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FEATURE An Interview with the Curry Family

Winter 2013-14
Vol.25 No.4


Montessori Life





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On the Cover: NBA star (and former Montessori child) Stephen Curry with current students at his alma mater, the Christian Montessori School at Lake Norman.

Photograph by James Nubile



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FROM THE EDITORS

*Winter roses wait
Under white shroud of snowfall
For resurrection.*

—Writer Fox

As fall morphs into winter, consider the varieties of change: shorter days, longer nights, the peace of snow (in some parts of the country), thermostat adjustments, the promise of holidays both secular and religious, family gatherings, and time to contemplate, and perhaps begin, projects that will bear spring fruit.

To that end, we offer you, dear reader, a winter quilt of pieces in this issue: an interview with NBA player Stephen Curry, his mother—Montessori school head Sonya Curry—and the rest of the family, whose success emanates from faith, family, and the Montessori philosophy; an article on the myriad ways to establish inner calm using breathing techniques rooted in the practice of yoga; an account of the power of simple, hands-on work to revitalize an adult community; and a story about how the upper elementary students of a Texas school collaborated in a uniquely Montessori way to write, rehearse, and perform an end-of-year play.

And after a long winter, waiting in the wings will be the promise of renewal through the AMS 2014 Annual Conference, "Montessori: Unity in Diversity." The conference will take place March 27–30, at the Hilton Anatole in Dallas, Texas. Turn to pages 42–44 for more details about the conference and the five keynote speakers. What better way to put winter to rest than by joining colleagues and old and new friends in the pursuit of knowledge and fun!

Finally, let us hear from you. *Montessori Life* is *your* magazine, and we want it to provide you with content that inspires you, makes you think, and offers you professional development. What do you want to see in *Montessori Life*? Your feedback helps us shape future issues. Email us (see addresses below), or if you prefer the old-fashioned way, send letters to Kathy Carey, 1112 Glenwood Avenue, Nichols Hills, OK 73116. We will be checking our mailboxes!



KATHY CAREY, MAT, and CAREY JONES are editors of *Montessori Life*. Contact Kathy at edmontessorilife@aol.com and Carey at carey_ink@yahoo.com.

Mission-Driven Networking: The Key to Building a Montessori Movement

Jimmy Cheng Photography



By Richard A. Ungerer

Most of us are familiar with social networking, abetted by tools such as Facebook and Twitter, and business networking, aided by sites like LinkedIn. Here, I would like to discuss another kind of networking: mission-driven. By this I mean networking that brings people together to work toward a common goal or ideal. Within the Montessori community, the sharing of ideas, resources, and relationships that grows out of networking can play a strategic role in strengthening the quality of Montessori education, expanding its reach globally and building a movement that serves as a vehicle for social change.

ing the quality of Montessori education, expanding its reach globally and building a movement that serves as a vehicle for social change.

Face-to-face, mission-driven networking continues to be very effective in building coalitions that support the Montessori movement. In the past year, there were impressive international networking opportunities in Portland, OR, Moscow, Russia, and Budapest, Hungary. The AMS 2014 Annual Conference, “Montessori: Unity in Diversity,” in Dallas, this coming March (www.amshq.org/2014Conference), will be another great opportunity for connection.

Mission-driven networking can also happen online. AMS’s Facebook page now includes 7,000 members and is growing every day, and our Twitter presence (@amshq) continues to expand. AMS’s various ListServers provide networking opportunities for AMS heads of schools, directors and faculty of AMS teacher education programs, AMS member teachers, and the peace education community. AMS also hosts electronic communication forums called “caucuses” that are in active use by our board of directors and various committees and task forces.

AMS serves as a networking hub, facilitating conversations with people and communities around the world, to promote strong connections among Montessori researchers so that teachers, parents, and children may benefit from their findings. We work with the Association Montessori International/USA and other associations to advocate for Montessori education by influencing public policy. We create “webs of contacts” and electronic networking communities to share best practices and to stimulate innovation and creativity, and we encourage collaboration through new forms of mission-driven networking (in our rapidly changing world, new networking technologies emerge regularly).

Maria Montessori understood that transforming education and the lives of children required taking risks without prior assurance of change. But, as we know all too well, change will not rise from a vacuum but rather from the concerted but risky efforts of those who are dedicated to a worthy cause. Join colleagues, parents, and other like-minded citizens in all opportunities for networking—locally, regionally, nationally, and globally—to insure your voice for Montessori education is heard.

RICHARD A. UNGERER is executive director of AMS. He welcomes your comments, questions, and ideas. Contact him at richard@amshq.org.

AMS 2013–2014

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- MONEY TEN BOARD: SYMBOLS "¢" and "."
- INTRODUCTION TO TWENTY-FIVE CENT COIN
- MONEY ONE HUNDRED BOARD AND NUMERALS

MONEY WITH THE DECIMAL SYSTEM

- INTRODUCTION TO ONE DOLLAR BILL
- MONEY: ONE CENT, TEN CENTS, ONE DOLLAR, TEN DOLLARS
- THE DECIMAL SYSTEM
- SHOPPING WITH MONEY: TWO ITEMS
- COUNTING THE ONE CENT COINS
- SHOPPING CARDS: ONE THROUGH TEN
- INTRODUCTION TO THE FIVE CENT COIN
- INTRODUCTION TO TEN CENT COIN
- SHOPPING CARDS ONE THROUGH TEN
- MONEY TEEN BOARD: QUANTITY & SYMBOLS
- MONEY TEN BOARD: QUANTITY & SYMBOLS
- SHOPPING CARDS
- INTRODUCTION TO TEN DOLLAR BILL
- INTRODUCTION TO THE DECIMAL SYSTEM: SYMBOLS
- ASSOCIATION OF QUANTITY & SYMBOL
- SHOPPING WITH MONEY: ONE ITEM
- MAKING CHANGE WITH MONEY

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- 1 set - with decimal point



- 1 set of Product - Price Cards
- 10 cards with decimal point
- 10 cards with cent symbol



Money - Spindle Boxes

- 2 sets of Spindle Boxes
- 1 set - with ¢ symbol
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- 1 set of Product - Price Cards
- 9 cards with decimal point
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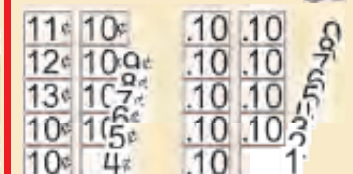
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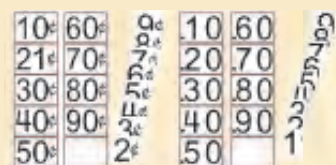
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Money - Ten Board

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- 1 set - with decimal point

Plastic coins included



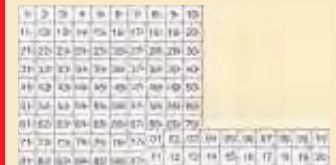
- 1 set of Product - Price Cards
- 9 cards with decimal point
- 9 cards with cent symbol



Money - Hundred Board

- 2 sets of Hundred Boards
- 1 set - with ¢ symbol
- 1 set - with decimal point

Plastic coins included



Money - Decimal Numeral Cards & Coins

- 3 sets of Decimal Numeral Cards
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- 1 set - large (.08)
- 2 sets - small (.09)

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Money - Product & Price Cards

- 3 sets of Product & Price Cards
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Working Together for the Future of Montessori in America

By Joyce Pickering, MA, SLP/CC, HumD



What would the world be like if all children had the opportunity for a Montessori education? I believe that it is our duty as Montessorians to work together to help all parents and educators know the value of Montessori education.

The Montessori Leaders Collaborative (MLC) is a group who feel as I do. The MLC was formed by philanthropists and activists

Stephanie Miller, Marianna Kulak McCall, and Laurie McTeague with the goal of advancing the public's understanding of Montessori.

Recently, the MLC invited leaders of several Montessori organizations (including AMS, the Association Montessori International/USA, the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), and the North American Montessori Teachers' Association (NAMTA), among others), as well as a diverse group of other passionate Montessori advocates, to make this goal a reality.

The invitees met several times to discuss how to spread the word about Maria Montessori and the unique education movement she created. The group considered the viability of the MLC, the major issues that should be addressed, the procedures and research to be used, and potential funding sources. In addition to MLC's founders, this group included Jackie Cossentino, Jennifer Davidson, Steven Hughes, David Kahn, Jacquie Maughan, Janet McDonell, Virginia McHugh, John Moncure, Rebecca Pelton, Mark Powell, Sue Pritzker, Virginia Riga, Andre Roberfroid, Tim Seldin, John Snyder, and Richard Ungerer. I joined the group in July 2013, after it had already met several times.

At the last meeting, the group arrived at a final draft of a MLC Collaborative Agreement. Eleven members signed on the spot, while five members indicated a need for their board approval (including AMS). Executive director Richard Ungerer and I presented the agreement to the AMS Board of Directors, and it was unanimously agreed that AMS should sign it.

The group agreed that it will be research that provides the data to convince the greater public about the efficacy and importance of Montessori. To that end, the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS) recently obtained a \$300,000 grant from the Harold Simmons Foundation, in Dallas, TX, for a research project that will

clarify the strengths of the Montessori method. Steven Hughes and Jackie Cossentino will be the lead researchers on this study. They will build on the research of John Chattin-McNichols, Angeline Lillard, and others who have worked to collect data to analyze the unique aspects of Montessori.

Going forward, Richard Ungerer and I will be AMS's representatives to the MLC. We will bring AMS's perspectives to the table and will work cooperatively with the rest of the group to meet the challenges ahead.

It will be research that provides the data to convince the greater public about the efficacy and importance of Montessori.

We have an enormous task ahead of us. Montessori education has been in existence for over 100 years, yet millions of children do not have access to it. It is a method that fosters in children a love of learning, a deep understanding of academic subjects, problem-solving skills, and respect and consideration for others. These experiences lead to confident, responsible, mature adults.

I am dedicated to positive collaboration with all Montessorians. Our differences are small when compared to the enormous need for effective education for our children. As an educational consultant, I see serious problems in our present educational systems. Though many educators work very hard, they are often, in my experience, sabotaged by a bureaucratic system that does not put the child first.

I believe that if all children have access to a Montessori education, we will raise future generations of emotionally intelligent, respectful, tolerant, service-minded, and mature adults, and in the world there will exist less delinquency, crime, and violence—and more integrity and the peace that Maria Montessori envisioned. In her wisdom, she knew that changing the world begins with the education of children.

JOYCE PICKERING, MA, SLP/CC, HumD, is president of the AMS Board of Directors. She is executive director emerita at Shelton School & Evaluation Center, Dallas, TX, and is the AMS 2013 Living Legacy. She is AMS-credentialed (Early Childhood). Contact her at president@amshq.org.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

I wanted to say how much I enjoyed Geoffrey Bishop's article, "Learning through Nature," in the last issue of *Montessori Life* (Fall 2013, Volume 25, Number 3). I read it just as our 45 upper elementary students were preparing to visit Nature's Classroom in Mukwonago, WI, [of which Bishop is head] for their annual week-long visit. It made me realize, once again, how fortunate we are to be able to offer this incredible experience for these fourth-,

fifth-, and sixth-level students as a part of our curriculum! I am in total agreement with Mr. Bishop that we must provide our children the gift of nature as a place to freely explore and enjoy.

Rita C. Lewis, Administrator
Racine Montessori School, Racine, WI

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Transformation of the Teacher: A Primary or Secondary Goal?

