This NAMTA Bulletin is publishing an adolescent initiative report about the adolescent community (12-15) and upper adolescent community (15-18) at St. Catherine’s Montessori School in Houston, Texas, which is in a green, overgrown, urban area adjacent to Houston Downtown. The bulletin chronicles the history of the Japhet Creek project as being a logical evolution of a green, urban village that becomes a fresh vision for a holistic prepared environment for Erdkinder. Those participating in the Deep Dive (see list in the report) acknowledged the potential of this very urban site with two adjacent minority neighborhoods (one Hispanic and one African American) to call out to the adolescent sensitive period for social justice and economic independence. The Japhet Creek program put the adolescent physical plane squarely on the land where the work is available to engage adolescents as they step outside of the school. There will be no commute to an urban center. David Kahn comments “If we are to intensify community farms, the Montessori middle schools and high schools should be located on those farms, not separately housed and split up socially by rotations and commuter space.” Special thanks to Ciara Wentworth for her editing assistance.

The Erdkinder genesis in the 1990s and thereafter was supported by environmentalists like Robin Moore (school grounds), Roger Hart (environmental psychology), Fritjof Capra (eco-interdependencies), David Orr (eco-literacy), and Louise Chawla (environment design for children). In this bulletin, we present Louise Chawla’s earlier research that delves into the Western “urban history” that has created the dichotomy between urban and rural childhoods. Through interviewing residents of two Kentucky towns, one rural and one urban, Chawla concludes that children do not want to be removed from nature in order to live in an urban environment and will seek out greenspace. Both urban and rural children responded identically in her research that their favorite place was “a park or green place among trees or bushes.” Through resurrecting greenspaces and making neighborhoods and streets safe and peaceful, children in urban settings can experience the benefits of nature as communities thrive with the presence of happy and safe children. Trees should be replanted, riverbanks reopened, commons renewed, and the pedestrian scale of old communities reimagined so that children and nature can both be admitted into cities as “visions of the past and visions of the future coincide.”

—David Kahn
AMI/NAMTA/GREAT WORK, INC. ADOLESCENT INITIATIVE SPONSORS A SEMINAR ON THE ADOLESCENT COMMUNITY URBAN-RURAL DICHOTOMY

An AMI Goal Statement

Purpose of the Adolescent Initiative
The goal of this initiative is to conduct a thorough study and review of the development of the NAMTA/AMI Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies to prepare Montessori teachers for the third plane of development. The project will include a thorough review of the evolution of the “adolescent movement” from its beginnings with the first adolescent colloquium in 1998 to the current NAMTA/AMI Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies as well as the exploration of recent research in adolescent brain development, innovations in other adolescent learning environments, and other curricula and delivery models.

Through surveys of current adolescent programs, assessment of current teacher preparation, site visits, deep-dive events, and colloquia, the initiative will develop frameworks for ideal learning environments for adolescents. This research will inform the development of handbooks and toolkits for schools as they implement 12-15 and 15-18 Montessori programs. Special attention will be paid to the development of the course of studies and programs for early adolescent (12-15) to the second subplane (15-18).

Based upon this initial research and review of the adolescent orientation, the initiative will establish an AMI diploma course. Concurrently, the initiative will establish requirements and guidelines for identifying and training additional lecturers and trainers for trainers at the adolescent level.

The initiative will be led by an executive study team facilitated by Great Work, Inc with a steering committee, identified by AMI, that will act as an advisory and pedagogical review board.

End Goals

Goal 1: Explore and identify the most current and relevant understanding of the adolescent psychology and learning with an emphasis on:

- Survey innovations in non-Montessori, adolescent-centered models for inclusion of relevant and complimentary ideas.
- Organize knowledge into implementation toolkits or stimulus packages including research-based operations handbooks to be used by new and existing schools and graduates as the basis for creating new and exciting optimal learning environments.

Goal 2: Develop an AMI adolescent diploma training course.

Goal 3: Articulate and develop clear pathways for experienced educators to become trainers, specialists, and presenters.
The variety of land uses in the city combined with a social mosaic, in which the well-to-do lived in imposing Italianate and Victorian homes on the main avenue, the working class in shotgun homes on secondary streets, African-American families in blocks of extended kin scattered around the community, poor whites and African-Americans in the alleys, and the poorest families in a shanty town by the wharves.

In this integration of diverse land uses and social groups, the city was characteristic of other old “walking industrial” communities built when interdependent classes and services had to be located in proximity. In its racial integration, it was also characteristic of other old Southern cities in the United States, where geographic segregation remained low into the twentieth century.

What were the consequences for children? For one, nature and commerce coexisted, and children penetrated both settings: commons and quarries, overgrown river banks and canal locks, tree lined avenues and rail yard, orchard and corner grocery, parks and local dump. (Chawla “Revisioning Childhood, Nature, and the City”)

In the history of the development of Erdkinder programs in North America, Camillo Grazzini urged the dismissal of the Montessori urban program in 1996. Mr. Grazzini wished to establish the “very environment which constitutes the keystone for an Erdkinder community experiment” (183). He therefore called for a model program to follow Montessori requisites for an Erdkinder, while asking for a permanent organizing committee for the United States to coordinate all the experiments already existing in the country. His stand established an ideal of a farm homestead leaving the urban/suburban compromise as a “lesser choice” although the majority of the adolescent programs in America during the nineties and turn of the century were in the suburbs or a city.

This is both paradoxical and confusing. The “land-based framework, economically
independent and interdependent farm community” was set up as the ideal, making an urban adolescent prepared environment feel second best and compromised. A closer look reveals that the urban counterpart may have the environmental richness of the city. Japhet Creek in downtown Houston is a place where adolescents penetrate both “commercial, educational and nature settings” as best conditions for learning history, sociology, farming (on vacant lots abandoned due to foreclosure and demolition), mathematics, language, wood shop, urban geography and neighborhood dynamics. Observing the St. Catherine adolescents in this urban environment was compelling.

The experienced Montessori adolescent farm managers who observed this urban activity found urban living engaging and courageous. For example, commercial ventures were recycling rags and steel from the Bayou or warehouses, removing junk from the creek, testing the water table, checking the minerals in the soil, establishing garden beds, and more. The visitors from Montessori farm communities stood in awe and respect of St. Catherine’s widespread outreach and saluted the joy and optimism the youth expressed about the heavy work ahead. Work was their joy. Their home base was a nineteenth century house with a fence that they were rebuilding and painting, still preserving its original characteristics as a modest home.

The city qualities celebrate a part of the human condition and the Buffalo Bayou mystique: the work of removing invasive species, meeting the homeless, learning the expansive ethnic neighborhoods and the sounds and sights of the city at work, living out of doors, bonfires, dancing in the parks and streets, and open markets. Hopes and dreams chase away the potential dangers and put the adolescent in charge of his or her terrain without the usual urban phobia.

History of the Montessori Adolescent Urban-Rural Dichotomy

Dr. H.J. Jordan, a collaborator with Dr. Montessori, developed an urban “Montessori” high school concept around the Utrecht High School in Holland in 1945. Twenty-five years later, he told his story at an address delivered in 1970 in Paris at the Montessori Congress held on the occasion of UNESCO’s centenary celebration of Maria Montessori’s birth. He stressed at the time that there was no Montessori method of teaching in secondary education. He had, however, read *From Childhood to Adolescence* in the French and made this rather interesting dismissal of the outline:

> It is true that about 1935, Dr. Montessori made a public plan containing her ideas on education and upbringing of adolescents. In her book *De l’enfant à l’adolescent* she puts forward some of those ideas. I made several personal attempts, in cooperation with Dr. Montessori, to bring to fruition what I considered was a most valuable plan, but unfortunately I was unable to find the millionaire to finance it. It was so visionary and also so revolutionary that it simply did not fit into any existing educational legislation. (260)

Since the late 1970s, adolescent programs in Montessori schools in the United States have emerged as a very serious part of the Montessori movement. Until 2000, the complexity and diversity of secondary projects extended over a very wide span of practices, represented by approximately 200 projects evolving from approximately 1000 elementary programs. With no design consensus, however, some viewed the pioneering Montessori secondary effort in North America as spurious, originating without the proper foundations. In the interview “Designing for the Needs of Adolescents,” John McNamara points out a very basic fact about his urban practice, which derives its foundations from the elementary psychology and methodology:

> When we do a Montessori adolescent program, so much of what is historically Montessori—namely, the elementary curriculum—is precisely what contemporary curricula are trying to develop. Therefore, we are not starting from scratch. We are in the forefront if we really resort to our Montessori starting points and do not lose sight of our philosophical roots. (Kahn 103)

So the curtain rises on the so-called urban adolescent program when, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a general period of experimentation emerged, with prominent Montessori
educators of the suburbs and cities deciding to move into the “third plane” of adolescent development using second-plane foundations as their base. John McNamara began his work in the 1970s. In the early 1980s, John Long, Pat Ludick, Larry Schaefer, and myself took what we knew about Montessori and applied it to the adolescent. John McNamara called it “conscious Cosmic Education.” He knew from the beginning of his work that the adolescent would manifest the ideals of the Montessori elementary—the cosmic task, the focus on purpose and creation, the interdependencies of life and civilization, the materialization of the abstract passages in order to arrive at mathematical formulae, etc.

At the same time that McNamara was nurturing his classroom model, Phil Gang sought out the AMI point of view. In 1976, Erdkinder Atlanta Inc., a community group that Gang helped form, interviewed Margaret Stephenson and Abs Joosten (“Erdkinder: The Experiment for the Experiment”). These two Montessori luminaries stated the case for the limits of the Montessori legacy. Regarding the Montessori Lycea (Montessori high schools of the 1930s in Holland), Abs Joosten cited Maria Montessori’s outlook:

She suggested later, “Don’t call it Montessori. If it works along Montessori lines, good. But there is no Montessori method for the secondary stage yet. That continuation of the method can only come from the children, and not from me.”

(Erdkinder Atlanta 210)

Gang queried Dr. Mario Montessori, Jr., in 1979 (“Report from Erdkinder Atlanta”). Stressing the unconventional nature of an Erdkinder experiment, Mario Jr. suggested starting with the familiar, with an urban adolescent program for youth ages twelve to eighteen. One would evolve towards Erdkinder:

One should start with the compromise solution…. A compromise solution does not cause anxiety. They [parents] are not risking the chances of their children by letting them partake in an unknown adventure.

It would be neither fair nor realistic to send a child to the Erdkinder if he is not ripe for it. It would have an adverse effect. Also if his going could cause a conflict with his parents.

So if both types of schools are needed, it stands to reason that the less experimental one, i.e., the less divergent from the expectations of the parents for the secondary education of their children, should be the first to be organized. (Gang 62)

In the late 1970s, Gang published The Erdkinder Research and Development Report, a modest newsletter that distributed previously unpublished articles about the Erdkinder from the late 1930s authored by Maria Montessori. Three of these articles were reprinted in a 2001 special issue of The NAMTA Journal titled The Montessori Adolescent: Analysis in Retrospect: “Dr. Montessori’s Third Lecture,” “A New Education for the Secondary School,” and the “Twenty-Eighth Lecture of the Twenty-Third International Montessori Course.” The newsletter also carried information about potential Erdkinder projects, including a small Erdkinder experiment founded by Ursula Thrush in California in 1978, which closed two years later. As head of Northwoods Montessori School in Atlanta, Gang established an urban program for grades seven and eight while he was working towards a Ph.D. About a decade later, Dr. Gang chose a path “beyond Montessori,” leaving his school in Atlanta so that he could pursue a higher education career, which meant that Erdkinder development was left unfinished.

