It was a reminder to all of us in preparing ourselves in helping the child to adapt, appreciate and explore the language of his culture with joy."- Rajini Anguthala, Lumbini Montessori House of Children

"I realized that it is important for an adult to identify and sustain the interests in the child and capitalize every opportunity you get to embed language in real life experiences as it forms the base for writing and reading." - Divya Reddy, Prakruthi Montessori House of Children.

MUMBAI*-Mehak Hemnani*

Vibhuti Jain, who has worked for 15 years with children from 0-6 years and currently training to be a trainer at the 0 – 3 level spoke on 'How to handle tantrums in young children' at Peace Montessori School, Mumbai on February 21, 2019.

According to Jyoti Jalan, Founder, Peace Montessori School, the highlights of the talk were:

- * The importance of empowering the child.
- * Being consistent and slowing down speed as per child's requirement.
- * If children find things in order and are informed of changes, then the tantrums are less.
- * The idea of always giving the child two choices to choose from.

Various queries were addressed about cutting down afternoon naps and helping children get ready on time for school.

Then & Now

- Roopa Sundar

Are the seeds for the future laid here and now? In this segment, we bring to you glimpses of the childhood of famous artists and how it has influenced and shaped what they became.



Maqbool Fida Husain, known as the ‘Picasso of India’, was world renowned for his paintings and taking modern Indian art to the global front. His interest also flared towards poetry, print making, photography and filmmaking, all of which he grew a passion for when he was young.

Words of M F Husain as spoken to Gowri Ramnarayan:

“My earliest recollections are of faces bending over me when I was one or two years old. By age four I was drawing the faces I saw at home, on the street, and in the market-place. By the time I was five, I was sketching all the time, scribbling wherever I could – on paper, books, wall and floor. My favourite models were faces which had something extra on them like glasses, moustaches or beards.

I think my obsession with faces was not due to the variety in their features. It was their expressions that intrigues me. You see, even the same face does not always look the same. So many feelings fade in and out and chase one and another everchangingly.

My passion for painting became so overwhelming that I lost interest in everything else. My hand kept moving on paper, making shapes and patterns. I painted on broken bits of crockery and on the floor, imitating the traditions of Gujarat and Rajasthan. I used to carry a sketch pad with me always. Whenever something caught my fancy I would whip it out and draw feverishly.

As a child I read a lot. I was attracted to ideas. That is why all kinds of religious thought and philosophy interested me. My feelings for poetry was fanned by my uncle Zakir Ali Zia. He was a poet himself.

Like me, my father had many interests. Music was one of them. he played a Japanese instrument called the Tesho koto, probably purchased from a wandering Japanese tradesman.

Father was also very fond of the theatre. He would take us to see the famous Marathi plays put up by the popular drama companies of those times. I used to be entranced by their spectacle and songs. And Ramlila! It was not street theatre at all but an unforgettable experience. The characters of the old myth took fantastic shapes. It was more than real. It was magical.

In those days travelling shows were very popular. One of them was the ‘bioscope’. I was so intrigued by it that I constructed my own ‘peep box’- hand crank and all. I drew a strip of six to eight drawings rather like animation pictures, or those you see in flip books. My invention was a tremendous success and after this I got hooked on photography. We were not rich. But father said, ‘The boy is creative, let him do what he likes.’ He bought me an Agfa camera for five rupees. This interest continued in adulthood.”

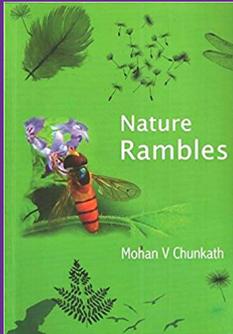
***These excerpts are from ‘Past Forward’ by Gowri Ramnarayan, Oxford University Press, which offers insights into the lives of six marvelous artists. We thank her profusely for graciously agreeing to publishing these snippets from her work.**

Titles & Tales



- Roopa Sundar

Books are real and magical, simple and transcendent, right here and beyond, and an essential part of children's lives! We bring you a series of reviews of books suitable for children over six. Watch this space in every issue for a different book!