By Mary Schneider

Teacher education programs affiliated by AMS seek to produce teachers who will create environments that offer the fullest potential benefits of a Montessori education. To that end, our programs are designed to meet well-defined standards for instructors, contact hours, attendance, advertising, scheduling, delivery methods, practicum sites, visits, supervising teachers, materials, and reporting that have been determined to be indicators of quality by our accrediting and affiliating bodies. We match our content and assessments to a set of competencies that the new teacher is to acquire during training, but there is little guidance about actual course content. More surprising is that little in the standards points to the development and assessment of the essence of what it takes to become a deeply committed Montessori teacher. The “transformation of the teacher” that Montessori describes as essential to the ability to work effectively with children is simply not addressed in any standards. There is a desire among the members of TEAC (the AMS Teacher Education Action Commission) to do a better job of defining what successful teacher preparation is at the deepest levels and how to best focus our efforts to achieve it.

We have begun a conversation at MEIPN (Montessori Education Institute of the Pacific Northwest) and at TEAC, asking the following questions:

- What is the set of core values and attributes that predict success in efforts to facilitate the transformation of the teacher?
- How do we facilitate this development?

Our first discussions resulted in lists still largely focused on skill sets and knowledge base. Clearly, that is what we are best at assessing. However, follow-up conversations repeatedly returned to personal qualities.

Keith Whitescarver and Jackie Cossentino, founding directors of the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, have described these qualities as “dispositions” and suggest that there are “three interconnected dispositions that lie at the heart of the Montessori approach: flexibility, restraint, and love” (2007, p. 3). They weave a most articulate argument for the centrality of these dispositions to the work of a Montessori teacher. They also discuss the controversy and history of efforts to incorporate consideration of dispositions in the world of conventional teacher preparation. Our Montessori philosophy is predicated on a new and well-defined role for the adult, so we really must turn our attention toward the development of these dispositions in our teacher education courses.

An answer to the question about how to develop these values or dispositions in adult learners comes from a TED talk by author Simon Sinek: “How Great Leaders Inspire Action.” Sinek cites brain research that shows we are much more likely to remember and act upon information that connects to the emotion centers of our brain. This effect occurs across all types of information and situations because we are accessing the centers of trust, loyalty, and decision-making in our brain, those attached with feelings or emotion. When we speak about why

we act, what we believe, and what our purpose is, we are more likely to inspire others in a way that will influence them profoundly. In teacher education programs, it is easy to spend much more time on the “how and what” of each course component. Typically, the student teacher thinks about the “whys” when writing philosophy or rationale papers, but the competencies for graduation, for evaluation of teachers in school, and for outward evidence of success as a teacher are based on *what* individuals do in the classroom and *how* they do it.

We invite all teacher educators to reflect on their own practices and on the steps necessary to develop deep emotional understanding and bonds with the individual child—and to reflect on the whys rather than the how and what of their practice. This is the true key to the outcomes we seek.

Reference

Whitescarver, K. & Cossentino, J. (Summer, 2007). Lessons from the periphery: The role of dispositions in Montessori teacher training. *Journal of Educational Controversy*, Woodring College of Education, Western Washington University. Retrieved from www.wce.wvu.edu/Resources/CEP/ejournal/v002n002/a008.shtml, ISSN 1935-7699.

MARY SCHNEIDER is chair of the Teacher Educators Section of the AMS Board. She is head of school at Woodinville Montessori School, Bothell, WA, and executive director of the Montessori Education Institute of the Pacific Northwest. She is AMS-credentialed (Early Childhood, Elementary I). Contact her at mschneider@meipn.org.

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The AMS Connection

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AMS Annual Conferences

2014 March 27–30

“Montessori: Unity in Diversity”

Hilton Anatole

Dallas, TX

2015 March 12–15

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown

Philadelphia, PA

2016 March 10–13

Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers

Chicago, IL

AMS 2014 Heads of Schools Retreat

“The Connect & Disconnect Dilemma”

January 17–20

Now Larimar Punta Cana

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

AMS Winter Webinars

All webinars are 7–8:30 PM (ET).

Visit us online to see the expanded schedule and to register:

www.amshq.org/webinars

Thursday, January 16

“Sharing Art with Children in the Montessori Way”

Presenter: Julie Karlonas

Thursday, February 6

“Nurturing Nature Inside and Outside the Early Childhood Classroom”

Presenter: Amanda Sanderson

Thursday, February 20

“Quests: The Spiritual Preparation of the Teacher”

Presenter: Catherine McTamane

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

If you are an AMS credential-holder looking for opportunities in your area to help you satisfy the AMS professional development requirement, including webinars in which you can participate no matter where you live, check out the Local Professional Development Events listings on the AMS website (you can also suggest events to be added):

www.amshq.org > Teacher Resources.

ADVERTISE JOB OPENINGS ON THE AMS WEBSITE

Our Employment Opportunities webpages receive 1,700 visitors per week! All AMS member schools and AMS-affiliated teacher education programs can advertise—there is no fee. To post a position, visit www.amshq.org > School Resources. To view open positions, go to www.amshq.org > Teacher Resources.

Happy Anniversary!

Congratulations to the following AMS-member schools on achieving a significant anniversary milestone. We wish them continued success.

50th Anniversary

Cambridge Montessori School

Cambridge, MA

Ingrid Tucker, Head of School

The Hockessin Montessori School

Hockessin, DE

Janette Henry, Head of School

30th Anniversary

Winhold Montessori School

Miami, FL

Eleanor and Barry Winhold,
Administrators

Southampton Montessori School

Southampton, NY

Irene Hope Gazza, Founder and
Head of School

10th Anniversary

Hilltop Montessori School

Denton, TX

Julie Winnette, Director

The Westwood Montessori School

Westwood, MA

Faye S. Lundberg,
Founder/Administrator

5th Anniversary

Elements Montessori

Duxbury, MA

Paula J. Doyle, Director

If your AMS-member school or AMS-affiliated teacher education program will soon be celebrating a 5-year, decade, or quarter-century anniversary, we want to know about it! Contact Carey Jones at carey_ink@yahoo.com. Please include your organization's name, location, and head of school or program director, and put “School Anniversary” in the subject line.

AMS-AFFILIATED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Teacher education programs affiliated by AMS provide comprehensive courses of study that prepare the adult learners of today to be the highly skilled, highly qualified, Montessori teachers and leaders of tomorrow. Credentials are offered at the following levels: Infant & Toddler (birth to age 3), Early Childhood (ages 2½ to 6), Elementary I, II, and I-II (ages 6 to 9, 9 to 12, and 6 to 12), Secondary I and I-II (ages 12 to 15 and 12 to 18), and Administrator. For a complete listing of AMS-affiliated teacher education programs, searchable by country, course level(s), program type, and name—along with contact information—visit our website: www.amshq.org/Find_TEP. *New TEP affiliates since the last issue of Montessori Life are marked with a star.*

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HOUSTON MONTESSORI CENTER
Administrator
Additional Site: Mobile

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SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA
Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood
Additional Site: Mobile

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Early Childhood
Tucson

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EDUCATION PROGRAM
Early Childhood, Elementary I
Phoenix

CALIFORNIA

CAPITAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE*
Early Childhood
Chino

FOUNTAINHEAD MONTESSORI ADULT EDUCATION
Early Childhood
Dublin

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Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
San Diego

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CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
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Chula Vista

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Early Childhood
Castro Valley

MONTESSORI TEACHER ACADEMY
Early Childhood
Dana Point

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SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA
Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
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Shingle Springs

MONTESSORI WESTERN TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM
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Garden Grove

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EDUCATION PROGRAM
Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Moraga

UNIVERSITY MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION
PROGRAM AT UC IRVINE
Early Childhood
Irvine

COLORADO

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Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Boulder

CONNECTICUT

WASHINGTON MONTESSORI SECONDARY TEACHER
EDUCATION PROGRAM
Secondary I
New Preston

DELAWARE

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Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I,
Elementary I-II
Hockessin

MONTESSORI INSTITUTE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION
Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood
Wilmington

FLORIDA

BARRY UNIVERSITY MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION
PROGRAM
Early Childhood, Elementary I-II
Miami Shores
Additional Site: Hollywood

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF MONTESSORI STUDIES
Early Childhood, Elementary I
Indian Harbour Beach

MAITLAND MONTESSORI TEACHER
EDUCATION PROGRAM
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Maitland

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Pembroke Pines

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Early Childhood
Miami

ORLANDO MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE
Early Childhood
Celebration

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EDUCATION CENTER
Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood
Palm Harbor

SEACOAST CENTER FOR EDUCATION
Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Additional Site: Celebration

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Early Childhood, Elementary I
Davie

VILLAGE MONTESSORI TRAINING CENTER
Infant & Toddler
Miami

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MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM
Early Childhood
Honolulu

ILLINOIS

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Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Evanston

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EDUCATION CENTER
Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood
Moline

SETON MONTESSORI INSTITUTE

Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I,
Elementary I-II, Administrator
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Covington

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Early Childhood
Falmouth

NORTHEAST MONTESSORI INSTITUTE
Early Childhood
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Early Childhood
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Rockville

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Early Childhood
Newton

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St. Louis

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Early Childhood
Kansas City

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MONTANA MONTESSORI TEACHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTE
Early Childhood, Elementary I
Kalispell

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MID-AMERICA MONTESSORI TEACHER
TRAINING INSTITUTE
Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Omaha

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MONTESSORI TRAINING OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
Early Childhood
Las Vegas

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SEACOAST CENTER FOR EDUCATION
Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Stratham

NEW JERSEY

CENTER FOR MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION/
NEW YORK
Early Childhood
Additional Site: Westfield

MONTESSORI TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTE OF
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Early Childhood
Plainsboro

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Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Princeton

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Early Childhood
Corrales

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BUFFALO MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM
Early Childhood
Buffalo

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NEW YORK
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Elementary I-II, Elementary II, Administrator*
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Early Childhood
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EDUCATION/NORTH CAROLINA
*Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I,
Elementary I-II*
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OHIO

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TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM
Secondary I, Secondary I-II
Cincinnati

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EDUCATION PROGRAM
Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood
Columbus

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Early Childhood, Elementary I
Norwalk

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EDUCATION PROGRAM
Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Cincinnati

OKLAHOMA

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Early Childhood
Oklahoma City

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Early Childhood
Springfield

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Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood
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Secondary I-II
Additional Site: Rio Piedras

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Rio Piedras

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Early Childhood
Florence
Additional Site: Charleston

LANDER UNIVERSITY MONTESSORI TEACHER

EDUCATION PROGRAM
Early Childhood, Elementary I-II
Greenwood
Additional Site: Swansea (Elementary I)

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SOUTH CAROLINA
Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Clemson
Additional Site: Columbia

SEACOAST CENTER FOR EDUCATION

Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Additional Site: Charleston

TENNESSEE

MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
NORTH AMERICA
Early Childhood, Elementary I
Jackson

TEXAS

DALLAS MONTESSORI TEACHER PROGRAMS
Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Dallas

HOUSTON MONTESSORI CENTER

*Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I,
Elementary I-II, Secondary I, Secondary I-II, Administrator*
Houston

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HOUSTON
Early Childhood
Houston

SHELTON MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION CENTER

Early Childhood, Elementary I
Dallas

UTAH

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WESTMINSTER COLLEGE
*Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II,
Administrator*
Salt Lake City

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Early Childhood
Ashburn

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Early Childhood
Richmond

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Early Childhood
Chesapeake

WASHINGTON

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WASHINGTON STATE
Early Childhood
Bellevue

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PACIFIC NORTHWEST
*Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary I,
Elementary I-II*
Bothell

INTERNATIONAL

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Infant & Toddler, Early Childhood
Richmond, B.C., CANADA
Additional Site: Coquitlam, B.C., CANADA

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Early Childhood
Tijuana, B.C., MEXICO

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Early Childhood, Elementary I, Elementary I-II
Monterrey, N.L., MEXICO

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SANTO DOMINGO
Early Childhood
Santo Domingo, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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Seoul, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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Seoul, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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Early Childhood
Dublin, IRELAND

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SCHOOL ACCREDITATION NEWS

AMS accreditation is a designation indicating that an AMS member school meets a well-defined standard of excellence. Congratulations to the following schools, who recently earned accreditation (or were reaccredited).