In 1982, Mario Montessori died, followed by his son, Mario Jr., in 1993. The appointed spokespersons for Erdkinder were no longer available, and the urban programs grew into their own sovereignty without the proposed counterbalance of a parallel Erdkinder “experiment for the experiment.”

It was not until 1996 at the Adolescent Colloquium in Cleveland that Camillo Grazzini urged the dismissal of the Montessori urban program, reacting to its unchecked development.

While I consider the setting up of an authentic Erdkinder program to be an initiative of enormous interest and importance to the Montessori community as a whole, I find that the “urban compromise” has nothing to do with Maria Montessori’s vision,
intentions, or hopes. The “urban compromise” was and is, an attempt to provide a
new kind of school for adolescents; and it would have been better to simply identify
it as that, without any reference to Montessori and without any sort of Montessori
justification. Furthermore, exactly in what way and to what extent does this new kind
of secondary school, the “urban compromise” school, differ from the Montessori
Lyceum found in Holland? (Grazzini & Krumins G. 182)

Mr. Grazzini did recognize the contribution of urban programs over 20 years in learning
about the adolescent from the Montessori point of view, but emphasized that what he
really wished to establish was the “very environment which constitutes the keystone for
an Erdkinder community experiment” (183). There was general agreement at the 1996
Adolescent Colloquium that the phrase “urban compromise” should be replaced with the
more positive term “urban contribution” (The Adolescent Colloquium 33, 53). He therefore
called for a model program to follow Montessori requisites for an Erdkinder, while asking for
a permanent organizing committee from the United States to coordinate all the experiments
already existing in the country and to oversee new ones in the hope that the Erdkinder
reform would come about over time (192).

In 2005, almost a decade after the first Montessori Adolescent Colloquium and five years
after the startup of the Hershey Montessori School’s Adolescent Community, we have a
credible Erdkinder model, and the establishment of a national committee by NAMTA titled
the NAMTA Center for Montessori Adolescent Studies (NCMAS).

The NAMTA/AMI Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies meets annually in the
summer for those specialists and Montessorians who are seeking some teacher preparation
for working with adolescents. Participants in these events identify most strongly with the
Hershey farm, where they actually live out the integrated work and study on the farm. They
experience clarity and social cohesion around the Erdkinder farm school experience, which
is, in some cases, life-transforming.

This segment of the orientation on the farm includes actual boarding by the participants
to make the simulated experiences more authentic. The farm experience is then more
appreciated and vivid. But most importantly, beginning with a concrete, lived vision of
the Montessori syllabus and prepared Erdkinder environment, the teachers coming to
our orientations assert that they would love to have a farm environment in any of their
situations, but it is not always possible. They have just had an encounter with nature,
bringing together academic work, practical work, and social life, but they want such an
experience in its most intense form for their own programs.

About one percent of founding programs connected to our adolescent work have Erdkinder
specifications for land, boarding, and farming. In the vast majority of situations, there are
not the resources nor the administrative experience to have a farm-based program. But
something else is happening, which Mr. Grazzini did suggest, and that is that the urban and
rural work is beginning to unify. Given the many talented Montessorians working in different
urban “experiments,” the practice of an Erdkinder model provides vocabulary, methodology,
psychology, and community dynamics that help these gifted schools make correlations
between Erdkinder Montessori theory and their work in the city or suburbs.

What we have discovered is that orientation students want their urban programs to embody
as much of an Erdkinder design as possible. It becomes the function of the orientation to
create a symbiosis between Montessori Erdkinder and urban development. It might be
that the coexistence of farm schools and suburban/urban Montessori adolescent programs
provides an interdependent overview of the whole adolescent. Both models need to address
community dynamics—one community (urban) involves the family; the other (Erdkinder)
involves a community that the adolescents create themselves, among peers, not connected
to their parents and home life. These contrasts alone provide insight into the adolescent’s
unique needs for community experience—all kinds of communities: peer and family, town
and country, city neighborhood—and for now this diversity enhances the “experiment for
the experiment.”

It is difficult to really convey the inner dynamic of the summer orientation, but it is a
certainty that the very socialization (valorization) that arises out of the farm school living
experience provides a bond to Montessori’s ideas. The farm has a “utopian” impact on
participant thinking so that when adapting Erdkinder ideas to their urban situations, they innovate using the following guidelines (a work in progress) from Montessori’s educational syllabus. This is the handout we give them with which to negotiate principles although they have had deep study of each of the component design parts presented in the following:

**ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE ADOLESCENT PREPARED ENVIRONMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Characteristics and Needs of Adolescents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The psychological characteristics and human tendencies are the basis for designing the prepared environment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hand-Head</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Real and meaningful intellectual and physical work</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economy—Production and Exchange</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relating to selling what one produces in exchange for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiencing Nature and Supranature—Science Studies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking at the connection between the natural and human-built world</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Living Community and Community Extensions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The cohesion and cooperation of the group through physical and intellectual work enhanced by living together, sharing practical life, and experiencing personal needs in relation to the whole community</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>History of Humanity in Relation to Community and Life’s Purpose</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full view of history as it is relevant to the adolescent community, leading to the “vocation of man”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Expression and the Artistic Occupations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Land</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogy of Place—Beyond the Classroom</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilization of place to build a sense of belonging and responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis on Character</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Valorization through noble Characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Roles Beyond Childhood/Reality Base</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work is meaningful, real, and necessary to the environment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Easy Access to a Broad Range of Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities offered to challenge many different kinds of skills and aptitudes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Key Ongoing Experiences/Seasonal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing experiences and materials that meet the needs of development outside of the classroom</td>
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St. Catherine’s Montessori, founded in 1966, started an adolescent community with 7th and 8th year students in 1996 and added the first 9th year class in 2002. This fall of 2017, we have our first class in the upper adolescent community (15-18) with four 10th year students.

For the first 19 years of our program we traveled to a land institute one hour away from our urban campus for our students to experience residential life and work on the land for brief stints ranging from 5–12 days. These trips gave the guides opportunities to observe the adolescent in a community of his own and the adolescents made it clear that a residential experience is key in the prepared environment. The students enjoyed the work on the organic farm and surrounding land and thrived in the home environment they created in the residence. Students planned and prepared each meal, enjoyed free time playing in the woods, and spent evenings working with friends on homework and playing board games, as well as entertaining us with music they created.

In our assessment, these experiences were valuable but lacked two key components. The first was that the students had no true sense of ownership of their work at the institute. While they were valorized by projects they contributed to while at the institute, other school groups visited at different times and worked on the same projects. This method might appear to be collaborative, but the student groups were not connected in any way other than sequential work on a project, so they didn’t benefit from the “shared” experience. Second, given the limited number of days, students did not need to fully commit to community life, knowing that eventually they would return home, leaving peer conflicts behind. Meanwhile, students tended an organic garden, chickens and bees, and ran a weekly market on our urban campus. These too were valuable experiences, but we realized that students did not take full ownership of this work, because they left school at the end of the day, or week or year and moved on to different roles in their lives away from school.

We spent several years looking for the ideal farm to call our own. We searched a 100-mile radius from Houston and while there were many potential farms, none of them fully addressed the needs of our adolescents, their families, and our school. We also realized that living in the fourth largest city in the United States provided opportunities for our adolescents that they wouldn’t have living far away from our metropolis. Ultimately, our search ended at Japhet Creek. Located five minutes from downtown Houston and having access to Buffalo Bayou to the south, Japhet Creek is uniquely suited to meet the needs of the younger and older adolescent. The work on this property represents an intersection of both the adolescent community (12-15) and upper adolescent community (15-18). While the younger adolescents are developing the garden, orchard, livestock enclosures and residential
housing on the property, the older adolescents have begun environmental testing of the soil in collaboration with the City of Houston and the EPA. The students completed Phase 1 in the spring of 2017 and are moving forward with Phase 2 soil sampling. The property is situated in a heavily industrialized part of town with steel recycling, converging railways and industrial lots; this necessitates the study of the environmental safety of the soil and water on our property. Relationships with city planners and professionals have already begun and we recognize the real work this brings to the older adolescent.

Our property is nestled just below the towering skyline and there is ample space and quiet for reflection near the creek. From the banks of the creek, you cannot detect how close you are to the city. Buffalo Bayou was a key waterway in the founding of Houston and continues to figure prominently in twenty-first century Houston. In the last three decades many organizations have pulled together to revitalize and transform Buffalo Bayou into a beautiful public greenspace and arts destination. Much of the work has been done on the west side of downtown and now this work is expanding eastward, and with this expansion the near Eastside is experiencing the beginnings of gentrification. Adolescents can see the benefits and negative impacts that growth can bring, arousing both optimism about the future and an awareness of the social responsibility they have to the economically disadvantaged population of long time residents who currently live in a food and retail desert and may soon be displaced because of rising property values and concurrent tax burdens.

Japhet Creek, one of the last remaining spring-fed creeks in Houston, flows directly into Buffalo Bayou, which meanders to the Turning Basin and Ship Channel, home to the Port of Houston. This affords the adolescent a unique grounding in a sense of place. From the early cotton, sugar and rice farming to the global trading hub and petrochemical industry of today, our adolescents investigate Houston’s origins from its humble beginnings to the grandeur of our twenty-first century city, which reaches to the exploration of space.

We are inspired as we see the adolescents building their own community on this property and are certain that we are providing them with the most authentically prepared environment possible. As the authentic oral historians Jim Ohmart and Eileen Hatcher, former property owners, aroused the history behind the neighborhood. Lastly a permaculture specialist brought out the need for land rehabilitation and water and soil intervention and conservation.

Urban programs innovated ideas that, when placed in a rural setting, were revisited and survived well: elements of humanities, emphasis on the seminar, the cabaret/coffee shop, the whole class council, mathematics, experience-based creative expression, key experiences, the adolescent three-period lesson, etc. In an evolutionary sense, the urban programs have had more time for curriculum focus simply because they do not have farms to tend. That freedom from practical chores makes the urban program a critical testing ground for new ideas that emerge from the land-based programs in a boarding school context and from revisiting Montessori’s ideas.

But the curriculum work must rally around common principles such as a list of agreed-upon essentials suggested above. What results would come from developing common principles from the start that are derived from Montessori writings?

1. Urban and land-based programs would communicate without judgment.

2. The land-based programs would provide a different prepared environment and community reflection that would add to the urban innovations. Conversely, urban settings could test their ideas in farm settings.

3. The overarching Montessori theme of the relationship between nature and supra-nature (the human-built world) has rural and urban experiments that correspond.

4. Urban programs and rural programs would provide critical mass for the “experiment for the experiment,” together creating a more significant sample for study and distillation of program design.

But we must hearken to the words of Mr. Grazzini, whose guidance has been vital if not prophetic. His desire for an Erdkinder focus was passionate. He felt that the one-sided continuation of urban programs was not going to uniquely define the potential of the third
plane. Utilizing the inspiration and philosophical coherence of the Erdkinder model brings all players fully into the third-plane psychology. This contrasts with our beginning adolescent work (even at the farm school), where the principles were highly influenced by the second plane. After all, the book *From Childhood to Adolescence*, which we used extensively as our working manual, mingles second- and third-plane principles as denoted by its title.

With the advocacy of the Erdkinder, the adolescent work slowly gravitates to a unique context for the *third plane* of education. In order to see the whole of the third plane of education, the boarding and land-based program model needed to be in place and accessible to evolving urban programs. Erdkinder projects make the principles listed above come alive; Montessori adolescent theory is embodied in the work of the adolescent, which the Erdkinder Appendices (in *From Childhood to Adolescence*) have so vividly illuminated. With a handful of land-based programs in place, working toward the materialization of Montessori ideals, “the experiment for the experiment” will find a healthy partnership between rural and urban, which will, in the final analysis, bring the 15-18 design into clearer view.