Nature Rambles

Author - Mohan V Chunkath

ISBN - 978-81-922917-0-3

Nature Rambles is an ode to local flora and fauna. It is an account of different species that Mohan Chunkath, biologist by heart and bureaucrat by profession, came across during his walks in the neighbourhood in Besant Nagar, Chennai. This is a collection of photographs and information of about 200 species of insects, flowers and birds that would be found in and around any city. The accounts contain the local and scientific names and some descriptions that are easily readable, proving to be an invaluable addition for budding nature enthusiasts, be it elementary (6-12 years) children or adults who are just beginning their explorations of the natural world.

'Nature Rambles' by Mohan Chunkath is available on Amazon.

Sorted at 16 - A book by a mother & daughter duo

- Aditi Ganesh



"Our mission is to bring the beauty and science of the Montessori philosophy to all parents, including those whose children go to mainstream schools so we can empower a whole new generation of children to be sorted by the age of 16. By 'sorted', we mean children who are responsible, committed, collaborative, decisive, punctual, passionate, peaceful and ethical. With these skills and values, they will be ready to live life on their own terms with success, joy and happiness, irrespective of what life path they choose!" says Sruthi Kumar, who co-authored the book titled 'Sorted at 16!' along with her mother Bhavani Kumar, the founder of Patasala Montessori School. The book was launched at the National Achievers Conference on January 13, 2019 by Jack Canfield, the bestselling author of the 'Chicken Soup for the Soul' series.

As adults, some of us feel that their life gets sorted in their 30s or 40s. But in this book, we come to the realization that a child's life gets sorted at the age of 16 itself, as they have the potential. Beyond the age of 16, this child is said to grow much more in terms of independence and self-confidence and begin their search in order to find a life purpose and their contributions towards the society.

This book will be of great help to parents who are expecting a child or have a child who is under the age of 16, focussing on achieving life skills for a better future! The book is available for sale on Amazon and at the campus of Patasala Montessori School.



Workshops across Cities

CHENNAI

What can go into a Progress Report?

- Aditi Ganesh

A workshop on 'Progress Reports- Building Bonds with Parents' was held on February 2, 2019 by Navadisha Montessori Foundation, Chennai. It was conducted by Rukmini Ramachandran (Primary Trainer), Hemalatha Rangarajan (Primary Trainer) and Ramya Sridhar (Primary Auxiliary Trainer) and attended by teachers, parents and students from different cities.



The day-long session focused on multiple factors that made the participants re-think and work over their approach towards writing progressive reports about their children. Some of the highlights include - observation as the key factor in order to chart out a child's progress, reports talking about a child's progress in terms of what he has achieved rather than something that he is still working on or has been just introduced to and how meetings can be conducted with parents. The participants brainstormed the kind of progress to be recorded and expectations at different age levels, allowing them to ponder deeper into the idea of report writing.

"It reminded me to reflect on myself and work with what is there now rather than dwell on what is not within my control, and most of all to remember where we started and put ourselves in the parents' shoes to be able to work with them cohesively for the betterment of children"- Hiba Abdullateef, Primary Student

BANGALORE

How is Language supported in a Montessori Environment ?

- Kavneet Chadha

Teachers and parents from different parts of Bangalore came together for a Language Workshop on February 16, 2019 at the Montessori Institute of Bangalore. Suneeta Madnani (Primary Trainer) and Anahita Gandhi (Primary Trainer) examined the support given in the Montessori environment for children to arrive at reading and writing spontaneously.



They highlighted the significance of spoken language, the core on which the child explores language and how this can be furthered with songs, stories, sharing experiences and playing games. The participants were shown some language presentations given to children and how children are helped to distinguish the sounds in the language. With the knowledge of sounds, symbols and rich spoken language a child can write about his thoughts with ease and without force!

"Many ideas given in the workshop today have helped me to think differently about how to approach language with my children. My son writes in the air and now I know that this is his way to express himself!"- Kavita Bhandari, Parent

Conferring Diplomas !

- Roopa Sundar

The sixth batch of elementary students of Navadisha Montessori Foundation, Chennai, became graduates on February 16, 2019. Students, trainers, examiners, family and friends came together to celebrate the end of an intense journey, but also the beginning of many more. There was reading of poetry, some drama of scenarios in class, at home and long thank you notes to everyone who played a part in this experience. Gerard Leonard, the AMI examiner handed the diplomas to the students and shared a story, a story that originated in India, a story that Montessori related. The day ended with Ann Dunne, Director of Training, sending off the students to sow as many seeds, keeping in mind the immensity of their responsibility towards the child, towards education for peace and towards human development, leaving the students with watery eyes and committed hearts.