Brooklyn Heights Montessori School
(Reaccreditation)
Brooklyn, NY
Martha Haakmat, Head of School

Riverwoods Montessori School
(Reaccreditation)
Riverwoods, IL
Lisa Kambich, Director

Deerfield Montessori School
(Reaccreditation)
Deerfield, IL
Lisa Kambich, Director

Whole Earth Montessori School
(Initial Accreditation)
Bothell, WA
Dianna Galante, Founder/Philosophical
and Program Director, and
Joseph Galante, Head of
School/Executive Director

Deerfield Montessori Children's House
(Reaccreditation)
Deerfield, IL
Lisa Kambich, Director

Discovery Montessori School
(Initial Accreditation)
Jacksonville Beach, FL
Kim Bednarek, Head of School

Glenview Montessori School
(Reaccreditation)
Northfield, IL
Lisa Kambich, Director

Kingsley Montessori School
(Reaccreditation)
Boston, MA
Renee Duchaine-Farkes,
Head of School

Montessori School of Northampton
(Initial Accreditation)
Northampton, MA
Susan Swift, Head of School

Newton Montessori School
(Initial Accreditation)
Newton, MA
Beth Black, Head of School

School Accreditation Webinars

Tuesday, January 14, 6–8:30 PM
“AMS School Accreditation Team Member
Training”

Tuesday, January 28, 7–8:30 PM
“AMS School Accreditation Team Chair
Training”

Tuesday, February 4, 7–8:30 PM
Tuesday, April 8, 7–8:30 PM
“AMS School Accreditation 101”

All times are Eastern Time. To register
and for more information: www.amshq.org
> Events > Webinars.





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Temple **GRANDIN** on cognition

"If I could snap my fingers and be nonautistic, I would not. Autism is part of what I am."

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Andrew **SOLOMON** on nurturing



John **HUNTER** on peace

"Children have a lack of pre-conceptions, a lack of experience, of what has or has not worked, of what can or cannot be useful. Because of that innocence, or naivete, their solutions come across as bold, creative, and often wildly open-hearted."

"A school's function is to prepare children for the future, but it can only do this by teaching them about the past—not just history but the assembled body of knowledge in each subject and the society's key values and norms."

Rob **EVANS** on leadership



John **CHATTIN-McNICHOLS**

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HMEI Montessori Teacher Education

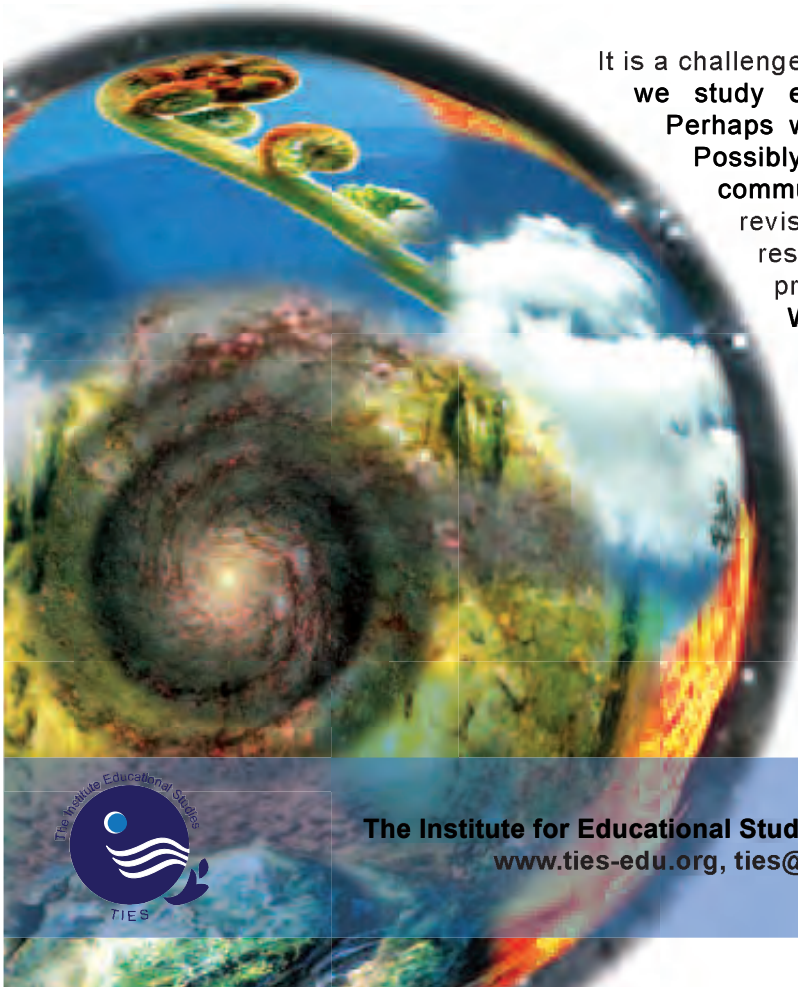
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**2009 Endicott Graduate,
KATHRYN ROSS
Head of School
Children's Garden Montessori School
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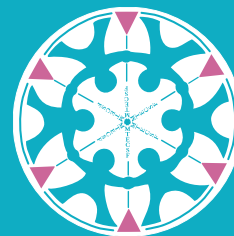
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Nothing but Net: An Interview with the Curry Family

By Peter Piché



Top: Stephen Curry (in white) makes his way down the court. Above: Seth, Dell, Sonya, and Sydel Curry

You cannot live in the heart of North Carolina, as I do, without being conscious of the intense emotion college basketball generates for its local fans. In 2008, a young man named Stephen Curry was playing for the Davidson Wildcats, a team that was expected to bow gracefully and early out of the NCAA postseason. The Wildcats had other plans. They became the Cinderella story of March Madness. I remember watching Davidson's historic run and felt physical pain as it ended with a heartbreaking 2-point loss to Kansas, in the quarterfinals. At the time, I had no idea that Stephen, as well as his younger brother and sister, had attended Montessori school, and that that school, founded by their mother, was here in North Carolina. Imagine my delight when AMS tapped me—both a Montessorian and a sports fan—to interview Stephen Curry and his family for a feature story in *Montessori Life*. Fast forward three months.

Photographs by James Nubile, except where otherwise credited.



Stephen Curry with current students at the Christian Montessori School at Lake Norman

As I walk into the Christian Montessori School at Lake Norman (CMSLN), in Huntersville, North Carolina, I am greeted by head of school Sonya Curry, who has become a sports media darling for her demonstrative support of her three children, Stephen, Seth, and Sydel. She is less known as the founder of this Montessori school, a school all three of her children attended until sixth grade. Stephen, 25, a professional basketball player for the Golden State Warriors, has just set the NBA record this season for three-point shots, solidifying his place as one of the game's elite. Seth, 23, has recently graduated from Duke University, where he was a crucial cog in the lineup of the Blue Devils basketball team. And Sydel, 19, a recent high school graduate, is headed to Elon University, where she will play volleyball. Dell, Sonya's husband, and the father of these three splendid athletes, played in the NBA and is widely regarded as one of the best off-the-bench scoring threats of his era.

Sonya and I chat informally in the hall outside her office, while we wait for her children and Dell to arrive. She founded this school in 1995 and has served as its head ever since, seeing it through humble beginnings, peaks, and valleys, and we discuss the challenges inherent in keeping a school vibrant and growing. As we talk, I gain a sense that Sonya is a strong, supportive fixture in her family, but also verify that she loves her school, loves children, and long ago, found her calling as an educator.

The rest of the Currys arrived, and I was eager to get their perspectives on how Montessori had affected each of them. We all took our seats in the center of a classroom.

Peter Piché: Dell, it sounds like your wife is passionate and came home and said, "This is what I want to do," and you believed in her. In terms of your own Montessori journey, what have you seen with your own kids?



Dell Curry: She's very passionate about whatever she sets her mind to, and she's always been one to have something going on. She's not a basketball wife who sits around. When she said she wanted to start something, I knew she'd be full bore with it. It was a big investment, but I knew she'd make it work. And then watching my kids come through here—how independent they were, how quickly they learned—I could see it at home when they were independent while doing things. It actually helped them learn how to do things around the house, which helped us [he laughs]. It all worked out. Obviously, Sonya felt something that she became passionate about. It kept her challenged and, in turn, helped form the type of people my children are today.

PP: Davidson College head basketball coach Bob McKillop has said: "There is no entitlement whatsoever in the family. If we had parents like Dell and Sonya in every household in America, we'd be in Paradise." It's clear that you abide by the Family First motto. Tell me what is special about your family.



Stephen Curry: Mom is the anchor of our family. She's had such an impact on my life, as has her love of teaching the Montessori way. Family is huge in my life, and it's an established tradition for us to be part of each other's lives, supporting each other in whatever we do. I live and play on the West Coast, but in my off-season, I come back to Charlotte to be able to spend time with family because I don't get to see them much during the season. Family is a big part of who I am, and now that I have my own family, my wife and daughter, just how important they are is highlighted even more. Family teaches you lessons and encourages you to just be who you are.



Seth Curry: I think Bob McKillop said that about my parents because of the way Stephen handled himself while he was at Davidson [Stephen attended Davidson College for 3 years before being drafted to the NBA]. It seemed like everyone there in the Davidson community fell in love with him. That's the person that he is, and it started in our household. We were obviously fortunate to grow up in this family, but our parents never gave us any handouts. Everything we acquired was earned. That was just the pattern in the household. So, going outside of the household, we acted the same. That's the way we were raised, and Stephen carried that with him to Davidson.



Sydel Curry: I've always felt that, despite the successes of our parents, they put family first. Our parents led by example, and we still look up to them for guidance and as models.

PP: Stephen, Seth, and Sydel, what are your clearest and fondest memories of your Montessori school experience?

Stephen: I have a lot of great memories! [Looks around him]. I am looking again at all the shelves and materials. and I'm remembering what they were and what they taught me—the multiplication beads and globes, and just all the hands-on materials that I had so much fun with! I used to love to come to school because there was something new I was going to learn every single day, at my own pace.



Sydel and Seth Curry working with the trinomial cube while visiting their alma mater

Seth: My fondest memory was simply learning different things in a hands-on way. You'd see other kids from other schools who just had sheets of paper, but going to Montessori school and being able to learn similar things in a totally different way—looking back on it now—that's unique. And it was fun, too. Leaving Montessori and going into middle and high school, I always felt a little ahead of the curve, everywhere, until I got to Duke. Most of the work that involved sheets of paper or reading in later schooling felt easy.

Sydel: I think what was unique about my Montessori experience was all the family that was here. I am pretty sure I had a cousin in each class. I had an aunt who was a teacher, and my grandmother was the school chef. That's what I loved about the school—being able to come here with friends and family. It also showed me how important my family is to me. So for me that's what I remember most about Montessori, but I also have two friends to this day that I made here at Montessori who are still close to my family and to me.

PP: Dell and Sonya, I've followed the evolving story of each of your children and seen your family values reflected in their college decisions. You live in North Carolina, and

your children chose higher education there—Stephen at Davidson, Seth at Duke, and now Sydel is headed to Elon. Dell, you served as an assistant coach for your sons' high school basketball team, and Sonya, you helped coach Sydel's high school volleyball team. Can you talk about the importance of keeping family close but letting your kids find their own way? How do you maintain the balance?