**References**


Participants

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Catherine Ruff - St. Catherine’s faculty
Dusty Simpson - St. Catherine’s faculty
Susan Tracy - Head of St. Catherine’s

Special thanks to Ciara Wentworth for her editing assistance.

To start, Andrew Gaertner read his introduction to a Farm Stay Welcome at David’s request. The seminar was moved by its simplicity and Montessori truth. The following is his introduction.

LAKE COUNTRY LAND SCHOOL FARM STAY WELCOME PROCEDURE

By Andrew Gaertner

At Lake Country School, our 7th and 8th graders can choose to do an 18-day farm stay at the land school, our 160-acre rural campus, which includes the “Farmstead” with gardens, greenhouses, workshops, and animals, and the “Homestead” with dining, sleeping, living, and classroom space. Each farm stay begins with a welcoming circle in the homestead gathering room. The adolescents and the land school staff sit in a circle and we all introduce ourselves and say something that we are looking forward to. After that, one of the staff has a short speech to set up the farm stay. Following the welcome speech, the students divide into small groups and have lunch and a hike with their land school staff mentor, and after the mentor lunch, there is a community meeting to decide on community guidelines; an hour-long perimeter hike; and four short, small-group orientations to chores, rooms, kitchen, and listening skills. These orientation experiences constitute the first period of an 18-day lesson. They are designed to be lofty, inspirational, and give the big picture. Here is an example of a typical inspirational welcome speech:

Let us start with a rhetorical question. A rhetorical question is the type of question that you answer in your head.

Why do we have a land school farm stay?

There are many reasons. But we like to get the big picture, so let’s start with world peace.
There are real, big problems in the world: racism, climate change, injustice, refugee crises, wars, to name a few.

Dr. Maria Montessori lived about a hundred years ago and she saw problems in the world too. She lived through two world wars, a global economic depression, refugee crises, and more. She looked at the world and saw that what was desperately needed were engaged, aware adults who can work together to make the world a better place.

She saw that many of the worst problems in the world are there because adults act like children. Adults often act selfish, unaware, and disempowered.

Montessori actually proposed that in order to change the world, we need a new kind of adult, and in order to get the new adults, we need to change education. Specifically she said that the point where children become adults is where a great change needs to happen.

This brings us to more rhetorical questions:

How do you become an adult?

There is a big difference between a child and an adult. When you are 11, you are clearly dependent on your family and society thinks of you as a child. Within just a few years when you turn 18, you are old enough to vote, to drive a car, to get married, to fight in the military, and to move away from home.

What happens in those six years to make you become an adult?

In order to become an adult you will need experiences to help you to find the answers to three questions:

Who am I?

How do I fit in?

And what is my great work?

If you can answer these three questions well, you are on your way to becoming the kind of engaged, aware adult that the world clearly needs.

Montessori gave us an idea about how to answer these questions. She suggested that in order to have engaged, aware adults, we could have adolescents live together in a place where they are called on to be engaged and aware members of a community that needs them and their contributions. She specifically suggested that adolescents leave their families and live on a farm in a community where their work is valued.

She said that a farm is a perfect place for that community because on a farm there are so many different ways that people are needed. There is a lot of necessary work on a farm, from animal care, to planting and harvesting, to cooking for the community, to creating things to sell. All of this work requires cooperation and requires community members to be engaged and responsible. If the animals and plants are not cared for, they can die. If the lunch is not ready, nobody can eat. This is a real place that needs you to be aware and engaged.

So let’s get back to our three big questions. This is the farm stay program and we set up the environment to help you answer the big questions:

Who am I?

We have many opportunities for self-expression. You find out who you are by expressing yourself and finding out what gives you joy. We have dedicated class time for both creative and physical expression; we have performing time during gallery night; writing with Morning Pages; participating in Community Meetings; storytelling during the Closing Meetings; but really you are always expressing yourself. There is magic in self-expression, because you can
actually discover who you are. The more you express yourself, the more you discover. You literally express yourself into existence.

How do I fit in?

Fitting in is more than trying to just be like everybody else in terms of fashion or music. When you are aware of what is happening in your community and you know how to engage, then you can take on a positive role. Fitting in is all about doing what needs to be done. You will take on specific roles during the farm stay. You will be cooks, cleaners, animal caregivers, scientists, and you will be hosting a major school event. But more generally, you will be taking on informal roles all the time as leaders and followers. These are places where you are called on to be independent and responsible in order for things to go well in our community.

What is my great work?

Beyond just filling a role, the intersection of the first two big questions leads you to the third big question. When you express yourself and discover who you are, and when you take on positive roles in your community, sometimes you find something that really resonates with you. This is your great work. You will find out what your great work is by making contributions to your community. When you find out that your contribution makes a difference, this gives you a sense of pride in yourself. If all adults knew who they were, knew how to take positive roles in their communities, and chose to contribute in a way that they can see makes a difference in the world, then we might have a chance against the big problems facing our planet. We can start on the farm stay.

During farm stay, we give the news of the world during every morning meeting. This is meant to spark us, to stay connected and to think about what is going on. We also have specific ways to contribute. During the occupations class, you will be improving the facility or creating delicious meals. During micro-economy time, we will be preparing to host the holiday fair. You will get a chance to be entrepreneurs and create food and crafts to sell and make some money.

There is a special challenge with the holiday fair. Recent years have seen a shrinking in the number of people who come out. What can we do as a community to advertise and make the holiday fair into something that we can be proud of?

We want to close by saying that this experience is what you make it. Each one of you is necessary for making this farm stay work. We need you. But really it is bigger than that. The world needs you to become engaged, aware adults.

ST. CATHERINE’S JAPHET CREEK PROJECT: A MONTESSORI PREPARED ENVIRONMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS

By Jesse Gevirtz

Background

St. Catherine’s Montessori in Houston, Texas is a 50 year-old, AMI recognized Montessori school with a well-established adolescent community. Recently they have had the opportunity to utilize a highly urban green space with significant cultural and historical roots in order to better develop the Erdkinder aspect of their adolescent community.

Site Visit: Observed Human Tendencies and Adolescent Sensitive Periods

Upon the observation of the adolescents for one day on site, as part of an adolescent Deep Dive, it is apparent that this locale will support the Erdkinder ideal and has the potential to provide opportunities for young adolescents to participate in the types of work that will support their growth. During the day, the adolescents were offered choices of work during several extended periods. These choices included work on the land in the form of garden
bed building, planting, and maintenance, the work in the small orchard, and the cleaning of out buildings (goat pen, chicken coop, storage shed). There were also lessons and periods for more academic work possible over the course of the day. On this particular workday, it appeared that all activities were chosen freely. Moreover, over the course of the day, a group of four older adolescents (approximately 15 years old) were working on a documentary film project related to the history and ongoing work at the site.

In order to consider an adolescent program Montessori or Erdkinder, we consider it in terms of Montessori philosophical concepts. These include the preparation of the environment based on the human tendencies, as well as the specific psychological characteristics and sensitive periods inherent to the plane of development.

Some of the Human Tendencies Observed

**Orientation:** During specific times of the day, the adolescents oriented themselves through the use of a large graphic organizer that helped them choose work from several options. There was a large satellite map of the site available as well. Also, the adults were available to help orient and connect the adolescents to the work that was needed.

**Order:** There was a basic structure to the day, which was known to all and represented with an interactive chart, providing the order necessary for the adolescents to work freely and responsibly. The building and site appeared well organized, stocked with materials so that the adolescents could work and maintain the environment relatively independently.

**Work/Manipulation/Movement:** These three components were well apparent throughout the visit. The adolescents were permitted free movement throughout the environment and used a variety of tools as they worked. The work was greatly varied and most work appeared meaningful to them. There seemed to be endless possibilities for work at this site with the ability to move freely and choose one’s occupation.

**Repetition, Perfection/Exactness:** Work on a farm is repetitive in nature and at St. Catherine’s, it included repeated hoeing, planting, and shuttling mulch. Some people also spent time practicing math problems or grammar lessons, work that requires abstraction and the use of symbols.

**Control of Self:** This was necessary when working freely and when the students used tools or dealt with old lumber, glass, and other debris associated with cleaning out old barns and sheds.

**Communication/Belonging:** Perhaps one of the most critical aspects of this work was that it was set in the context of a community, working together for a common aim. People communicated as they performed their manual tasks sharing information about what they were doing and giving instructions or simply moving around each other. They tutored one another as they worked to solve academic problems as well. Before they ate, they gathered in a circle to share a blessing and other information; this was a clear demonstration of one of the many rituals and routines (order) needed for a self-managing community to operate.

The power of imagination must be at play in order for adolescents to apply themselves to difficult and strenuous farm work by their own choice. They have to understand the potential outcomes of their labor in terms of products they can use or sell in the future, as well as the improved appearance of the land and buildings in the future.

While this project is still in its early stages, it is apparent that the site has great potential as an appropriate and enriching Montessori environment for young adolescents. On this day, the adolescents were observed interacting with their environment and applying the
full range of human tendencies. Setting the community here is also providing many optimal experiences that play to the sensitive periods for personal dignity and social justice. Rich with opportunities for valorization provided through their work, valued by a community of peers and a greater community, the urban farm also allows for these adolescents to consider greater social issues. Not only is there the chance to experience viscerally the positive aspect of human interaction, there is also the opportunity to extend their work into the local population of a socio-economically depressed part of the city.

**Urban Farm without Compromising Erdkinder Values**

By Susan Tracy

An urban land experience, just as a rural farm school, can serve the function of allowing the adolescent to make a realistic transition to adulthood. The adolescent stage of human development requires particular experiences to support the valorization of personality. The idea of the farm school, both urban and rural, is not to create new farmers, but rather to support the development of flexible and self-sufficient adults who understand they have a place and recognize their role in society. The opportunity each individual experiences on a daily basis to contribute to their community lays the foundation for their self-worth in society and their understanding of the importance of social justice. It appears an urban land experience can provide all of the elements that make an adolescent program valuable and authentic. The urban farm need not compromise any of the core principles that are aspects of the optimal prepared environment of the Erdkinder.

St. Catherine’s Montessori in Houston has the good fortune of having acquired a small urban farm at Japhet Creek, a little green oasis just minutes east of downtown Houston and surrounded by warehouses that are in transition. In addition to the already existing gardens, small orchard, chickens and bees, there is a spring-fed creek that feeds into Buffalo Bayou. The owner of the land at Japhet Creek is interested in keeping the land as a green space and continuing its use for educational and agricultural purposes and has made his donation and purchase agreements with those conditions.

The desired use of the land aligns with our purposes well; however, there are additional reasons that make this particular urban site compelling for the adolescent. Being close to where Houston was founded, the richness of the history and the economic evolution of the area present a fascinating study. The stories from long-time residents stimulate the interest and curiosity of the younger adolescent, while the older adolescent is actually stepping out into society to engage with different organizations on redevelopment plans for the city and working side by side with city officials on environmental studies.

**Work**

The younger adolescent, being in a time of immense physiological change, needs both physical and intellectual work. Work on the land offers interesting and varied activity that has meaning and purpose while giving the adolescent physical experiences to build their bodies and expend their natural energies. There must be freedom within structure allowing the adolescent free choice of occupation and a chance to experience optimal engagement and flow. The farm is a place where work is needed for production and exchange and requires the integration of mind and hand, making it an ideal prepared environment for the developing adolescent.
Education should... include the two forms of work, manual and intellectual, for the same person, and thus make it understood by practical experience that these two kinds complete each other and are equally essential to a civilized existence (From Childhood to Adolescence)

Work is a key ingredient for the development of the adolescent through which he experiences a shared struggle with others and works side by side with the adult. The adolescent can concretely see the results of his labor and he can see the economic value of his work. There is a farmer’s market only minutes from Japhet Creek where students can sell their produce once a week.