Reena R, a student, shares this journey through an analogy to the great story of creation:

“For me personally this course has made me understand the difference between having information and having awareness. It has been a journey of going back to simple things and looking at them deeply and understanding the connections in relation to everything else. Most of all the nature of human beings and their purpose. I have to say that I am humbled.”

- Reena. R

“In the beginning, there was darkness and coldness and in that immensity of space, a light – Montessori Education. The particles were given laws and just by obeying the laws the earth was in the process of being created, the beginning of the Foundation Course. The angels Rukku, Ruby, Hema and Ramya danced their dance and the earth started to take some shape. The earth went round and round itself and around the sun. The momentum was created but the inside of the earth was still hot. There was chaos and terrible fights at the beginning of elementary, to orient and adjust. It was not a pretty sight. Then it rained and it rained submissions. The veil of ignorance was drawn as we practised and the work settled us. We shined.

There was a series of muttering and complaining, looking at our feedback. Then we became like the blobs of jellies cleaning up the ocean of our work. We ate and we grew and we produced many submissions. Slowly we adapted and understood the ideas of whole to parts, Interrelatedness, exploration, isolation, indirect preparation and the characteristics of the second plane child, the reasoning mind, active imagination, seeking social and moral independence. We got our backbones at the end of Teaching Practise and Observations seeing the wonderful children– the hope for humankind.

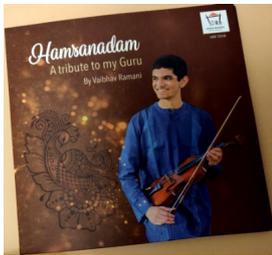
There were so many different kinds among us. Some large, some small, some animals with fur, and then with warm blood we developed acceptance, empathy, sympathy and tolerance. Then we evolved into a strange creature not with enormous size or claws but with the power of cosmic education in our mind, hands that would present and give useful help, offering of keys and leaving discovery to the child. Along with this a heart to love the children, the future men, the jewels of the earth. All this given to us with kindness and goodness by Ann with her cosmic agents Prabha, Virginia and Carol. See how long it has been and how far we have come with our endurance, hard work, patience and trust.”

*Primary Team – Rukmini Ramachandran, Hemalatha Rangarajan, Ruby Lau, Ramya Sridhar

*Elementary Team – Ann Dunne, Virginia Viscovic, Prabha Karthik, Carol Hicks (Guest Lecturer)

Vaibhav Ramani wins Award!

- Priyanka Kumar



Violinist Vaibhav Ramani, who delighted us with his performance during the IMF Chennai Conference in January 2018 won the 'Spirit of Youth Best Accompanying Violinist' on January 1, 2019 at the Music Academy, Chennai. His first CD Album titled 'Hamsanadam' - A Tribute to My Guru' was released on November 30, 2018 at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja. Hamsanadam is available for sale and is priced at Rs 200! If you

wish to to get a hold of the CD, please contact Ms. Sukanya Ramani at +91 9243104047.



“What happens in childhood is imprinted in the human soul. It is thus essential that the child be the centre of somebody’s affection; whatever the child does is considered with interest by that person. So parents need to take care to make the child the centre of their affection and to give him the love of which he has so much need.”

(Montessori, Maria Creative Development in the Child Volume II Kalakshetra Publications, India 1994 Ch 9 P 71)



This is our last issue for this academic year. We will resume in July when the new school year begins. Thank you all for your support and contribution. Have a wonderful holiday!

AMI Membership

Membership to Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) is open to everyone! Become a part of a worldwide community dedicated to the recognition of the unique nature of childhood, natural human development and the rights of the child. Discounted rates to events, AMI eBulletins and Journals are some of the benefits a member receives. AMI membership is an individual membership and is not available to schools, universities, and other educational organisations.

Membership fees begin at 40 euros.

To join, please visit www.montessori-ami.org

Anyone can become a subscriber!

The Indian Montessori Foundation brings out two publications, a monthly newsletter, **The Touch Board** (6 copies a year) and an annual journal, **Montessori Matters**.

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