Dell: We both grew up with big, close families, so that was always instilled in us—family came first. We did everything together, so that was easy. Coaching our kids was a little tougher at times because we're both very competitive, being former athletes—we want our kids to be competitive and do well. We coached them because I was at the pinnacle of my sport, and both of us competed at the highest levels, so we knew what was going on. We also wanted the kids to understand that we were trying to help them. As Sydel said, the kids knew that family came first, so once they understood that Mom and Dad were trying to help them through coaching—trying to challenge them and not being critical of them all the time—it became easier.

PP: Sonya, as a mother, what characteristics were you convinced a Montessori education would foster in your children? Are there any specific characteristics within each of

your children that were cultivated through their early Montessori experience?



Sonya: I was thinking about this the other day and thinking about the school in the sense of what a Montessori education can offer; the term “tailor-made” came to mind. That’s what it did for three different human beings—my children. Stephen is a “type A” personality. His battery is running all the time. He could go into the environment and move as fast as he wanted—and he was able to move. Seth was more of a reserved child, observant and shy. He doesn’t like a lot of attention. In Montessori, he could also move at his own pace. He could go and do his thing, but he would be in the classroom with older kids and see what they were doing too, and then he would feel challenged by that. Sydel was my social butterfly, so she could sit with friends and then choose work if she wanted to! [Laughs]. It was exceptionally satisfying for me as a parent to see who my children were and how they were different, and yet they were never stifled. They never had to go into an environment and fit into the environment. Yes, there are parameters in Montessori, but it was always about respect. It’s all about doing whatever is right.

And sometimes doing what you want to do, if it impedes someone else’s ability to learn, is not right. So children learn how to sacrifice. Learning how to sacrifice and have limits but still have who you are be celebrated is what I believe Montessori gave all of them. It helped to cultivate what was already inside of each of them in the most positive way.

PP: Stephen, what kind of impact did attending your mom’s Montessori school have on you?

Stephen: It gave me a lot of confidence at a young age. I was able to learn the way I wanted and needed to, to gain a sense of achievement as I went along. I was able to push myself, and it taught me a lot of self-discipline and a work ethic. I always wanted to do more and get better. I liked to do math problems over and over again, even when that part of the day had moved on—I always wanted to get better at it. Montessori taught me that anything I put my hands on and practiced, I could accomplish. I think Montessori is a good fit for anybody because you can go at your own pace. You can take your time, and if you need help with something that you don’t understand, there’s a teacher that is present and personable to help you through. Montessori introduces you to a lot of different lessons that are part of any child’s development in the classroom, and each kid can

find a way to learn the best that he can. Montessori enhanced my personality because the person I was when I walked through that door was embraced and encouraged. I didn’t have to change anything about myself. I could harness my strengths and work on my weaknesses, and it allowed me to nurture my love of people and an ability to accept anybody that I come in contact with.

PP: Sonya, some Montessori educators are leery of the ugly side of competition. You were a high-achieving volleyball player at Virginia Tech. Dell, you were a two-sport athlete at Tech before going on to a career in the NBA. Can you tell us how you believe that competition can be positive in an educational setting and how you’ve been able to instill that positivity in your children as they compete at the highest levels in sports?

Sonya: The world teaches us that competition is a fact of life. What I’ve come to learn and hold on to and trust is that we already know what we’re capable of doing. So I always tell my children, “If you can tell me that you left everything out on that court in practice and games, then we don’t have to have any discussion. But if your answer is that you didn’t give 100 percent, then I’m going to challenge you on that because that’s where competition originates. There will always be someone better than you are. So external competition isn’t as positive and effective as inner competition. Someone can always win against you, but if you can say that you gave 100 percent but you can always go learn something else, or work on something else, then competition is very productive, because then you are in control, and then your worth and your success is not based on other people, it’s based on you.”

That’s what I found in Montessori classrooms: If you can teach children to be self-confident and to know that God has already equipped them with what they need to be successful in what He wants them to be successful in, then children can focus on that. And I counsel my own children not to worry about what the naysayers have to say because we deal with that a lot in our world. One day you’re great, and the next day you’re too short, you’re too this, you’ll never make this. Our kids have never fit precisely what the athletic recruiters wanted, but they’ve adapted and been successful. So, I want every child who comes to our school to know not to listen to outside voices. You have to listen to yourself and hear God’s voice, and let that guide you. Life may be a little easier then, but you still have to go and operate in the arena of life and a large part of that can’t be easy; it’s not supposed to be.

I also want the Montessori community to know that you don’t have to have a huge sports program. Our kids



Stephen and Sonya Curry

played in recreational leagues up until they were in middle school. We have a lot of parents, now, who come to our school and worry that there is no sports program. There's time for children to excel. People ask Dell—did you go out and shoot with your kids all the time? The answer is no because he did not want them to think they *had* to play basketball. We let them figure out what they wanted to do. We started them out in basketball young, and they burned out, so we know firsthand that they don't have to be pushed. There are lots of people that don't start playing basketball until high school and then end up in the pros. My advice: Let them be children. Let them be. Let them be in good, healthy environments, and they're going to find their way.

PP: Stephen, was it always your dream to play in the NBA?

Stephen: Since high school it has been. I've been around that lifestyle, with Dad playing 16 years in the NBA, but you never actually know for sure if you'll achieve it. My dad was great at allowing us to make our own decisions about what we wanted to pursue, so there was never any real pressure to pursue basketball if I didn't want to. But I gained a love for it early, and once I got to high school I knew the blueprint of what it would take to get there. Obviously, a lot of work has to go into it, but it was a dream of mine since high school.

PP: A *San Francisco Chronicle* interview stated, "Stephen attributes much of his self-confidence to that early education" (referring to Montessori school). There were a lot of naysayers when you first entered the NBA, claiming you weren't big enough, or that your game wasn't aggressive enough. Did your Montessori education influence your confidence, and how do you handle criticism as a result?

Stephen: It did influence me. I think it takes confidence to be where I am personally. I've had a lot of success in the sports world, but to go to a school like Davidson and excel in the classroom there, all that's based on the foundation of how you learn and how you attack certain things in the classroom. So Montessori really helped me to navigate that part of my life. I was always that guy who was kind of, I guess, downplayed. As a basketball player, I didn't have the straight and easy path to where I am now. I was always seen as too small or somebody who couldn't play at the next level, but I was able to battle through all of that, with the Lord on my side, and allowed myself to basically be true to who I am. And a lot of the foundation that my parents have given me has set me up to shine; I'm a guy who's made some mistakes but has always tried to do the right thing, and I've become a better, stronger person. And I've become stronger in my faith, regardless of what other paths every-

body else is going down. I'm okay with being that guy who stands alone.

PP: Stephen, congratulations on setting the single-season record for three-point shots. I was hoping we might finish the interview with each of the Curry children offering me "three-points" that you think everyone should know about Montessori?

Stephen: I want people to know that Montessori can work for everybody! I had so many different people, personalities, and different backgrounds that came together in my Montessori experience. We came together and we helped each other. It was a cool experience for the 6 years I was a part of that environment. Montessori allows your creativity to shine, and your true personality to shine.

Seth: The main thing I've brought from Montessori is the independence of being able to complete tasks on my own and solve problems in any kind of way. Montessori is hands-on, and in a sense, it allows you to teach yourself, and to go at your own pace with learning. Every child is different and learns in different ways, and Montessori allows you to do that.

Sydel: Montessori is adaptable to each type of learning style, and it allowed me to really get to know what kind of person I was. Montessori has been a great foundation for me because it allowed me to be who I wanted to be but also molded me to be the best I could be. In my experience, it was the best time in my life. It's just fun.

PP: Sonya, would you like to add a closing thought that you want everyone to know about Montessori?

Sonya: I think Montessori is wonderful. It is worth the time and financial investment. At Christian Montessori School at Lake Norman, we strive to cultivate an environment in which children can fall in love with learning and in love with God.

Editors' note: Due to Stephen Curry's travel schedule, Peter Piché interviewed Sonya, Dell, Seth, and Sydel Curry, while Stephen Curry was interviewed by AMS in a separate session, later the same day.

PETER PICHÉ has been a Montessori guide since 1997 and currently teaches at Montessori Community School in Durham, NC. He is the school's guide for Humanities and Language Arts in the seventh and eighth grade Adolescent Program, a program that he conceptualized and founded in 2005. Peter is a strong advocate of learning as a life-long pursuit. Contact him at montessorimindset@gmail.com.

Stephen Curry

By Peter Piché

STEPHEN CURRY IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF how Montessori helps foster global citizenry in its students. One week after our interview, Stephen flew to Africa in conjunction with Nothing But Nets, a grassroots campaign dedicated to preventing malaria deaths by installing bed nets in malaria-ravaged parts of the world. Ten dollars buys one net. For each three-point shot Stephen hit in the 2012–2013 NBA season, he pledged to donate three bed nets—a pledge that culminated in 816 donated bed nets after he hit an NBA-record total of 272 three-pointers.

But it wasn't enough to donate the money; Stephen was compelled to go to the Nyarugusu refugee camp, in Tanzania, himself to hang the nets. During the trip, he met refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo and was able to see firsthand how he was making a difference. Having witnessed the family values exemplified in my interview, coupled with the Curry children's formative development in their mother's Montessori school, I would say it's no surprise that Stephen is widely recognized for what he is doing off the court through his charitable work, community service, and as a dedicated family man. Stephen shared his thoughts with AMS on:

His dreams at the age of 25: To raise my daughter the best way I know how. It's awesome to have that responsibility, to have a family that I have to provide for and have to support. It's just a blessing, and I hope that I do it the right way.

Potentially facing his brother, Seth, in the NBA someday: To play against each other in an NBA game—I don't even know how to put that into words. It's just a surreal feeling. Growing up, we used to play [basketball] video games and watch the NBA on TV. For both of us to be on that level would be really special.

continued on page 26



Future basketball star in training?

How he hopes children see him (reflecting on a recent visit to a school in Oakland, CA): Hopefully as a good influence and a good role model. There are so many people on TV and in pop culture that kids look up to who are not good influences. It's just a blessing to be able to meet so many different kids and talk to them . . . and allow them to see that people they look up to have similar stories.

What Montessori gave him: A sense of confidence that I could do anything. A [Montessori] classroom might seem overwhelming, with so many different materials. But once you get in here and see the way it works, it's a great thing. And for any kid to experience it allows them a sense of confidence that when things get tough, they can persevere and adapt.

Learn more!

Stephen Curry: stephencurry30.com

Nothing But Nets: nothingbutnets.net



Stephen Curry with his mother, Sonya, and his daughter, Riley

Sonya Curry's Montessori Story

By Peter Piché

I WAS CURIOUS TO LEARN HOW SONYA CURRY discovered Montessori. I also wanted to know what made Montessori her choice for her own children and how that led to her founding the Christian Montessori School at Lake Norman. Here's what she had to say:

My background is in elementary education. Dell and I moved to Charlotte in 1988—so Dell could play for North Carolina's NBA team, the Charlotte Hornets—and, in 1989, we looked for a school for Stephen, who was 1 year old, eventually settling on a church preschool. In addition to preschool, I was teaching Stephen at home, and I noticed he learned quickly. When I went to pick him up from school one day, they had a chart up on the wall. The children were rewarded with multicolored scoops of ice cream underneath their names for good work. The more scoops you had on your cone, the better you were doing. Stephen had 50 scoops, and some kids didn't have any. My first internal reaction was, "I told you he was smart," and my second thought was, "I need to find a more challenging environment for him!" And then something inside of me just got sad. I thought to myself, there are other little kids here that

are 2 and 3 years old, and they are looking up there and wondering why they don't have colorful scoops on their cones. I know they noticed that! Then I started wondering about the other parents that would see this up on the wall and how they might feel when they saw their child in light of this comparison chart.