Roles

Trying on different roles in a land experience gives the adolescent a chance to sample various responsibilities and offers a safe place to make mistakes. There is much work to be done at the Japhet farm and many roles are available, providing endless opportunities for problem-solving along with a need for flexibility. These real world experiences help the adolescent discover his role in the community and the importance of his contributions. Who am I? How do I fit in? Figuring out how one can contribute to the greater good of the adolescent community ultimately helps one find his place in society. Working together in community, especially combined with an overnight component, requires responsibility for one’s role and demands the necessity of working through interpersonal struggles.

Ownership

Feeling a sense of ownership of the farm is important for the adolescent, not only to take pride and responsibility for the work, but also to buy into the work that needs to be done. Ownership gives the opportunity to identify the problems, research solutions, seek out resources and complete projects. Only through a feeling of ownership can an adolescent truly invest in working through the problems of a farm. The adolescent can see the direct effect of his efforts and realizes his work is real and not tokenistic. The successful completion of projects on the farm empowers the adolescent, valorizes his work and enhances his self-perception to be one of a capable and competent human being. Ownership of the Japhet Creek urban farm stimulates creativity and problem-solving much more than visiting a rural farm a couple of times a year.

Self-Expression

Being out in nature offers time for quiet reflection and an opportunity for the adolescent to experience silence. This reflective time at the farm sets the stage for creative expression in the form of art, music, sculpting, woodworking, photography, dancing, theater, improv, videography, metalworking, jewelry design, sewing, writing, cooking, poetry, etc. Finding various ways to express oneself helps the adolescent really know who he is and discover what talents he has.

Economics

Experiencing economic exchange helps the adolescent understand the value of work. The opportunities to experience economic exchange would be at a weekly farmer’s market and ultimately in a shop, perhaps a coffee shop run by the students, that would also sell eggs, honey, soap, garden and orchard produce. The older adolescents can manage and provide marketing for some of these endeavors as well as incubate enterprises of their own.

Adults

The adults need to be passionate, curious individuals, optimistic about the future and willing to work side by side with the adolescent. There is a necessity for a farm manager and a couple of other core guides and, beyond that, part time adults can be called in from the broader community to share their expertise in different areas. It is helpful for the adolescent to interact with a variety of adults including internships and mentorships. There are many skilled people in the immediate vicinity of Japhet Creek who could be outside support for the adolescents and who would be able to share valuable skills and experiences. Easy access to a wide variety of adult expertise is a great advantage of an urban farm.
Nature and Spirituality

The urban farm, gives students an opportunity to immerse themselves in nature and experience the awe, wonder and beauty of all living things. Having a land experience brings a feeling of peaceful unhurriedness and connects one with his higher self.

It (environmental education) seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God. Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology and helping people, though effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care. (Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ On care for our common home, 137)

Our Mission

Providing spiritual attachment to our common home inspiring responsibility and cultivating universal peace.

WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO A MONTESSORI ADOLESCENT PROGRAM?

By Alex Heil

What is essential to a Montessori adolescent program? As you indicated throughout the beginning portions of our work together this week, this has been, and continues to be, a complicated issue in the Montessori community. However, if one is to take Maria Montessori at her word, I think it safe to say that the proper prepared environment includes the following:

**Center for Study and Work (Appendix A).** The essential components of this center include a quiet setting in the country, close to nature, an open-air life, individual care, and a non-toxic diet. There must be calm surroundings, silence, and the opportunity for reflection and meditation on the wonders of nature.

**Country Home (Appendix A).** This place where the adolescents live must be organized on a larger scale and with more freedom than the family. In addition to these essentials, the following could be pursued: hotel or hostel (Appendix A), shop or store (Appendix A). In addition to these considerations of a physical nature, she calls for the following in terms of dealing with the adolescents:

- Variation of occupation and interests rather than “holidays” for rest and rejuvenation (Appendix B)
- Study as a response to a need of the intelligence (Appendix B)
- Never treating them like children (Appendix B)
- Allowing freedom to act on individual initiative (Appendix B)
- Restricting rules to only those necessary to maintain order (Appendix B)
- Providing for the need for solitude and quiet (Appendix B)

With regard to diet and health, she offers the following: Non-toxic food rich in vitamins and sugar; No meat – only vegetarian; No alcohol or nicotine; Life in the open air, bathing, and swimming; Long walks.

Given the items listed above, it seems to me that the Japhet Creek location is attractive on a number of fronts. First, it will afford St. Catherine’s a location to get a substantial amount of land under cultivation, easily enough to make the operation one that can cover its costs (minus overhead) through CSA and farmers’ market sales. It was especially encouraging to see that there is an existing farmers’ market in close proximity. Second, it will allow the program room to grow, especially as the high school adds more students. Third, the location provides for a “sanctuary in the city”: a quieter place with direct connection to the
natural world. It would appear from my observations that the students have already really
taken to the property and are getting on with the work of fixing the house and bringing the
garden back to life. Make no mistake, there is a lot of work that still needs to be done, but
everything has gotten off to a good start.

I think a good exercise for the staff of St. Catherine’s would be to sit down and really decide
what the priorities are for the property. My list runs something like this: 1. Continue bringing
the garden back to life. 2. Build a classroom facility on property — likely on the lot behind
duplex. 3. Clear the land behind duplex and house. 4. Develop additional gardens and
pasture in this area. Personally, I think the notion of boarding on the site is premature and
should wait until the farm is more fully developed, certainly until after classroom facilities
are built. In the meantime, I think teacher housing in the duplex is great. It keeps a school
presence in the neighborhood on nights and weekends. Once the neighborhood “campus” is
on its way, I think attention could be expanded to include the three acres across the creek.

**Reflections on the Adolescent and St. Catherine’s**

By Catherine Ruff

In *From Childhood to Adolescence*, Dr. Montessori called for “a school of experience in the
elements of social life.” Since I began my journey at St. Catherine’s, I have often pondered
this statement; throughout the year, my understanding of this idea has grown more clear
as I have spent more time observing the adolescents at Japhet. At Japhet, students have
the opportunity to experience their learning; they encounter the world around them while
applying their lessons; they read outside while listening to the sounds of nature mingling
with the sounds of industry; they have the opportunity to visualize life away from the
city while remaining in its shadow. The adolescents were surrounded by opportunities
waiting to be experienced, but there was more to being a school of experience than the
aforementioned practical aspects. At Japhet, they have the ability to grow in independence,
to freely choose, and to learn from their choices. As they navigate these decisions, some
adolescents might let their peers down while others work for the good of the community; in
either case, they are becoming more socially independent and can readily see the way their
choices affect the community. The work, academic and manual, provides an opportunity
for valorization. The proximity to the city helps emphasize that “education should therefore
include the two forms of work, manual and intellectual, for the same person, and thus
make it understood by practical experience that these two kinds complete each other and
are equally essential to a civilized existence” (*From Childhood to Adolescence*). Through
observation, I have seen students find their niche through both their head and their hands
with equal amounts of satisfaction resulting from their work.

As I listened to the experts from around the country, several themes stood out to me, but
one in particular has stayed with me. Regardless of location, adolescent programs should
have commonalities; while, the plan of study and work has guided all of our programs,
each adolescent program looks different. However, community work and a true sense of
community remain an integral part of each program. While each representative spoke to the
difficulties faced with a day program, they have been able to instill that sense of community
amongst the adolescents and guides. I believe that this is of utmost importance because the
ability to put your community above yourself is a characteristic I would hope to see in the
better adults of the future. True preparation for adult life must include an emphasis on
social justice, moral responsibility, and a quest for self-discovery. Therefore, I believe all
programs should begin with Andy’s three questions: “Who am I? How do I fit in? What is my
great work?” In doing so, we put the focus on the individual and his needs, connect the
individual back to the community, and, finally, place responsibility on the individual to
contribute
to the greater good. If we guide the adolescents down this path of self-discovery, self-
awareness, and selflessness, there is hope they will use these tools to build a better world.
Notes from the Japhet Creek Site Visit

By Andrew Gaertner

During the Deep Dive at St. Catherine’s Montessori in Houston, the participants had many discussions about the role of the farm in a Montessori adolescent program. There was not total agreement about anything, but there were times when someone would say something and it would carry the collective conversation in a new direction. Here are some of the things that stood out to me from the Deep Dive:

Jacquie spoke about how there are adolescents everywhere in the world. Montessori’s vision for adolescents must be a general one that can be applied everywhere and without having to spend millions of dollars to get it perfect. This is an issue of social justice. Whatever model we come to needs to be within the realm of possibility to implement anywhere, whether it be urban, rural or suburban.

Alex spoke about his program where the students earn money through the individual and collective enterprises of the junior high. This money is tracked and reduces the individual’s costs for the end of the year trip. Income from money making enterprises that happen in school hours is distributed equally, while income from efforts outside of school hours is distributed according to hours worked. Some students earn over $1,000 by the end of the year. Andy also spoke of students leaving the land school after their 18 day farm stay with some cash in their pockets that they earned from entrepreneurial enterprises. Montessori speaks explicitly about having them earn actual money, and Alex and Andy both spoke about how real money makes things real in a social sense and workflow sense. Alex talked about community meetings that they have before and after events where the students will call each out if they are not working. This is the natural consequence that is missing if there is no money at stake.

Alex spoke about the importance of a metal shop. And Jesse spoke about how their program focuses on value-added items in their economic ventures. According to Alex, the metal shop is very important for some of the young people. Perhaps it is the perceived danger and real adultness of welding and grinding metal. Perhaps it is the permanence of the products created. It is about transforming a raw material into something useful to society. This also happens in any value-added enterprise (“I made cookies!”). That transformation is likely appealing on an inner level because it mirrors the transformation of the adolescent from a child to an adult.

Patricia spoke about her banishment of the word “micro-economy.” The “micro” part has a psychologically diminishing effect, which is the exact opposite of what you want. Andy spoke about the difference between a garden and a farm. A farm requires systems with roles. Work on a farm is significant enough that you feel tired at the end and also work long enough that you can get into a flow state within the work. It is the difference between harvesting one pumpkin and harvesting a field with 500 pumpkins in it. The work cannot be tokenistic.

We spoke as a group about the question of whether to move the program entirely to the Japhet Creek site or to keep the program at the lower school or some version of splitting time between the two campuses. There was no consensus. There were practical space considerations and also questions of where and how to allocate financial resources. The value of the Japhet Creek place was recognized in Alex’s statement that there is “a lot of work” needed there. The place is a grand collective project that has the potential to give young people valorizing experiences for years to come. We referenced Jenny Hoglund’s program where the young people feel that the farm is their own place, and the work requires them to be active and present. Therefore, it would be antithetical to have a big capital campaign to have contractors come in and make the place for them. We spoke with Ruth and Sofia and they spoke about restoring the bathroom to a useful state and removing a storm window to let light in. If you had a contractor or custodian do those things, then you would have missed the valorization of their contributions. For this reason, the Japhet Creek site might need to be able to move at the pace of adolescent work, which is sometimes slow and sometimes fast. Therefore, from my point of view, the investment in contractors and space is recommended for the main campus infrastructure.
Although the program might eventually move entirely to Japhet, for the foreseeable future there will likely be a dual campus with some sort of back and forth. In our discussions we looked at the various configurations for this back and forth. Because this is a “school in the elements of social life” and the main Montessori material for social life is a functioning, purposeful community, in my opinion, any configuration that splits the community either physically or mentally for extended periods of time should be avoided. It might be tempting to think of Japhet as a place for small groups to rotate through, but when you divide the community, people make up stories about what they are missing. The site needs to be big enough to accommodate the whole community in purposeful work. The potential for mental division is equally to be avoided. There should be one program that is carried out at both campuses and the work at Japhet is not to be seen as less than the work at the main campus. Jackie spoke about the urban/rural or academic/farm splits as requiring us to rethink our urban academic programs. You can’t have one program at the farm that is about valorization and purposeful work and another program at the “school” which is about meeting academic goals for content distribution. The school needs to look like the farm in some way (which we did not clearly define).