I returned home and decided that I wanted to find a more challenging place for Stephen. I'd heard that Montessori was a very academically challenging environment for children. I researched some schools and found Charlotte Preparatory School, which has a Montessori early childhood program. We visited and fell in love with it. I walked in and thought, Wow. There were all these children in the classroom, choosing work and working on different activities. They were talking and moving around, and I thought, This can't be real. This can't be true, especially this freedom to move. I was traditionally trained, you see—I was used to sitting at a desk and working on ditto sheets, and listening to a teacher all day. When I played school as a youngster, this is what I did. So I was blown away. Dell and I visited again to make sure that what I thought I was seeing was real, and when we saw that it was, we enrolled Stephen. Seth came next, and I remember thinking, "I'm going to really test this thing" by enrolling him as well, in

the same primary class as Stephen. We knew they were two totally different children. Seth moved about the classroom, observant and cautious, trying things when they felt safe, and Stephen buzzed around the classroom trying everything, and I was amazed. Maura Leahy-Tucker, the founder and head of Charlotte Preparatory School, had watched me with my children and suggested that I might be a good fit as an administrator at one of her planned satellite locations. So I became partners with her, and we opened up a satellite school while she maintained her other school, and that was the beginning.

Dell and I were building a home here in Huntersville and wanted to keep our children in Montessori school. I came home one evening and said, "Dell, I want to start my own school here in Huntersville." He looked at me and kind of laughed and said, "Who starts a school?" I thought it was a good question, and the answer was I wanted to start one. We found this property, started the school here,

and then we had Sydel. Stephen and Seth started Montessori at 3 years old, and they started in my school at 6 and 4 years old, respectively, and then went through 6th grade. And Sydel started at 15 months in my school. I decided, "You know what, she's a girl. I've got two boys, and she's very different from them. . . . Let's see how she does. She did fine and attended our school until 6th grade. That's how I got into it. I got *sold* on Montessori [laughs]."

AMS VIDEO SERIES:

"Living Montessori: The Curry Family"

AMS has produced a short video about the Currys! Find it, along with other AMS videos, on YouTube—just search for "American Montessori Society." You can download this, and other AMS videos, for playing at your school open houses or events.



*Sonya Curry, working with a student in the classroom,
at the Christian Montessori School at Lake Norman*

“We the people declare today that the most evident of truths—that all of us are created equal—is the star that guides us still, just as it guided our forebears through Seneca Falls, Selma, and Stonewall....”

—President Obama’s Second Inaugural Address

Seeking Seneca Falls

By Beverly Carson, MEd

AS I WATCHED PRESIDENT OBAMA SPEAK ON JANUARY 21, 2013, that sliver of speech jolted me. I wondered, do my students know about Seneca Falls, Selma, or Stonewall? My next thought was, could we turn one of these events into a class play?

Every year, my Upper Elementary (fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade) Montessori students write a play that they perform during the last week of school. The creation of the play is a multifaceted journey: History research, literature studies, problem solving, and team building are all synthesized into the writing process. We brainstorm, draft, revise, and ultimately perform. Our plays have included Greek mythology, French legend, Egyptian civilization, and English royal history. Topics spring from books I have read aloud, books students have read in our studies of literary genre, and history investigations. I have found that this play creation and performance fits in well with the Montessori philosophy of “following the child” (although I do have to actively guide this endeavor to keep it focused on history).

This year, I wanted our play to have an American theme. Our class had read Jim Haskins’ *Get On Board: The Story of the Underground Railroad*. Although Montessori students regularly research topics for cultural studies, this year was the first time our class pursued an expository book for reading. I wondered if they might want to write a play about it. However, certain topics in the book proved too harsh, and no one wanted to dramatize it. So when I heard Obama’s speech, I was inspired. When a former student inquired about the topic for the play this year, I asked him,

“Do you know anything about Seneca Falls, Selma, or Stonewall?”

“Nope.”

“Then we’re writing a play about the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848.” This year, two-thirds of my students were female, so we needed



Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton speak out for women's rights.

Photograph by Allison Matney

a subject that promised plenty of female roles. Seneca Falls would give us the casting opportunities we needed.

Next, our class began to discuss the evolution of human rights in America. During our biography study in February, I presented books about Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and Susan B. Anthony. The sixth graders were beginning to research the Civil War, so I embedded abolitionists and suffragists in their history investigations. Several students had also seen Spielberg's *Lincoln*. The boys were intrigued by war and assassination, while the girls were shocked that women were not allowed to vote or own property in the 1800s. Students learned that, although many abolition-

ists supported women's suffrage, suffrage occurred fifty years after emancipation. My female students were indignant! The sixth-grade girls volunteered to write the play, and, wanting extra time to work, they came in during lunch, after school, and during their library and computer technology time. Their conversations and discoveries motivated the fifth-grade girls to investigate women's rights in America. Although they politicked unsuccessfully for the inclusion of a fight scene, the boys never showed much enthusiasm for the play's research.

Research begat research. Different girls pursued different historical figures. Notes were compiled, shared, and blended. After weeks of collaborative research, students began writing a draft,

and *The Spark at Seneca Falls* was born.

To manage the writing process, I suggested a framework of scenes—Harriet Tubman leading slaves to freedom, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's childhood, discriminatory laws against women, the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, suffragist notables joining forces—all culminating in the Seneca Falls Convention. As students continued to research and write, more characters—Amelia Bloomer, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucy Stone, and Frederick Douglass—appeared in the script.

To structure the writing, I assigned certain students certain scenes. Borrowing from primary source materials, we included excerpts from Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Frederick



William Lloyd Garrison pleads for reform.

Photograph by Allison Matney

Douglass's actual speeches from the Seneca Falls Convention into the rough draft of our play. To heighten the drama, we inserted part of Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" speech. Students contrasted the struggle of the American suffragists with the plight of American slaves—suffragists wanted the vote and equal rights with men; slaves wanted freedom and the right to keep their children. It was an illuminating investigation of 19th-century human rights.

Once we had a working script, we practiced in the classroom, blocking off where actors entered, exited, and stood. Enthusiasm ran high, and ideas continued to boomerang around the classroom, even after the rough draft was typed.

I have found that the playwriting process works best when my young authors see their work being performed. They then have a chance to improve their work as they edit it throughout the rehearsals (we agree on a final draft a week before the first performance). During the first readings, I used a document projector to show the script on a wall, both to focus the students and to save paper. Some students knew immediately what roles they wanted to play, but others

tried out for different parts. Students who wrote the play got to pick their parts, and students who enjoyed singing took the musical roles. After the first week of play practice, I typed the second draft, adding and subtracting based on practice and suggestions from the group.

To keep everyone occupied, I encouraged students to bring other schoolwork to rehearsals for times they were not engaged in a scene. Prop-making was another way children busied themselves during rehearsal.

Handmade props included Stanton's *Declaration of Rights and Sentiments*, made from rolled butcher paper on which the students lettered the text, and suffragist signs created with paper, cardboard, and yardsticks. A large basket made storing and transporting these materials easy. Students were also involved behind the scenes: The prop manager handled props and was also in charge of collecting and passing out scripts. The stage manager controlled curtains, turned on microphones, and inserted the CD for the final song. The music manager kept track of lyrics sheets and turned pages for me at the piano. The costume manager made sure that costumes were hung neatly before and after rehearsals. Delegating responsibility to students maintained my sanity and increased their ownership in the play.

Over the years, our historical plays have evolved into musicals. Usually, I select several songs that are easy to sing, with lyrics that are easy to rewrite. I accompany students on piano. Sometimes the musical numbers are given additional color with students playing simple xylophone parts. I play the original songs in class during clean-up or at the end of the day so that the students can learn the melody, and I

rewrite the lyrics, trying to keep some of the original rhymes. The songs provide characterization and exposition for the play, and music makes any production more entertaining.

This year, I was impressed when one of my fourth-grade boys volunteered to write the lyrics for a song I had selected. He listened as one character, Amelia Bloomer, sang, "I'm Just a Girl Who Cannot Vote," rewritten from Rodgers and Hammerstein's song, "I'm Just a Girl Who Can't Say No," from the musical *Oklahoma!* Then he copied my technique of matching structure and rhymes and triumphantly presented the class with his rough draft of "Seneca Girl," derived from Marshall Crenshaw's 1980s song "Cynical Girl." "Seneca Girl" became a musical collaboration when some of his lines made the final cut of the song.

Two songs would be sung with piano accompaniment, and the finale would have karaoke-type background music from a burned CD. Three weeks before the performance, we started daily rehearsals on the cafeteria stage. During rehearsals, students began to more fully understand their characters, and, as a result, there were many requests for revisions of lines and the additions of dramatic elements. The process was collaborative yet frenetic. To slow down the pace, I suggested that the students write their ideas in a notebook. We would review and incorporate them at the next rehearsal. Conveniently, our narrator memorized every new addition and kept us up to date. Would revision never end? We began to rehearse twice a day to keep up.

During rehearsals, we noticed that we needed a backdrop. Several girls volunteered for the job, undaunted by the fact that they had never drawn a backdrop before. They measured the back curtain on the stage and calculated dimensions. We used clear packing tape to connect three layers of blue butcher paper and rimmed the perimeter with

more tape to secure it. The girls found a picture of the actual Seneca Falls Convention hall on the Internet and used it as a model from which to paint their own colorful version. When it was finished, the tall students and I borrowed custodians' ladders and stapled the backdrop to the back curtain of the stage. That was the hardest part of the entire process. Lesson learned: It is better to recruit tall adults to help hang a backdrop.

In order to have an audience for our play, we needed invitations. Students created this invitation by drawing a picture of the Seneca Falls Convention hall and lettering the information. They hand-delivered the photocopied invitations to all classes, administrators, and their parents. We planned two performances—one for the Lower Elementary and one for the Upper Elementary, both during school hours.

As we approached dress rehearsal, the question of costumes arose. All actors needed to look like Americans from the 1800s. Most girls found long dresses or skirts in their mothers' closets or resale shops. Boys, less interested in fashion in general, needed more direction. I had specific conversations with them about what they needed and contacted as many parents as possible for help.

Preparations for the cast party were in the works as well. Each year, our cast party serves as our end-of-year party and also celebrates the completion of a monthlong project by all the students. The children participate by coming up with the menu and the music for the celebration. The room parent organizes donations of food and drink. Again, this responsibility is best delegated to the student celebration committee, with at least one parent on

hand to assist with disassembling costumes and laying out food.

Parents were involved in other ways as well. I encouraged them to film the performances, both to share with other parents who could not be present, as well as to post on our school website for public relations purposes. I also lined up two parents to supervise the wings of the stage because I would be playing the piano throughout the performance.

At 9:00 a.m. on Monday, the class premiered our play to a forgiving audience of children, ranging from 3 to 8 years old. Two of our performers were absent that day. The prop manager and one of the shy sign-carriers filled in for the missing students. Despite these setbacks, the performance went well. Small children laughing is quite a boost to young performers' egos. The next day, the entire cast was



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present. Upper Elementary students, office staff, and parents attended, and the presentation was a hit. As the last strains of the production number, "We Want Liberty" (sung to a karaoke version of the Sister Sledge song "We Are Family"), faded into a thunderous ovation, the class proudly took their curtain calls. Afterward, many of the students in the audience expressed

Coupling the writing process with acting, prop-making, and singing was an enriching experience that built community within the classroom.

incredulity that women had not been able to vote. Adults said that they, too, had learned new facts.

The Spark at Seneca Falls brought

deep satisfaction to the class. The team effort involved in brainstorming, drafting, and revising was a lively enactment of the writing process. Coupling the writing process with acting, prop-making, and singing was an enriching experience that built community within the classroom, which was clear to the play's audience during the performances. It was a learning experience in terms of history, and also in terms of process. The Montessori curriculum already possesses the Common Core standards: academic rigor, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, and creativity. But by bringing history to life through research, writing, and performance, our monthlong endeavor was also an authentic example of project-based learning. *The Spark at Seneca Falls* explored the theme of human rights. My students learned that while

Elizabeth Cady Stanton did change discriminatory laws in New York, she did not live to see women's suffrage in her lifetime. Although our play did not have a Hollywood ending, it did convey hope. Delayed gratification, whether for long-term theater projects or the messy struggle for human rights, is a lesson for us all.

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How Deep Is Deep?

By Olynda Smith

We are often told to “take a deep breath,” but true deep breathing is something few people actually know how to do.

The practice of working with the breath in order to train ourselves to be able to take a balanced, deep breath is an integral part of yoga. The Sanskrit term for this practice is *pranayama*; in English we call it “breathwork.” The Sanskrit word *prana* translates to both “breath” and “energy”—pointing to the fact that our energy and our breath are inextricably linked. Deep breathing brings more oxygen into our system, positively affecting our energy levels, brain function, metabolism, emotional state, and even our capacity for insight. Specific breathwork can be done to help alleviate chronic pain, post-traumatic stress, and depression (Farhi, 1996).

Breathwork has many benefits that support our ability to function at our highest as teachers, partners, and parents. As Montessorians, it is vital that we interact with each student in an authentic and respectful manner. Breathwork can help us cultivate calm, patience, and kindness in those times when we need these qualities most. Breathwork also increases our oxygen intake, which can lead to an increased clarity of mind, helping us see each child more clearly and gain insight into how to help students understand their work completely. Breathwork can help us pause in times of chaos and enable us to restore harmony in ourselves and in our classrooms. Finally,



breathwork can increase our sense of well-being, which means fewer sick days and more energy for all we do. And the best part is, your breath is always with you, so you can tap into its power wherever you are.

When asked to take a deep breath, many people breathe only into their upper chest, lifting their shoulders. In fact, this is actually a very shallow breath—the body has a much greater capacity for breath than most people realize. What follows are some basic pranayama exercises. The first four exercises teach the body how to breathe deeply, while the final exercises promote balanced breath. The exercises are listed in ascending order of difficulty. Begin with the first exercise, setting aside 5 to 10 minutes to do it.

Practice when you get a chance, until you are able to do it effectively. Move on to the second exercise, and again, practice until you master it. I recommend that you do each exercise on its own for at least a week; after that, you can increase the time you spend on each exercise and/or start combining them. You will soon find which exercises make the most difference in your life, and you can return to those in the future.

1. Belly breathing

Lie on your back in a comfortable position, with your feet wider than your hips. If your lower back hurts, put a blanket or pillow under your knees, or simply bend them and put your feet flat on the floor. Place one hand on your belly and the other on your heart. Draw your attention to your breath and notice, with the help of your hands, how your body is moving as you inhale and exhale. After a few moments of investigation, work to let your belly rise toward the ceiling as you inhale and fall back to the ground as you exhale. Try not to have any movement in your chest or shoulders.

2. Chest breathing

Begin belly breathing as described above. After 20 breaths of belly breathing, shift to isolate the breath in the lungs. (Be patient with yourself—this

does not come easily to most people.) Work to keep your belly still as you let the chest and ribs expand in all directions—up to the ceiling, out to the sides, and into the ground underneath you. Try not to let your belly move at all. This will help stretch out and strengthen the chest muscles, improving your lungs' ability to expand fully to receive the breath.

3. Two-part breathing

Start chest breathing as described above. After 20 successful chest breaths, combine both belly and chest breaths. To do this, breathe down into your belly to fill it up. Once it is full, let your chest expand. When there is no more room, exhale, contracting the chest, then the belly. This may be difficult at first—to do it correctly takes a lot of practice and body/breath awareness. Keep trying! You are getting benefits from this work, even if it isn't perfect at first. You may get dizzy because your brain is getting more oxygen than it is used to. If this happens, stop and breathe normally until the dizziness goes away, and then start again.

4. Belly breathing and two-part breathing while sitting

After a few weeks of working the breath while lying down, try belly breathing and two-part breathing while sitting in a chair or on the floor (doing these exercises seated will be more challenging). Sit so that your spine is long; you want to feel spacious in your torso. If you are on the floor, cross your legs at the shins or at the ankles so both feet are resting on the floor. If you are in a chair, plant both feet flat on the ground and sit up at the front edge of the chair.

Pay special attention to your lower back, making sure that the spine in your lower back curves into the body. If you are sitting on the floor and your lower back is rounded out, elevate

your hips with a blanket, some blocks, or some thick books until your knees are below the top edge of your pelvis and your lower back is curving inward. If this is impossible on the floor, sit on a chair, making sure not to slouch into the lower back.

Place your hands, palms up, on your thighs, and soften your shoulders. (At the beginning, you can also place one hand on your belly and one on your chest to help you feel where the movement of the breath is happening.)

5. Equal breathing

Most of us consistently inhale more or exhale more. In yoga, we believe that if we are taking in more *prana* (breath/energy) than we are releasing, then we are prone to anxiety and insomnia and are constantly keyed up. On the other hand, if we are exhaling more than we inhale, then we are prone to depression and lethargy. This exercise helps to balance the breath so our inhales and exhales are equalized, and we can experience a steady and balanced energy supply.

Sit or lie down. Begin by becoming aware of your breath and simply noticing if your inhales or exhales are longer. Deepen the breath to include belly and chest breathing. Begin to count as you inhale—try to count to 6 or 8. If 6 counts are too much, start with 4. Then exhale to the same count. The number is not important—what is important is to keep the rate of breath the same and the pace of counting as consistent as possible.

6. Alternate-nostril breathing

In addition to an inhale/exhale imbalance, we often have an imbalance of breath between our right and left nostrils. In yoga, we associate left nostril breathing with restfulness and a cool body temperature, and right nostril breathing with activation and heating up of the body. When the two are bal-

anced, we feel alert, present, and relaxed, all at once. The practice of *analuma viloma*—alternate-nostril breathing—can be helpful in achieving this balance.

To begin, sit as described in exercise #4. Turn the palm of your right hand toward your face. Bend down



Alternate-nostril breathing

your index and middle fingers, leaving the other three fingers extended. Inhale and exhale a few times to bring attention to your breath. Now, use your pinky and ring finger to close your left nostril by pressing on the side of the nostril. Inhale through the right nostril. Let go of the left nostril and close the right nostril with your thumb. Exhale through the left nostril. Inhale through the left nostril. Switch and exhale the right nostril, and then inhale through the right nostril. Repeat for 5 to 10 minutes. This is a very balancing, calming type of breath.

As you work through these exer-

cises and learn to take deep, balanced breaths, the benefits will ripple out to your classroom, school, and home.

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OLYNDA SMITH is an E-500 Yoga Alliance-certified and Anusara-certified yoga teacher. She has 10 years of experience teaching adults yoga and 7 years of experience teaching children in the Montessori Early Childhood classroom. She is co-owner of Carolina Yoga Company in Carrboro and Durham, NC, and is AMS-credentialed (Early Childhood). Contact her at olynda@durhamyoga.com.

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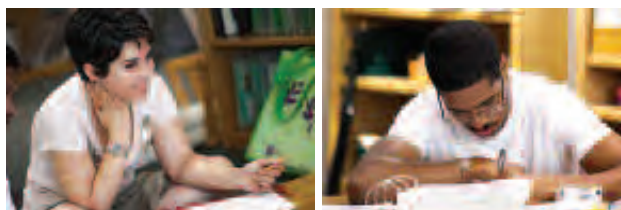
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Building Community with Clay



Joyfully coming together

Photograph by Daniel M. Lord

By Daniel M. Lord, MAT, CAGS

The administration, teachers, parents, and students at Harborlight Montessori School, in Beverly, MA, saw the great wave of change approaching. It had been traveling toward us over the years, gaining strength and momentum. Significant change was not some-

thing our school was used to; our methodology was strong and our unifying principles were consistent with our mission. However, we had recently transitioned to a new head of school and merged with another school, and, as a result of these upheavals, our community was at risk of losing its reputation as a premier Montessori center.

We had two choices: Ride the wave of change or drown.

A strong Montessori community nurtures and encourages children to develop to their full potential. By collaborating, children, parents, and teachers help build the foundation for what we know as our school community. Each member of our team has a

specific role, including responsibilities to one another to ensure that our relationships develop in healthy, respectful, and, ideally, inspirational ways. The benefits of a strong Montessori community enhance student learning as Montessori students report greater “affect, potency (i.e., feeling energetic), intrinsic motivation, flow experience, and undivided interest (i.e., the combination of high intrinsic motivation and high salience or importance) while engaged in academic activities at school” (Rathunde, 2005, pp. 341–71). These qualities are attributed to the strong culture of community. Faced with a disappearing sense of community, we at Harborlight had to do something creative to bring us back together.

Collaboration is defined as “shared creation,” and as Harborlight’s elementary and middle school art teacher, I considered how we could implement this. I wondered what might happen if adult members of our community came together to create with clay in the art room. The art room has always been a place where our students are free to take risks, explore the nature of their own creativity, and interact with one another in the creative process. But would the same hold true for adults? Would adults be able to express themselves openly and honestly in the process of creating ceramic works of art? Would our community become stronger as a result? These were my questions, my hopes, and my goals.

In order to attract our community, I crafted a colorful flyer, motivated by how much I enjoyed playing with friends in the mud during my childhood. The flyer was funny, uplifting, and direct, and asked community members to attend a workshop, titled “Adult Play with Clay.” My hope was that adults would reflect on their own childhoods, wish to relive some experiences, and come together, perhaps

unintentionally, with the end result being community building. The flyer went out to our entire school community by email.

If Montessori education is about enabling the inner adult within the child, then the inverse might hold true when it comes to adult learning—enabling the child within the adult. As Picasso once said, “When I was young, I could draw like Raphael, but it has taken my whole life to learn to draw like a child” (Salvador, 2008, p. 1). Children usually love working with clay, and so I was hoping that reflective adults might also be drawn to the activity.

Positive responses to the flyer flooded in, primarily from parents in our community, but from teachers as well. I got nervous but realized that, as an artist, I now had material to work with: individuals who wanted to be a part of the workshop, and, by extension, part of the community. However, I knew the experience had the potential to be superficial. As Peter Senge, director of the Center for Organizational Learning at MIT’s Sloan School of Management, states, “after retreat-like sessions for improving communication, the team returns and conducts its regular business in the same old counterproductive ways” (2000, p. 74). Experiences are often disconnected from the real work of participants and have no effect on the way individuals relate to one another.

I imagined and hoped that “Adult Play with Clay” would be different. I knew that community-building could be an effective way to create “byproducts such as synergy, improved morale, and a healthy organizational culture and climate” (Glaser, 1986, p. 58). However, I wanted to make sure participants understood our goals, so I stated them clearly at the beginning of each workshop: First, work on rebuilding our community by increasing our

level of collegiality. Second, raise money and awareness for people living in poverty by preparing ceramic works of art for the 15th Annual Empty Bowl Dinner—a night where we come together as a community and enjoy a simple bowl of soup. For each year’s Empty Bowl Dinner, students create simple ceramic bowls, utilizing either hand-building techniques or the potter’s wheel, and then, at the dinner itself, parents of the young potters purchase their children’s work for \$10. Each attendee also receives a simple meal consisting of a bowl of soup, bread, and water, all donated by local restaurants and supermarkets. It is a wonderful event that attracts nearly 300 attendees each year.