There was considerable discussion of the role of a residential component for adolescent programs. None of the programs represented by the team are completely residential, but each person spoke about how important the residential parts (or group travel parts) of the their program are. The consensus was that residential allows the individual a chance to take on more positive roles in a community and also gives them a chance to work all the way through social issues within a supportive community. The idea was put forth that in a day school environment, the young person is able to “wear a mask” which they are unable to maintain under a long-term residential experience. When the masks come off and are replaced by authentic roles, that is work that is vital for self-construction.

The visual is important at the Japhet site. Alex suggested that they start with the area around the house and manage that area very well, and then expand the sphere of influence relatively slowly. His point was to not diffuse the energy by pushing too far away from the center. There is some benefit to being able to live in and see the results of your work. This does not preclude “big work” projects that extend out beyond the house, but rather just to remember the power of visually seeing the work of yourself and others. When visiting with Shawn (permaculture teacher and architect), we got a sense of how we could use permaculture as a lens to view the site. One of the principles of permaculture is to grow by “chunking.” You don’t try to do everything all at once. You take one chunk of your site and work on it first. What you learn working on that chunk, you can apply to the next chunk you work on. You have a long-term vision for the whole, but you start small. The other permaculture principle that applies is to think in terms of “zones.” In permaculture, zones have to do with frequency of contact. The places where you are every day are “Zone 1” (the dwelling and area around the dwelling) and these are managed for efficiency of movement and convenience. Zone 2 is for areas that are accessed many times during the week. This is home garden and chickens and such. Zone 3 is for “the farm.” The farm is where big orchards and fields are, as well as grazing land. Zone 4 is semi-wild, but managed, and Zone 5 is wilderness. From this standpoint, Alex’s idea about the “importance of the visual” means that at the beginning the bulk of the work will be in Zone 1 and Zone 2. However, Zone 3 areas are essential in the long term because they offer experiences in farm-scale production. Andy, Kathy, and Amy all took the hike out to the Bayou. This is an example of a potential big work in Zone 4 that could capture the imagination of the whole community. How do you transform a trashy dump into a farm and a park? This is the interaction between the wild and human-managed spaces that echoes the interaction between the wild and civilized nature of the human soul. The year-long permaculture design class that Shawn offers could be a requirement for all high school students.

Andy brought up “the village” as a concept for a Montessori high school. Alex spoke about his program where there are many different adults who come in to support different aspects of the program. If the job of the adolescent is to become an adult, then it is useful to have a variety of adults as role models and have a variety of adult roles available to the young people. Alex spoke about the need for there to be an abundance of opportunities for young people to experience positive roles in the community. In a high school those roles become more managerial and entrepreneurial, but the technical roles are not to be discounted. The
high schoolers’ work can be adult work in adult businesses. Patricia’s school is a functioning farm with a school and not the other way around. High school students are ready for that level of real work. The village could include things like: builders/restorers of houses, artists and craftspeople, bakers and cooks, growers, and vendors. Some of the village enterprises would need to be owned and operated by the school, while others might be partnerships. There was consensus that the high school-aged young person needs to go much beyond digging in the dirt with their peers. The high school aged person will not be satisfied with learning to use a drill and making a bird house to sell. They must be building a house. They won’t be satisfied making cookies for the bake sale. They must be running a bakery. The Japhet Creek site seems to offer the potential for that level of engagement at the high school level. David cautioned that in his experience, high school aged people are ready and anxious for abstract thought and they are eager to take on the “academic” topics. In my opinion, this does not need to be mutually exclusive. The challenges of the wider community offer a chance for the young people to see both their physical and academic work in the context of an urban revitalization. If the work of the high school student is to be place-based and project-based, then it requires a real place for the projects to take place. The academic work is made more powerful when it is connected to a real place.

REFLECTION: AN OPTIMAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS

By Kathy Hijazi

One principle in identifying the optimal environment for adolescents is responsibility to place. The adolescent environment is not replicable in the ways that an elementary or primary classroom is replicable. Because the prepared environment for the adolescent is society, it is best characterized by the place in which young adults find themselves. Linda Davis expressed her concern about having a single model for adolescents during the First Adolescent Colloquium, questioning whether practitioners might get caught up in trying to reproduce details rather than understanding principles (Kahn 50). Adolescent programs, whether they exist in a rural setting in the southwest, a pastoral setting in the heartland, or an urban setting in a metropolis, fulfill requirements for the prepared environment by the very nature of their existence in the world in which adolescents live.
For the younger adolescent the prepared environment is a social one: a cocoon for fledgling adults to find their voices among peers, role models among specially prepared adults, opportunities for economic independence, valorization by contribution to an entity greater than one’s self, and work.

A rural setting can undoubtedly provide a safe environment for this to occur. The question we face is: Does the rural setting necessarily need to be removed from the greater urban society at large? Can an adolescent program provide opportunities for real work, initiation into economic independence, and “quiet surroundings … close to nature … an open-air life … ”(Montessori 67), while existing within the hub of a great city? In 1996, Pat Ludick stated, “The city—the civilization in which the young people live—is an important environment. They [the adolescents] need to be led into the city to find places that are nourishing and cause them to reflect on the history of the city, the stories of the people, the struggles that go on: factories, bridges, museums, theaters, parks, libraries, churches” (Kahn 7).

The older adolescent by her very nature looks toward her imminent roles in society. She is concerned with social justice and seeks to understand social inequities and environmental stewardship and aspires to create solutions. She understands the necessity of collaboration among people and the interdependence between the natural world and the manmade world. Dr. Montessori cautions us:

> It is essential that this training should not turn out men who have been lulled to sleep by a false sense of security, who are incapable of confronting the unforeseen difficulties of real life, and who are totally ignorant of conditions in the world in which they are destined to live … Today the need for a more dynamic education of the character and for a clearer consciousness of social reality is making itself felt.

St. Catherine’s Montessori has committed to the completion of Montessori’s third plane of development by adding the 15-18 year sub-plane. We have a unique opportunity to explore the dynamics between each sub-plane as they unfold in an urban/rural environment. Louise Chawla postulates that an “urban-rural dichotomy is neither historically precise, nor in harmony with children’s preferences and future needs.”

We understand that each level, 12-15 years and 15-18 years, has changing characteristics and needs, which develop on individual timetables. Our observations of adolescents will allow us to determine if the shared space at Japhet Creek is optimal for students across the plane while providing us the opportunity to provide developmentally appropriate work for the adolescent as he matures.

The younger adolescent needs opportunities for meaningful work with the land that Japhet Creek provides; the older adolescent needs experiences with the people and occupations of the neighboring communities. The younger adolescent will be valorized by contributing to his smaller community of peers and the older adolescent will work towards social justice and environmental health on a broader level. Each group of students will benefit from the tranquility of nature as well as a deeper understanding of place and appreciation for the works of those that preceded them. We aim for objectivity in our observations so that we may more accurately contribute to the ongoing development of optimal environments for adolescents.
Three orientations will be held during the summer of 2018. The course content is standard for all of the locations, and each is staffed by experienced directors and advisors.

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REVISIONING CHILDHOOD, NATURE, AND THE CITY

By Louise Chawla


Summary

Western culture has historically separated notions of nature and the city, and since the eighteenth century, it has associated children with nature. Planners and designers have complied by moving many children into the passive nature of new towns and suburbs. A study which compared the memories of the old and the contemporary perspectives of the young in a Kentucky urban and rural community challenged this dichotomy. A separation of nature and the city is neither historically precise, nor in the spirit of children’s preferences, nor in keeping with the needs of a sustainable future.

Can Children and Nature Be Urban?

In his introduction, “The Urban Child,” Kaj Noschis (1994)suggests that “there is no place for children” in our cities “because cities are not for children.” In Judea-Christian tradition, cities have been associated with Babel, with secular opportunism, danger, temptation, and sin. Since the late eighteenth century, children have been associated with carnal and spiritual innocence and with nature. Therefore when planners, designers, and politicians have not themselves been preoccupied by the temptations of Babel, and they have given thought to children, they have attempted to move them out into the domesticated but untilled nature of the suburbs.

Children, however, have remained in the city; and as Noschis points out, more than half of the world’s people will live in cities by the end of this century. Therefore he advocates that we do away with “the association of children with nature.” If we admit children into the city, he suggests, perhaps we would also make room for gods.

Historical studies, nevertheless, have taken children’s presence in the city seriously. Colin Ward (1978), Cary Goodman (1979), David Nasaw (1985), Ning de Coninck Smith (1990), and Sandy Gaster (1991) have charted children’s changing lives in major industrial cities of Europe and the United States during the course of the twentieth century. All of these studies converge in identifying a decline in multigenerational street life and an increasing segregation of spaces for children in playgrounds, schools, and recreation centers.
This paper reports on a project that began by challenging the status of this research as a specifically “urban” history, and the dichotomy between urban and rural childhoods that, as Noschis correctly observes, characterizes Western consciousness since at least the eighteenth century. The project concluded by suggesting that we do not need to disassociate children from nature in order to admit them into the city because an urban-rural dichotomy is neither historically precise nor in harmony with children’s present preferences and future needs.

Visioning Backwards

The project reported here, “Childhood in Kentucky, 1900 to Now,” can be described as an example of “visioning backwards.” In contemporary United States planning, the process of visioning invites local residents to describe what they want their community to look like in 20 or 50 years, and then to backcast how to reach this goal. This future vision is necessary, but how can planning move intelligently into the future unless it assesses the historical forces that have altered places’ form and use, and the past possibilities that localities once supported? To expand the potential of the future, it is important to understand the past.

The “Childhood in Kentucky” project was based on the premise that children’s community experience is a topic that can make this history accessible to people of all ages and walks of life, and that can bridge past and future. It brought together the memory of adults and the contemporary perspective of the young, with the goals of identifying local changes, relating change to the needs of families and children, and reassimilating past possibilities into planning for the future. In the terms of Noschis (1992), it attempted to awaken a dialogue between the inner child and the real child.

The “Childhood in Kentucky” project explored resources for children in Portland, an old urban working-class community on the Ohio River in Louisville, and 35 miles away in New Castle, the county seat of rural Henry County in the outer Bluegrass region. To relate past, present, and future, the project gathered information through three means: oral histories with past and present residents who grew up in these communities between 1900 and 1960; archival research that reviewed old maps, newspapers, and written reminiscence; community evaluations by local nine and ten year olds. The project’s method and findings have already been reported in some detail in articles on the project’s rural and urban components (Chawla, 1994a, 1994b).

An urban and rural community were compared in order to explore the following questions: What changes in twentieth-century children’s lives are distinctively urban? What is rural? What changes transcend our rural-urban dichotomy? This paper will briefly summarize some key findings from urban Portland, compare them to New Castle results, and discuss implications for how we associate childhood, nature, and the city, as researchers and as design professionals.