To reach our goals of rebuilding community and raising money for those less fortunate, I wanted to make “Adult Play with Clay” as easy as possible for participants to attend. With the support of our interim head of school, David Hursty, several teachers provided child care and a simple dinner of pizza and drinks. On the first night, many participants admitted that they felt a little uncomfortable; I heard comments like, “I haven’t been in art class in a very long time.” Others joked about their fears of creating meaningless work that their children might mock. They were at the brink of engagement—fearful but courageous.

To begin each workshop (there were eight workshops in all), I gave a short, basic lesson. I started with hand-building, the most immediate, simple, and natural way an individual can learn to work with clay. In subsequent sessions, I challenged participants with more complicated techniques, such as coil-built bowls and slab construction. In our last few sessions, with our excitement peaking and relationships forming, we explored the potter’s wheel.

After completing each lesson, I said to participants, as I say to all my students,



Working with the potter's wheel

Photograph by Daniel M. Lord

"Okay, let's get to work." I passed out clay, putting our community-building experience in motion. Some parents went inward to find creativity, while others became more social, making connections with one another.

Observation is a core value of Montessori education, and "observe" is what I did. I took note of what people were doing, what they were talking about, where they were sitting, and how much movement there was throughout the workshop. Moreover, I witnessed relationships as they began to emerge, as community members began to share personal stories, ideas, and solutions to problems. One particular example occurred when two women decided to explore the potter's

wheels. They had no experience with the wheel, and they did not know each other, short of smiling at one another in passing. The two continually laughed as the wheels spun, spitting clay and water and scattering their tools. If laughter is a strong indication of learning, then I was on to something.

Over time, participants began to look forward to "Adult Play with Clay." The atmosphere became increasingly comfortable as relationships developed over the course of our eight scheduled meetings. Workshops lasted 2 hours and were always scheduled on Friday evenings. The group solidified as parents shared intimate stories about their own children, and everyone laughed together. The overall

experience improved from week to week, reflected in subtle changes including the offering of wine, music, and continual chair and table rearrangement.

Moreover, it was also clear that participants were feeling more comfortable working with clay as the results of their work began to emerge. Small cups, saucers, manta rays, mushrooms, bowls, and abstract pieces were pulled from the kiln and put on display. Most parents were humbly surprised at the results of their efforts.

The night of the Empty Bowl Dinner highlighted this community-building project. The event took place one week after our last workshop in February. In the middle of the display of hundreds of student works were the amazingly creative and diverse results of "Adult Play with Clay." Pictures of participants in process, some hilariously muddy and others deep in concentration, were included to tell the story and ramp up interest for future workshops.

It was clear that others were interested in the group's work. Many families gathered around the "Adult Play with Clay" pottery, making comments and asking questions. They wanted to know what had happened and why. I saw participants explain themselves and laugh at the challenges that they had met along the way. They were reflective and happy, and, while I don't think it was their intention, they were shifting the focus of our community. I no longer heard the previously pervasive complaining about the present or deep concern for the future; it was simply people connecting with other people through their art.

Beyond what I witnessed at the Empty Bowl Dinner, a participant exit survey revealed that 90 percent of participants felt more connected to our community as a result of our workshops. Participants made connections, and thus increased their level of collegiality. In my opinion, this implies that creative community projects like "Adult

Play with Clay” can be beneficial to schools that strive to improve communication and foster environments in which teaching and learning thrive.

Praise for the workshops was great to hear, but what continues to motivate me is knowing that I played a small part in reconnecting our compassionate, curious, and creative community. Now, as I observe parents connecting with one another outside of the clay workshops and see children feeling more comfortable with me as a teacher, I feel more joyful and more connected. I know my work is still in process; however, it is exciting to consider the future of the Montessori community at Harborlight as it goes forward as Harborlight-Stoneridge.

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DANIEL M. LORD, MAT, CAGS, is the art teacher and director of the extended day and summer programs at Harborlight-Stoneridge Montessori School (Beverly, MA). He has nearly 10 years of experience working as a Montessori art teacher, director, and community-builder. He plans to pursue studies for an AMS credential once his second child learns to talk. Contact him at dlord@h-smc.org.

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The AMS 2014 Annual Conference: A Keynoter Sneak Peek

Join colleagues and friends at the AMS 2014 Annual Conference, March 27–30, in Dallas, Texas, to experience thought-provoking workshops and hear the words of five compelling keynote speakers.

JOHN CHATTIN-MCNICHOLS, PhD, has been a Montessorian since 1971, when he studied with Mario Montessori in Bergamo, Italy. He is internationally recognized as a distinguished teacher and scholar and has lent his expertise to Montessori programs across the globe, including in England, South Korea, Australia, and Brazil.

Dr. Chattin-McNichols' thoughts on his Montessori work:

"One of my lifelong ideas is to try to build bridges to Montessori from other areas. That's one of the reasons I went back to college to get a doctorate—to be able to talk about Montessori to students and faculty at the university level and to discuss child development beyond what I had mastered in my training with Montessorians."

See Dr. Chattin-McNichols on **Thursday, March 27**, at **7:30 p.m.**, when he will present "**Think Big: 10 Leadership Projects for AMS and Montessori Educators.**"

Dr. Chattin-McNichols will outline 10 projects that will propel AMS and the Montessori community toward an even stronger future. The projects include parent education and teacher education initiatives; new approaches to using technology and teaching second languages; and new ideas on the role of research within the Montessori community. Dr. Chattin-McNichols will flesh out each of these ideas, with the aim of motivating leaders at every level to take on new challenges.

ROBERT EVANS, EdD, is a clinical and organizational psychologist and executive director of the Human Relations Service, in Wellesley, Massachusetts. A former high school and preschool teacher and a former child and family therapist, he has worked with schools and families for 35 years, focusing on the challenges facing adults in schools: coping with high levels of change, leading innovation, and absorbing the impact of shifts in the American family.

He is the author of many articles and 3 books, *The Human Side of School Change*, *Family Matters: How Schools Can Cope with the Crisis in Childrearing*, and *Seven Secrets of the Savvy School Leader: A Guide to Surviving and Thriving*.

Dr. Evans shares some of his thoughts on Montessori:

"The tension between change and continuity—what do we hold on to, where do we adapt—is alive in most schools. For Montessorians, it can be especially challenging, given the anti-developmental changes in America's educational landscape. Much of my work in Montessori schools has been about helping them manage this dilemma, about finding ways to sustain and enrich deeply held beliefs about child development and yet prepare students for the very different middle and high schools they will eventually attend."



John Chattin-McNichols



Robert Evans



Temple Grandin



John Hunter



Andrew Solomon

See Dr. Evans on **Friday, March 29, at 1:30 p.m.**, when he will present **“Getting to No: Building True Collegiality in Schools.”**

Dr. Evans will outline ways teachers and school administrators can improve candor and create genuine collegiality, even when they see things differently. He will explain why

the ability to deal directly with and differ constructively from one another—about teaching and learning, performance and priorities—is vital to professional growth, and he will show how a more constructive approach to conflict improves a school’s ability to model and teach the habits, skills, and values it wants children to learn.

TEMPLE GRANDIN, PhD, a professor at Colorado State University, has done extensive work on the design of compassionate livestock handling facilities, developed animal welfare guidelines for the meat industry, and consulted with companies on animal welfare. She is the author or co-author of 10 books, was named one of *Time* magazine’s 2010 “100 Most Influential People in the World,” and was inducted into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame, in 2011.

A past member of the board of directors of the Autism Society of America, Dr. Grandin lectures to parents and teachers throughout the U.S. on her experiences with autism.


Dr. Grandin’s thoughts on the prevalence of autism diagnoses (from the prologue to *The Autistic Brain*, which she co-authored with Richard Panek):

*“Unlike a diagnosis for strep throat, the diagnostic criteria for autism have changed with each new edition of the DSM [the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*].*

I warn parents, teachers, and therapists to avoid getting locked into labels. “

See Dr. Grandin on **Friday, March 29, at 10 a.m.**, when she will present **“Helping Different Kinds of Minds to Succeed.”**

At the age of 2, Temple Grandin had no speech and all the signs of severe autism. Fortunately, her mother defied the advice of doctors and kept her out of an institution. Many hours of therapy and intensive teaching enabled her to learn speech, and mentoring by her high school science teacher and an aunt with a ranch in Arizona helped her to pursue a career as a scientist and livestock equipment designer. Dr. Grandin will talk about how her mind works, sharing her ability to “think in pictures,” which helps her find solutions that neurotypical brains might miss. She will make the case that the world needs all types of thinkers: visual thinkers, pattern thinkers, and verbal thinkers, as well as all kinds of smart, “geeky” kids.



JOHN HUNTER is an award-winning teacher and educational consultant. For the last 30 years, he has used his World Peace Game in his classroom as a primary teaching tool, allowing students to develop workable solutions to dilemmas inspired by real-world events. His 2011 TED talk was named by both TED and the *Huffington Post* as “the most influential idea of 2011,” and his work is chronicled in the educational documentary *World Peace and Other 4th-Grade Achievements*. Hunter holds master classes in cities around the world, designed for teachers to examine their teaching practice in a deliberative and reflective way so that they might discover new seeds of possibility for the learning they lead.

Hunter’s thoughts on teacher-student connections:

“Relationships are important in education. That really may even be the key to teaching well, the relationship you have with a student. If you are able to touch a student’s

mind, fine. But if you can touch a student’s heart, then the mind contact lasts longer and goes deeper.”

See Hunter on **Sunday, March 30, at 10 a.m.**, when he will present **“Our Mission: Preparing Children to Lead into the Unknown.”**

Hunter’s World Peace Game creates a rich practice field where children can lead, explore, collaborate, conflict, negotiate, and solve problems. It is the epitome of a learning environment that is well prepared—a place for students to engage in open inquiry that is purposeful, while building competence in dealing with ambiguities, misinformation, conflicting ideas, and other elements of the unknown. Hunter will share the core principles of his game and show how it reinforces the idea that, since today’s students are tomorrow’s leaders, exposing them to complex problem solving and complicated communication is good practice for the challenges and opportunities that await them as adults.

ANDREW SOLOMON, PhD, author of *Far from the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity* and *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression* (winner of the National Book Award for Nonfiction), is a writer and lecturer on politics, culture, and psychology.

Dr. Solomon is a lecturer in psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College and a member of the Board of Visitors of Columbia Medical Center and the advisory boards of the Mental Health Policy Forum at Columbia Mailman School of Public Health and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. Along with founding the Solomon Research Fellowships in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies at Yale University, he is a member of the boards of directors of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and TransYouth Family Allies. He lives with his husband and son in New York and London and is a dual national.

An excerpt from *Far from the Tree* (p. 47):

“For some parents of children with horizontal identities, acceptance reaches its apogee when parents conclude that while they supposed that they were pinioned by a great and

catastrophic loss of hope, they were in fact falling in love with someone they didn’t yet know enough to want. As such parents look back, they see how every stage of loving their child has enriched them in ways they never would have conceived, ways that are incalculably precious.”

See Dr. Solomon on **Saturday, March 29, at 2 p.m.**, when he will present **“Far from the Tree: Parents, Children & the Search for Identity.”**

Dr. Solomon interviewed more than 300 families to write this book, which tells the stories of parents who not only learn to deal with their exceptional children—those who have dwarfism, Down syndrome, autism, schizophrenia, and multiple severe disabilities, or who are deaf, who are prodigies, who were conceived in rape, who become criminals, or who are transgender—but also find profound meaning in doing so.