Growing Up in Portland: 1900-1950

As the name Portland suggests, the community began in the early 1800s as a stopping point for boats coming up the Ohio River, where they unloaded passengers and cargo for land transport past the rapids of the Falls of the Ohio. In 1830, the Louisville & Portland Canal was built, becoming a new channel for river transport, although the wharves continued to function into the twentieth century. After annexation to Louisville in 1852, Portland gained a streetcar yard and large rail yard. These economies of river and rail supported factories, warehouses, many small businesses, and, on the community’s western edge, still-operating remnants of orchards and farms. Every few blocks, there was a commons where people grazed delivery horses or gardened.
This mosaic of land uses combined with a social mosaic, in which the well-to-do lived in imposing Italianate and Victorian homes on the main avenue, the working class in shotgun homes on secondary streets, African-American families in blocks of extended kin scattered around the community, poor whites and African-Americans in the alleys, and the poorest families in a shanty town by the wharves.

In this integration of diverse land uses and social groups, Portland was characteristic of other old “walking industrial” communities built when interdependent classes and services had to be located in proximity (Bartelt et al., 1987). In its racial integration, it was also characteristic of other old Southern cities in the United States, where geographic segregation remained low into the twentieth century (Massey & Denson, 1993).

What were the consequences for children? For one, nature and commerce co-existed, and children penetrated both settings: commons and quarries, overgrown river banks and canal locks, tree-lined avenues and rail yard, orchard and corner grocery, parks and local dump.

By all reports, parents accepted that “boys will be boys”: riding river currents (and sometimes drowning), jumping box cars, or exploring the quarry, even when these sites were forbidden. Through the 1930s, girls swam in the river at a Sand Island beach or in the canal locks. Traveling in groups and accounting for their time, many girls moved widely through the community through the 1950s. As a consequence of the diffusion of African-American families throughout the community, children often formed racially integrated play groups.

Children’s free range throughout the community was facilitated by several social factors. Memories of the first half of the century confirm the judgment of David Nasaw (1985, 4) that this period was the golden age of urban childhood, when the young enjoyed “more unstructured and unsupervised free time than the generations that preceded or followed them.” Freed from nineteenth-century toil in factories, and not yet programmed into T.V., Nintendo, or Little League, young Portlanders scouted out entertainment on their feet.

A general network of protective (and sometimes proscriptive) adult surveillance gave parents and children a sense of security (and daredevil boys a reason to seek out-of sight places). Takeover of the streets for play was made easy by light traffic and the fact that those under 18 composed a higher proportion of the population (42% of Kentucky’s population in 1900 versus 26% in 1990, and these figures are representative of the nation).

In addition to infiltrating workplaces and appropriating streets and green places, young Portlanders benefitted from the efforts of social reformers who were convinced that children (especially boys) needed to be taught civilized play, and who provided church socials, a Boy’s Club, a neighborhood center and gym, and staffed summer park programs. All in all, Portland oral histories resurrect the vivid “childscape” of diverse, intimately known places that, as the geographer J. Douglas Porteous (1990) has noted, characterized “the time before”—before postwar change—in both urban neighborhoods and rural towns.

Contemporary Children’s Perspectives

In this “time before,” children’s lives in an urban village like Portland and a rural county seat like New Castle were more similar than different. New Castle children too felt themselves to be at the center of things. Families of sharecropper and independent farmer alike came into town for free movies in the courthouse square on summer Thursday evenings, and for shopping and socializing on Saturday mornings. Prosperous and poor vacationed on the nearby Kentucky River. Adults were hawk eyed, and quick to report the worst to parents, but also tolerant of children’s presence everywhere.
How do these communities function for children today? Distinct as this urban corner of 15,000 and this rural town of 850 are, they have suffered parallel processes of change. Both show the effects of systematic postwar disinvestment in old workingclass communities, urban or rural, as both places have lost vitality to the subdivisions, shopping malls, industrial parks, and office complexes that continue to expand on Louisville’s eastern edge. Interstate Highway 71 now bypasses New Castle, and Interstate 64 runs along the Ohio River, cutting Portland off from its riverfront heritage. When fourth graders in the Portland Elementary School and New Castle Elementary School where asked what they liked best about where they lived, and what they wanted to improve, their answers reflected this history.

When children drew and wrote about their favorite places, their first and second choices were identical in both communities: most frequently, a park or green place among trees or bushes; and secondly, their own room. When asked, “What is the best thing about your community?” almost half of the students in both places identified friendly people and peace and quiet.

When asked to suggest improvements, answers differed. Portland students wanted drugs and crime controlled, trash cleaned up, and no more trees cut down. They were probably not aware that they were desiring prewar conditions, when drugs and crime were rare, when people took pride in their neat yards and sidewalks, and when double rows of great trees lined the avenues. New Castle students wanted more stores and more places for children to meet: again, probably not aware that town businesses now number only two-thirds of their 1940s level, and that the county’s small towns were once magnets and meeting places.

These values conform to those that emerged from Kevin Lynch’s international study of Growing Up in Cities (1977) and of a generation of child research in cities, suburbs, and small towns (Chawla, 1992). Around the world, children say that they want trees and green places, friendly people, peace, safety, cleanliness, and nearby places here they can meet and feel part of an active center. In other words, they want the basic characteristics of livable communities.

Admitting Children and Nature Into Cities

In Portland, where river access was cut off, many street trees cut down, and commons, orchard, and farms infilled, children’s access to nature had eroded. Contemporary children’s preference for the remaining parks and green corners, and their desire to protect remaining trees, suggest that a child-friendly city is one where city and nature mix. In New Castle, children described their appreciation for the fields and woods that remained close at hand, but they also wanted access to stores and meeting places. It appears that what children want is neither nature versus the city, nor the city versus nature, but a union of the two.

We can admit children into the city without doing away with the association of children with nature, because it appears that children have never accepted the dichotomy between city and nature that adults have attempted to enforce. Nor is this dichotomy an accurate reflection of prewar life in many old city quarters and rural towns.

Nor is this dichotomy in the best interests of children’s future. If planners, designers, and politicians are going to commit themselves to the creation of sustainable cities, for the sake of their children and their children’s children, then nature as well as children must be admitted into the city. The riverbanks need to be reopened, the commons restored, trees replanted, rich and poor of all races integrated, and the compact pedestrian scale of old communities like Portland made attractive once again. On this point, visions of the past and visions of the future coincide.
Louise Chawla will be presenting “Using the City as a Resource for Learning History and Civic Action” at NAMTA’s upcoming conference in Cleveland on April 20-22 (see page 37 of this bulletin).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Louise Chawla is professor emerita in the Program of Environmental Design at the University of Colorado Boulder. She remains active in the Center for Community Engagement, Design and Research that she helped establish within the design program. She serves on the executive committee of Growing Up Boulder, a partnership between the university, local school district, and city agencies to involve children and youth in urban planning and design. From 1996 to 2006, she coordinated the international Growing Up in Cities program for UNESCO, which served as the model for Growing Up Boulder. A book that she co-authored with colleagues, Designing Sustainable Communities with Young People: A Practical Manual, will be released by New Village Press in the fall of 2018.
ALASKA

Primary Lead and Mentor (Short Term) and Toddler Lead (Short Term)
The Juneau Montessori School in Juneau Alaska is seeking a Primary Lead Guide to work in the classroom environment and mentor a current teacher in training. We are also seeking a toddler lead guide familiar with classroom management, toilet training and who is AMI Certified.
Both positions, are open for short term commitments. Come enjoy Alaska for the summer! June 1st to August 1st. We want you.
JMS will provide travel to and from Alaska, moving expenses, help with finding housing, a competitive salary, a trip to one AMI conference of your choice and health care. Contact: jms@juneaumontessori.org or by phone 907-364-3535

Lower Elementary Guide in Juneau, Alaska
We anticipate an open lower elementary guide position at the start of the 2019-2020 SY. We’re looking ahead in order to find the perfect match; sponsorship available for the right candidate.
Montessori Borealis has been a part of the Juneau School District for 22+ years. Our public school of about 200 students includes a children's house classroom, three lower elementary, three upper elementary classrooms, and an adolescent community.
An AMI Elementary Diploma and Alaska state teaching credential are required.
Juneau, a small city with a population of 30,000, offers a vibrant arts scene as well as the activities that both a maritime and mountain community can offer.
If interested in applying for this anticipated opening, please submit a resume to principal, Kristin Garot (kristin.garot@juneauschools.org) and consider a visit to our school community.

ARIZONA

Elementary Teacher
Hermosa Montessori School, a tuition free public charter kindergarten, elementary, and middle school is currently seeking qualified applicants for the position of Elementary Teacher to join our creative and dedicated team. Hermosa seeks a teacher with organizational skills, administrative abilities, communication skills, leadership abilities, and the ability to influence and motivate high levels of creativity. Hermosa’s 16 acre campus was chosen for its beauty, and developed to fully integrate Montessori philosophy regarding the integration of the natural world and stewardship of the environment. The natural desert areas provide a perfect setting for the children to experience and learn about the world of nature. All buildings and classrooms are “green” environments. Hermosa’s team is lead by a certified Montessori teacher and is a well established authentic Montessori program.

Ad责任心 by an Excelling School
In 2004 Hermosa was recognized as one of three charter schools in the Tucson area to be labeled an “excelling” school by the state of Arizona. This is the highest rank the state awards to public schools, and Hermosa has maintained this distinction as an “A” rated school.

“2011 Academic Excellence Award.” Hermosa is one of only 18 public schools statewide to receive this honor, and one of two Tucson charter schools to be awarded this distinction from the Arizona Department of Education.

Top Arizona School by The John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth
Sheila Stolov, Hermosa’s founding principal was named among the top 1 percent of principals in Arizona and granted the “Circle of Honor” award by AZ LEADS-Arizona Leaders in Education for the Advancement and Development of Student and School Success.

Join a staff focused on making a difference in the lives of children. Send resume to: theresag@hermosaschool.org or call 520-749-5518 x 7202 for more information.

Keystone Montessori in Phoenix, Arizona Seeking Adolescent Guide
Founded in 1995, Keystone Montessori Charter School is proud to serve students from toddler to adolescents. The adolescent program was established in 2004 and currently has three guides in one classroom who share the responsibilities of guiding 30+ students. In addition to an academic curriculum, students participate in a micro-economy, farm, community service, team building, advisory, theater performances, and international travel.
Preference for the ideal candidate for the Adolescent program would include:
NAMTA/AMI certified in Adolescent studies or willing to attend training
Experience working with adolescents
A curiosity for and knowledge of current events
Good sense of humor, enthusiastic, team player
Ability to organize
Has vision for the future and ideas for implementation
Open minded, outgoing and self-motivated
Strong English language skills
Bilingual; not a prerequisite, but preferred
Appreciates the outdoors and enjoys camping, hiking, and traveling
Ability to teach; all subject areas preferred
Communicates effectively with parents, students, and staff
Competitive salary and benefits based on qualifications and experience.
Option for school-sponsored Visa. Please email your resume, letter of interest and copy of your AMI/NAMTA diploma (if applicable) attention to info@keystonemontessori.com.
CALIFORNIA

AMI Nido and Toddler Leads
MCS is searching for A to I Leads to join our community! We are located in beautiful Santa Cruz County, 10 minutes from beaches, and redwoods.
We are opening an additional Toddler and Nido community, and are thrilled to open our doors to more families.
We are looking for Leads with team-oriented mindsets, can-do attitudes, extensive Montessori knowledge, and warm personalities.
Ideal start date would be in June, but we can be flexible.
New classes will open in September 2018.
Please send cover letter and resume to madelynn@montessoricommunity.school.

Montessori Teachers Needed
Required qualifications—Certified Montessori Diploma for ages 3-6 primary level
If interested, please call: 562-682-3492
Montessori On Elm, Long Beach, California

Primary Assistant
Santa Cruz Montessori School has a temporary, one-year opening for the 2018-2019 school year. We are looking for a Primary assistant teacher for the Redwood class.
Founded in 1964, SCM is a nonprofit school with 260 students, ages 18 months to 15 years. We are located in Santa Cruz, California nestled between redwood-forested mountains and the Monterey Bay.
This position requires excellent interpersonal and communication skills and AMI or AMS Primary training. You will be working with a wonderful team committed to creating a beautiful, nurturing environment for children. Please send resume to: Kim Saxton, Head of School at kimsaxton@scms.org. To learn more about the school visit our website at: scms.org.

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CONNECTICUT

AMI Elementary Teacher
MSGH is welcoming applications for the position of Elementary Teacher. We are seeking an AMI certified teacher who will join a team of passionate, warm, committed people dedicated to serving each child with respect and joy. S/he will be a team player who takes initiative and communicates with children, staff and parents with maturity, sensitivity and respect.
MSGH is an AMI recognized school established in 1964 with a current enrollment of 160 students aged 15 months to fifteen years. Our families and our faculty come from many different walks of life, and we place great value on our diversity and our welcoming, inclusive culture. Teachers enjoy the full support of the administration, professional development opportunities, and a school culture fully committed to upholding AMI standards of excellence.
Salary is commensurate with education and experience.
Please send your resume to Kathy Aldridge, Head of School at kathya@msgh.org or fax to 860-586-7420.
MSGH is an equal opportunity employer.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Infant and Toddler Head Teacher Positions
You will establish and maintain a classroom environment consistent with the Montessori philosophy, including record keeping, lesson planning and effective communication with staff and parents.
Adherence to Montessori principles is a priority.
Education and Experience:
Bachelor’s degree and Infant Toddler (IT), MACTE accredited credential (AMS, AMI or other)
Minimum 3 years teaching experience working with young children; school setting and/or child care facility
Excellent written and oral communication skills
The qualified candidate will:
Be committed to helping Metro Montessori continue to set the standard for high quality Montessori education at every level
Establish and maintain a safe, healthy, loving, and nurturing environment for all children
Be responsible for writing lesson plans in accordance to curriculum requirements
Monitor each individual child’s developmental milestones related to body, mind, communication, and self
Establish positive and effective communication and relationships with families
Serve as supervisor and leader for all assistant teachers in the classroom
Be able to communicate effectively with Head of School
Participate in staff meetings and required teacher trainings
Function both as a “roll up your sleeves” and hands on employee
Ability to maintain highest degree of confidentiality
Highly developed ability to work in a detail-oriented, multi-task environment, meeting deadlines and setting priorities under pressure
Be physically active, engaged, and able to lift 40 pounds

This is a full-time salaried position. Benefits include but are not limited to: Medical and dental; childcare discount; retirement plan; and paid time off.

Metro Montessori is an equal opportunity employer committed to workforce diversity. All applicants must be able to pass a criminal background check. Start Date is Fall 2018.
E-mail: office@franklinmontessori.com

FLORIDA

Toddler, Elementary, and Adolescent Guides
The Children's House Montessori School is looking for all levels of guides for the upcoming 2018-2019 school year. We are a well-established Montessori School that has served our community for the past 49 years. We are nestled in a beautiful community 25 miles south east of Daytona Beach, Florida and steps away from a large university. The successful candidate will hold Montessori certification, have great organizational skills, have attention to detail, love children, and have fantastic communication skills. Salary commensurate with experience. Please send resumes to administration@delandmontessori.com.

ElementaryGuide
The Learning Nest seeks an AMI-certified Elementary Guide to establish our elementary program in the 2018-2019 school year. Located near vibrant Downtown Miami, Florida, we are near beautiful beaches and nightlife. Please email your resume and a copy of your AMI diploma to info@mylearningnest.com.

AMI Assistants to Infancy & Elementary Guides
Little Flower Montessori School in sunny Fort Lauderdale is looking for fellow Montessorians to join our excellent team. Little Flower serves children from two to twelve years of age and has a current enrollment of 89 students.

AMI Elementary Training (6 to 12)
3 summers, starting 2018
Director of Training: Kyla Morenz

AMI Primary Training (3 to 6)
Academic year, 2018
Director of Training: Eduardo Cuevas
Primary Trainer: Naoko Ogawa

AMI Assistants Course (Birth - 3)
January 8 to 20, 2018

AMI Assistants Course (3 - 6)
Summer 2018

AMI Assistants to Infancy Training (Birth to 3)
2 Summers 2019 and 2020
Director of Training: Maria Teresa Vidales

FOR MORE INFO
info@mtcbc-ami.org  604.261.0864  mtcbc-ami.org
Beautiful Vancouver, BC Canada - All course fees are in Canadian dollars.

Little Flower provides a warm, friendly and supportive work environment. Opportunities for professional development are offered to all staff members on a regular basis as part of a larger benefits package.
We are accepting applications from:
AMI Assistants to Infancy Guides
AMI Elementary Guides

AMI Assistants to Infancy to Elementary Guides

Little Flower Montessori School in sunny Fort Lauderdale is looking for fellow Montessorians to join our excellent team. Little Flower serves children from two to twelve years of age and has a current enrollment of 89 students.
learning more about our school please go to our website: www.littleflowermontessori.org. Interested applicants should contact Kathleen Miller Dzura at 954-565-8205 and/or send a resume with cover letter to LFMS@mibflorida.com.

Montessori Kids Universe—Corporate headquarters, is seeking independent consultants to facilitate various projects relating to school training and support.

Positions Open:
Field Consultant—position required travel to school locations; assessing the specific metrics for MKU compliance. This part-time; independent consulting position; may require air travel; 2-4 days per month; with the potential to increase as needed with one week notice.

Trainer:
This part-time position requires presenting the MKU “brand” material; quarterly; at corporate headquarters in Florida. This intense; 2-4 day training is for New Owners and Heads of School. Presentation experience required; as well as Head of School Montessori experience. Additionally; creating monthly webinars may also be an option.

Email: mkustaffing@gmail.com

A to I Guide
Established AMI-certified school guide for the 2018-2019 school year. We are located in beautiful Davie, Florida, a suburb of Ft. Lauderdale. Join our staff of committed Montessorians! Salary commensurate with experience; 401K offered. Please submit resumes to: elizabeth@mibflorida.com.

Elementary Guide
Montessori Institute of Broward seeks an AMI-certified Elementary Guide to continue the ongoing work of our elementary program with the longer view of establishing an Adolescent Program. Located in suburban Davie, Florida, we are near Ft. Lauderdale and Hollywood. Please email your resume and a copy of your AMI diploma to Elizabeth@mibflorida.com.

AMI Certified Primary Guide
Established AMI-recognized school seeks AMI-certified Primary Guide for the 2018-2019 school year. We are located in beautiful Davie, Florida, a suburb of Ft. Lauderdale, and are in our 11th year of operation. Join our staff of committed Montessorians! Salary commensurate with experience; 401K offered. Email elizabeth@mibflorida.com

GEORGIA

Primary Guide
Springmont is currently accepting resumes for a Primary Guide to lead an established classroom community. Applicants must hold a Bachelor’s degree, an AMI Primary teaching diploma, and have at least three years’ experience in a Montessori environment. Springmont is Atlanta’s first Montessori school, celebrating 50+ years of authentic Montessori education. We are located in the city of Sandy Springs, just north of Atlanta. We currently have over 250 students, ages 1½ to 14 years, Toddler through Middle School.

Our school has well-equipped classrooms and offers a supportive and collaborative environment that fosters professional and personal growth. In addition to our 7-acre campus, students also benefit from our 86-acre land laboratory in the northwest Georgia mountains, adjacent to the Chattahoochee National Forest.

We offer competitive salaries commensurate with experience. Our benefits package includes individual health insurance, individual dental and disability insurance, a matching retirement plan, professional development opportunities and tuition remission. Interested candidates are asked to email jobs@springmont.com, providing a brief cover letter in the body of the email and a resume as an attachment.

ILLINOIS

Elementary Directress, Fall 2018
Seton Academy, a Catholic Montessori school, established in 1979, has an opening for an elementary directress beginning in the Fall of 2018, and is happy to sponsor a candidate for Montessori training if needed. Located in a quiet western suburb of Chicago, Seton seeks a cheerful, gentle and energetic individual to guide students aged six to twelve. Large, airy classrooms, dedicated parents, pleasant work atmosphere. Knowledge of the Catholic Faith a must; Catechesis of the Good Shepherd helpful.

Please call Mary C. Thornton at 630-279-4101 or email setonacademy@sbcglobal.net.
LOUISIANA

Lower Elementary Guide
Cathedral Montessori School is looking to hire an Elementary Guide beginning with the 2018-19 school year. This will be our first lower elementary classroom, and we are looking for a Montessori teacher with Elementary certification and three or more years of teaching experience in elementary classrooms. CMS is a private, nonprofit school located on the beautiful Bayou St. John near Lake Ponchartrain. Come down to the Big Easy and experience a city known for it’s rich culture, history, architecture, and food. Please visit our website to learn more about our school and to view a video describing our current program. Laissez les bon temps rouler! Please email resumes to cathedralmontessori@gmail.com.

MARYLAND

Accepting resumes
Mater Amoris Montessori School in Ashton, Maryland, is accepting resumes at all levels. Founded in 1968, Mater Amoris is located on a beautiful 13-acre rural campus in Ashton, between Baltimore and Washington, DC. If interested, please send your cover letter and resume to Deborah Bricker, Acting Head of School, at office@materamoris.com.

Meadows Montessori Primary Teacher opening
Meadows Montessori is seeking the right individual to join our dedicated staff. Immediate placement is also an option. Ideal candidate will have a Bachelor’s degree and Montessori certification, AMI, AMS, or MACTE, and provide a depth of complementary skills, experience, and passion while cultivating a thriving, cohesive, authentic Montessori program in our 3-6 classroom. This is a full-time position with competitive salary, benefits and professional development opportunities. Please email info@meadowscenter.com with resume and an application will be forwarded to you to complete.

MINNESOTA

Lead Children’s House Guide
Child Garden Montessori School
Child Garden, a private Montessori school in Minneapolis, is seeking an experienced Lead Guide for one of our Children’s House classrooms.

Lead Garden Montessori School
This full-time position requires a warm, friendly personality with exceptional organizational and leadership skills. The Lead Guide is responsible for maintaining the Montessori environment, challenging each child to reach his or her potential, and guiding their activities academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically. All work is performed incorporating the Montessori philosophy and method.

Key Responsibilities:

- Parent relations: schedule and complete biannual conferences; establish positive relationships with families; ongoing communication with parents via email, daily logs, bulletin boards, telephone, and quarterly newsletter; lead occasional Parent Education workshops
- Student activities: lead morning and afternoon work cycles; maintain prepared Montessori environment; plan, supervise and implement curriculum to meet the needs of the individual children; use observation as a diagnostic tool; oversee and perform food preparation
- Staff relations and development: serve as a positive and consistent leader for classroom staff and the organization; provide ongoing training to classroom team; supervise assistant job performance; complete performance evaluations as requested by Education Director; attend all staff meetings and in-service days
- Administration and operations: ensure safety and licensing requirements are met; maintain current, accurate academic records on students; document child behavior; complete required recordkeeping such as accident reports, separation reports, classroom inventory
- Work in partnership with the Education Director to ensure the organization’s objectives, requirements and standards are achieved
Position Requirements:
AMS or AMI Credential
Bachelor’s Degree from an accredited college
Experience working in a Montessori setting preferred
Excellent management and leadership skills
Strong communication, customer service and interpersonal skills, able to interact effectively with parents, staff and students
Effective organizational, time management and problem solving skills
Experience leading in a diverse and inclusive environment
Please send your resume, cover letter, transcripts and references to educationdirector@childgardenmontessori.com EOE.