Dr. Solomon will explain how he learned from these parents that generosity, acceptance, and tolerance can prevail, that love can transcend every prejudice, and that by embracing the differences between us, we expand our definition of what it is to be human.

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A Required Read

By Kathy Carey



Learning How to Learn: An American Approach to Montessori

By Nancy McCormick Rambusch
New York: The American Montessori Society and Parent Child Press, Inc.,
Commemorative Edition, 2013
Hardcover, \$25

Nancy Rambusch is surely a known entity among Montessori teachers and teacher educators in the United States—for her leadership in the early days of the Montessori revival and for her connection to Whitby School. But perhaps only the

name is familiar, as we might remember a distant relative.

To know Rambusch today, one must study her writing, some of which has been reprinted in *Montessori Life* over the past 20 years. Her most notable contribution is, of course, *Learning How to Learn*, published in 1962. I recall hearing the title and some references to Rambusch as a young graduate student, but her book was not assigned reading. Perhaps it should have been. There is much here to remind us of Montessori's depth of understanding of children and learning, and of Rambusch's clarity in setting Montessori's wisdom in an American context.

Chapter 5, on "The Teacher," would have been a great help to me, especially if I had posted the following quote on my supply cabinet and, thus, been required to acknowledge its presence each day: "The reactions of children in any classroom are related to the expectation of the adults who prepare the environment of the class for them" (p. 95). The concept of "freedom to work" sat at the edge of my consciousness but slowly invaded my practice as I began to shed notions of control. Rambusch also points out that "there is no diminution of her (the teacher) real authority with the increased autonomy of the children" (p. 96).

In the Introduction, Rambusch reminds us of one of Montessori's most significant insights: that the environment should reveal the child, not mold him. Chapter 6, "The Parent," discusses Montessori's perceptions of the home environment and the important differences between parents and teachers, one of which is orientation: "Parents unconsciously orient children toward their own goals. But the goals of early life are within the child and uncommunicable by him to adults" (p. 101).

Learning How to Learn is now available in a commemorative edition, published jointly by the American Montessori Society and Parent Child Press, Inc. (now a part of Montessori Services). New to this edition are a preamble by John J. McDermott as well as the eulogy McDermott delivered at Rambusch's funeral.

If you have not read this book, now is the time. It may well be a great gift for credentialed teachers as well as friends and family who want to understand the breadth and depth of Montessori education.

KATHY CAREY is co-editor of *Montessori Life*. Contact her at edmontessorilife@aol.com.

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I was entertaining some friends at my house, and one friend's small child, probably 4 or 5, discovered my piano and banged on it a little.

"What's that?" said an amused adult, who probably intended to introduce the word "piano."

"Sound," replied the child and wandered off to explore the next curiosity. Nobody corrected him.

Betsy Megas
Santa Clara, CA

A new babysitter arrived, and I asked my 5-year-old son, Hayden, to show her around and be nice. His tour started with his robot dog, and then his robot books, and ended in the kitchen, where he announced, "I have things for grownup girls in my refrigerator . . . wine!"

Aya Akazawa
San Francisco, CA

I'm not sure if I should be proud that I have raised my 11-year-old son to eat healthily or if I should be slightly disturbed by this recent conversation:

Taka: What's a Twinkie?

Me: A yellow, spongy cake filled with very artificial cream filling.

Taka: I want to put "have tried a Twinkie" on my bucket list.

Alyssa Morishima Moore
San Mateo, CA

My 5-year-old daughter and I have been talking about anatomy a lot lately.

Caitlin: Mommy, how can you tell the difference between a boy horse and a girl horse?

Me: Well, pretty much the same way you can tell the difference between a human boy and a human girl.

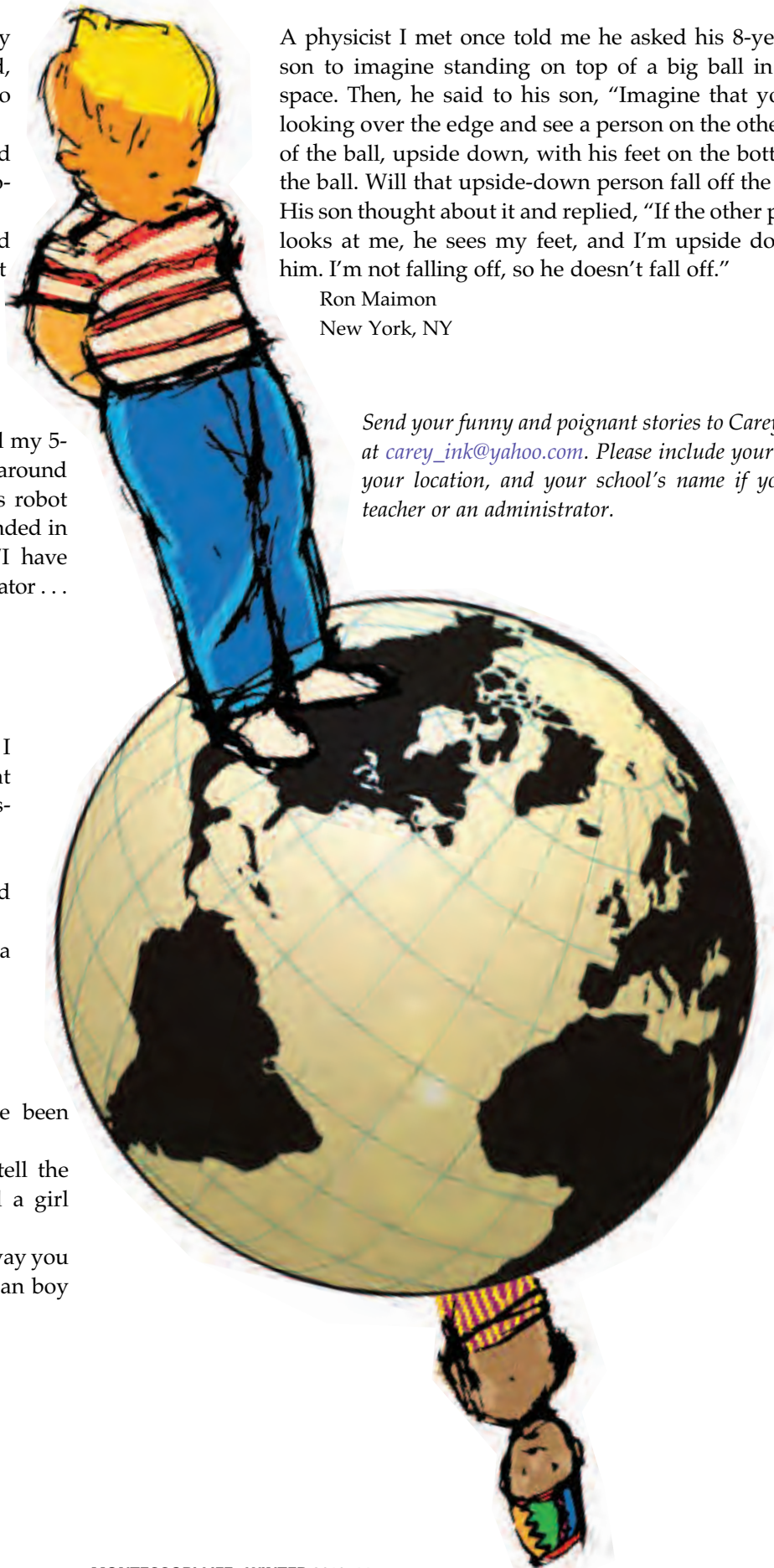
Caitlin: The boy has short hair?

Jen Ward
Centerville, MA

A physicist I met once told me he asked his 8-year-old son to imagine standing on top of a big ball in outer space. Then, he said to his son, "Imagine that you are looking over the edge and see a person on the other side of the ball, upside down, with his feet on the bottom of the ball. Will that upside-down person fall off the ball?" His son thought about it and replied, "If the other person looks at me, he sees my feet, and I'm upside down to him. I'm not falling off, so he doesn't fall off."

Ron Maimon
New York, NY

Send your funny and poignant stories to Carey Jones at carey_ink@yahoo.com. Please include your name, your location, and your school's name if you're a teacher or an administrator.



Proactive Planning: one Parent's Approach

By Jana Morgan Herman

The holiday season is upon us. This very busy time of year affects children, who depend on us for consistency, in so many ways. Although the increased activity of the holidays is fun, it can also be stressful, for adults and children alike. Here are some tips that may help to make this holiday season calmer.

1. Plan. Make a plan for your family that details guidelines for visiting others or hosting company. Changes in schedule are unavoidable; however, you can prepare your child with statements like, “Grandma and Grandpa are going to be spending the weekend with us. Some things will be different, but these ground rules will be the same.”

Practicing grace and courtesy throughout the year will prove helpful during holidays. Not interrupting when others are engaged in conversation, saying “please” and “thank you”—these manners act as social lubricants that help reduce stress and friction. But remember: Teach through modeling and *loving redirection*, not humiliation. Redirect children in private so they can focus on what you’re saying instead of focusing on their embarrassment at being scolded in public. As Montessori says, “Of all things, Love is the most potent” (1995, p. 295).

2. Respect your child. It is unreasonable to believe children can “shop until you drop.” If children must go shopping or socializing with you, make the outings short. If your child demonstrates that he or she is tired (i.e., throwing him-/herself on the floor, rubbing eyes, crying—you know the signs), calmly end your trip and go home. Children

do not have an adult’s endurance. Speaking loudly to children—especially in public—embarrasses them and makes the situation much worse. Instead, say something like, “It’s been a long day, hasn’t it? It’s hard to sit in the cart while I do this. Let’s get these last two items and go home for a bath (or nap or walk) and a book.” An even better option is having a friend or relative take the children to a park, or go on a walk, while you run a few errands.

If you are visiting someone, first go over expectations with your child before you visit and on the way there. “We are going to be at Aimee’s for 1 hour. We can take your rug and the blocks or Legos to play with while we talk, or you can play in the yard.” Then, only stay an hour—no longer! An even better idea is inviting Aimee to your house.

3. Semper paratus (always prepared). Not everyone is used to having children around. Remind your child that some things may be for “eyes only.” Books, coloring books, and a small set of Lincoln Logs, along with a rug (a portable, defined workspace) will help your child remain occupied while you converse. Never underestimate the attraction of other people’s possessions, so have realistic expectations for how long a child can restrain him-/herself. Going for a walk or to a park while you visit adults allows children to move and enjoy themselves.

4. Wash, rinse, repeat. One time through is not enough. If situations arise while you are out shopping or visiting, quietly (as not to elevate the situation) have a private conversation with your child about what the ground rules are. For example, if Jess is too loud,

have a short private conversation:

“Jess, remember the rules. If you need to, stay with me awhile, then you may try again in a few minutes. We will be leaving/eating/going to bed soon. Thank you. I know it’s not easy for you when things are so different.”

Hugs are recommended to help kids (and adults) settle.

5. Sleep on it. Maintaining a consistent bedtime routine will do wonders for your family, no matter what state you are in (literally and figuratively). Bring your bedtime books and favorite pillow and blanket. Following the same timeline (dinner, bath, books in bed, good-night kiss) every evening will lessen the stress your child will feel over going to sleep in a different environment.

Finally, remember to be patient with yourself and your child. This too shall pass. The stress is short-lived, and if you manage everything carefully, you won’t need a vacation from your vacation.

Reference

Montessori, M. (1995). *The absorbent mind*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

JANA MORGAN HERMAN, MEd, is an *Early Childhood guide and a teacher educator for Montessori Teacher Education Center—San Francisco Bay Area*. She is *AMS-credentialed (Early Childhood)*. Her two daughters, now in college, attended Montessori schools. Contact her at jana.morganherman@gmail.com.

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