NEW YORK

Battery Park Montessori is looking for 2018-19 Montessori Teachers
Battery Park Montessori in New York City is searching for:
Toddler Bilingual Teacher (Mandarin/English)
Early Childhood Bilingual Teacher (Spanish/English)
Early Childhood Bilingual Teacher (Mandarin/English)
Early Childhood Teacher
Early Childhood Assistant Teacher
We are a trilingual language school and require/prefer native Spanish or Mandarin fluency for most of our positions. These roles require at least 3 years of experience working with children ages 2-5. You must have completed a Bachelors degree, preferably in a related field. Masters degree is highly desired and Montessori training or experience a plus. Submit your application here: https://greenivyschools.gethired.com or email us directly careers@greenivy.com for more information. Visit our website http://www.batteryparkmontessori.com.

NORTH CAROLINA

Head of School for July 2019
Follow the Child Montessori School, located in the vibrant city of Raleigh, seeks a Head of School who is knowledgeable of and committed to the principles of Montessori education. Located in a new purpose-built campus featuring 10 Montessori classrooms and an Outdoor Learning Environment designed by North Carolina State University’s Natural Learning Initiative, talented faculty respect, support and empower highly motivated, inquisitive students who embrace personal and academic challenge and find joy in learning. An ethical culture where decisions are made in the best interest of children, FCM enjoys a robust enrollment and excellent financial health. E-mail: maryseppala@gmail.com

OREGON

Head of School and Infant Toddler Guide, Beaverton Oregon
Do you love inspiring and guiding teachers and parents? Westside Montessori International (WMI) is looking for a new Head of School who is an experienced teacher, mentor and director!
Ideal candidates. Have a passion for learning, belief in empowering child independence and are driven to inspire parents, teachers and their children. Should feel comfortable in planning and running daily operation of a multi-classroom school environment and supporting a staff of 15-20 adults.

Infant Toddler Guide: We are looking for someone with experience leading either a Nido or Toddler community of children. Are you passionate about working with children, continuing professional growth, and collaborating with colleagues and parents. Compensation is competitive and commensurate with education and experience. Professional development and in-house training provided.

http://www.wmioregon.com/
Contact Amanda Hyer, Interim Head of School, amanda.hyer@wmioregon.com or info@wmioregon.com.

SOUTH CAROLINA

AMI Lower Elementary
Come teach in historic Charleston, South Carolina. We are looking for a lower el. teacher to start in the 2018-19 school year. Charles Towne Montessori serves about 120 children from 15 months to 12 years old. Our Head of School has experience and AMI training for Primary and Elementary levels. To learn more see www.charlestownemontessori.org.

Upper Elementary Teacher
The Montessori School of Mauldin is seeking an AMI Upper Elementary (6-12) guide for the 2018-19 school year. Candidates should hold an AMI certification in Elementary with experience working in a Montessori classroom. The applicant must have a proven ability to work collaboratively and thoughtfully as part of a team; possess professional maturity, integrity and the ability to interact positively with parents; and demonstrate excellent written, oral and interpersonal communication skills. Established in 1977, the Montessori School of Mauldin is privately owned with 150 students ages infant to 6th grade. MMS is an academically and fiscally strong school that holds a clear Montessori vision for the future. We are located in Mauldin, South Carolina, a friendly suburb of beautiful Greenville, South Carolina. Greenville, South Carolina boasts a low cost of living and all the benefits of diverse city life. MMS has an extraordinarily supportive parent and staff body—with beautiful, spacious, fully stocked classrooms and an administration that stands behind its teachers. Our salaries are competitive; we offer benefits and tuition scholarships for teachers with school age children. Please submit a resume and cover letter to: Amanda Sisk: amanda.sisk@mauldinmontessori.com or 205 B East Butler Road, Mauldin, SC 29662.

WORKSHOPS

REFINING THE 3-6 PREPARED ENVIRONMENT
February 3, 2018
Molly O’Shaughnessy, AMI Trainer

TRAINING COURSES

PRIMARY TRAINING COURSE
Begin Fall 2018
Molly O’Shaughnessy, AMI Trainer

ELEMENTARY TRAINING COURSE
Begin Summer 2019
Alison Awes, AMI Trainer

For more INFORMATION or to ENROLL, please visit www.montessoricentermn.org or call 651.298.1120.
TEXAS

Primary certified teacher is needed in Austin, Texas area
A beautiful Montessori School in Austin, Texas area is looking for an experienced primary (3-6 years old) class lead teacher. Experiences are must and be able to work in US.
Email: rimy61@gmail.com

VIRGINIA

Toddler Guide
We are the oldest non-profit Montessori school in the Herndon community. We are going to start a toddler program and are looking to for an AMI trained guide with 2 to 3 years experience. E-mail: karen@mcsherdon.com

Upper Elementary Co-Teacher
Williamsburg Montessori School is accepting applications for an Upper Elementary Co-Lead teaching position. WMS’s Upper Elementary Program serves children ages 9 through 12 in our spacious classroom. Teaching duties require knowledge and implementation of Montessori theory and principles. Full description on www.williamsburgmontessori.org.

WASHINGTON

Trained Montessori Lead Co-Teacher
Lighthouse Montessori School seeks a trained Montessori Primary guide.
This is a co-teaching position partnered with another Montessori guide. The ideal candidate not only should have a passion for Montessori education, but also strongly support the emotional development of the child through Positive Discipline. This position could be for Summer 2018 or the 2018-19 school year, depending on the candidate. We offer competitive salary and benefits.
Lighthouse Montessori is a one classroom, 25 child, year-round, all-day school practicing the philosophies of Dr. Maria Montessori and Positive Discipline. But we are more than just a school: we are a small, tight knit community, with active and involved parents and a highly communicative and engaged staff. Lighthouse was founded in 2012 in the family-oriented neighborhood of Ballard, in Seattle, Washington. Our high-quality program is led by AMS and AMI trained guides.
Lighthouse offers a community of real support and collaboration. We believe that, just like children, adults work best when given the right combination of independence, trust, and coaching, and we are looking for a teacher eager to bring their full self to work each day.
Openings here are rare, so come join the Lighthouse family!
E-mail: cynthia@lighthousemontessori.com

WISCONSIN

Teaching Positions—All Levels
Montessori in Milwaukee Public Schools, Wisconsin, USA
Primary, Elementary and Dual Language (Spanish/English)
Primary Positions
Fall 2018
Join Us! Over 90 Montessori teachers and a vibrant training center in one of the largest Montessori communities anywhere!
Begun in 1976, we are one of the most established public Montessori programs in the nation. Montessori programs in MPS-Milwaukee Public Schools feature six district schools providing authentic Montessori programs to students in grades K3-12.
Candidates must hold AMI/AMS elementary certification from a MACTE licensed training center and must obtain a Wisconsin state teaching license within one year of employment. A program tailored for Montessori teachers is available.
For further information and to learn how to apply contact: Tim Duax, Montessori Liaison, duaxtc@milwaukee.k12.wi.us, Andrea Corona, Principal, sanfelax@milwaukee.k12.wi.us

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Elementary—lower and upper AMI guides
The Virgin Islands Montessori School is accepting resumes for an AMI lower elementary guide and an AMI trained upper elementary guide starting August 9, 2018. Established in 1964, our school is located on the beautiful Caribbean island of St. Thomas, USVI. Our facilities are spread over 10 tropical acres which include: two toddler, three primary, two lower elementary, two upper elementary, IB High School, After Care facility and numerous after school enrichment activities. We offer competitive salaries based on experience and education, professional development, mentorship, benefits and financial assistance with relocation.
If you are flexible, self-reliant, and passionate about parent education and desire to experience living and working in a culturally diverse environment please send resume to Norma Bolinger, Montessori Director, at nbolinger@vimsia.org.

Primary & Elementary at St. Croix Montessori
With a rich, cultural history, a supportive and diverse island community, and a strong vision for the future, St. Croix Montessori seeks certified Primary and Elementary instructors, and Elementary assistants who are excited to engage in a growing program and see our mission fulfilled.
A non-profit Montessori school, St. Croix Montessori is the only school on the island of St. Croix, USVI offering certified-Montessori instruction for the Primary years through Upper Elementary. In addition to our airy classrooms, we have an extensive natural playground,
classroom garden beds and composting, and partnerships with other community-programs. We offer competitive salaries based on experience and education as well as professional development, mentorship, benefits and financial assistance with relocation. Positions begin August 2018. Full posting available at: www.stcroixmontessori.com.

CAYMAN ISLANDS

Montessori Guides Needed for the 2018-2019 School Year
Located in the Cayman Islands, Montessori By The Sea is a growing community educating students 20 months-12 years.
We are recruiting Montessori Casa, Lower and Upper Elementary guides, with a BA, who support holistic development to provide an optimal educational environment, and are willing to give a long-term commitment to the school.
Send your resume to Kourtni Jackson at kourtni@mbts.ky

THAILAND

Opportunities
CMMS is a school 'in the tradition of AMI', located in the culture-rich, laid back heart of Northern Thailand. Purpose-built setting, 8,000m2 of tropical gardens, organic farm, children's workshop, community kitchen—a thriving learning environment, offering a safe and inspiring place for children to spend each day.
Opportunities for 2018-2020 include:
Early Childhood Guide
Elementary Guide
Requirements:
AMI Certificate
Bachelor Degree
Fluent English (non-native speakers must have 'IELTS' or similar)
We offer:
Competitive salary
Annual round-trip ticket
Health & Accident insurance
Flexible two/three year contract
Training and career development opportunities
Full logistical support
E-mail: aer@chiangmaimontessori.org

NOTICE
AMI Montessori for Aging and Dementia
This 2-day program on Montessori for Aging and Dementia is for care providers, educators, and families who want to learn how to improve the quality of elder care using the Montessori philosophy. Taught by AMI Educator, Jennifer Brush, MA, CCC/SLP. Find workshop schedule at www.brushdevelopment.com/events/.

A NAMTA Conference
April 20-22, 2018
At the Cleveland Museum of Natural History
1 Wade Oval Dr. Cleveland, OH 44016

Montessori History
Searching for Evolutionary Scientific Truth

David Kahn personally orchestrates a stellar lineup of celebrated Montessori trainers and lecturers who will discuss history, anthropology, Cosmic Education, the weave of history and ecology, the scientific roots of math, Montessori legacy, and more. Renowned contemporary scientists will present the full human influence on the Earth from evolutionary biology and technology to modern threats, such as climate change and nuclear war, and how the principles of sustainability, working for peace, human dignity, and democracy are conceived in a modern interpretation of Cosmic Education called Big History. This conference delivers compelling teaching materials spanning everything from contextualized historical thought to Montessori's psychological rendering of all disciplines through history's lens.
The Global Standard

Nienhuis Montessori is the leading manufacturer of Montessori materials worldwide. For over 85 years, we have produced materials that contribute to the responsible development of the child as a whole. Based on Dr. Montessori’s educational principles, our high quality products stimulate the child’s desire to learn. They promote independence, increase insight and facilitate critical thinking. Children can develop without pre-determined rules, but they do need individual guidance and supportive educational materials. We believe in personal growth and offer the necessary tools to promote this.

Find more online: heutink-usa.com