



Kingston House,
64 Patrick Street,
Dunlaoghaire,
Co.Dublin.

St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland

4  th Anniversary Edition

Spring 2010

Ph: 01 2805705

Email: info@montessorireland.ie

Website: www.montessorireland.ie

The History – Where It Began !!

Past > > > >

Ireland's first introduction to Maria Montessori's methods of education was in Waterford in 1920. The sighting of Ireland's first Casa Dei Bambini in Waterford was due to the interest and influence of the superior of the Mercy Convent, Mother de Sales Lowry. She achieved with very little financial support to establish a full Montessori programme in the junior section of St. Otteran's School, Philip Street, Waterford. Mother de Sales sent Mrs Eleanora Gibbon and Sr. Gertrude Allman of the convent of Mercy Waterford to the Montessori training course in London.

This was the only Montessori school founded under the Department of Education and was available free to the children in the local area. Sr.

Gertrude Allman directress was one of the first Montessori teachers to adapt the didactic material to the teaching of Irish, which was a compulsory subject under the Department of Education rules. The average class size was 110 children, ranging in age from four to seven years in a room named "An Rioghacht" measuring 55 feet x 22 feet.

1920 also marked the amalgamation of Montessori societies in England, Scotland and Ireland into one society with Dr Montessori as president. In the same year records state that a Montessori school was founded at the Friends School Newtown, Waterford. In 1925 another Montessori school opened in the Ursuline Convent, Waterford.

At their annual congress in 1924 the INTO discussed the Montessori system. Edward P. Culverwell, Professor of Education at Trinity College and Eleanora Gibbon were the main speakers. Miss K. Nettle of Waterford gave a demonstration of the Montessori didactic material. She emphasised that it was not the outcome of theorists but the result of twenty four years practical experimental work fixed in its present form by the children themselves. The Department of Education however did not see fit to make any innovation in early infant education in Irish primary schools at that period in the new states history.

W.B. Yeats as a Senator and a member of a government committee investigating the state of Irish Education paid an official visit to the Montessori school in June 1926. St Otteran's School was of interest to Yeats as it had a reputation for modern and enlightened teaching systems using as it did both the Montessori and Mason methods both placed emphasis on spontaneity and self expression. He was so impressed by the educational methods he observed on his visit and the balance that it struck between intellectual, practical, aesthetic and spiritual values. It was following this visit to St Otteran's School and his experience in the Montessori and senior classes that he wrote his poem "Among School Children".

On the 27th June 1927 Dr. Montessori came to Ireland for the first time. The first place she visited was St Otteran's School. Dr Montessori's ideas and principals had been in operation in the school since March 1920. Dr Montessori spent some time observing the children and their work and was delighted to see how her spirit had been interpreted by the Mercy Sisters. Dr. Montessori made a return visit to the school on 23rd June 1931, ten years after her first visit. She was accompanied by her son Mario. She expressed her appreciation of the work carried out in the school. She said "After ten years I see that the works which remain with you are still alive and can never turn back. I carry with me the comfort of this visit." Sr. Redemptoris Cummins now in her 96th year was a senior student and part of the welcoming party at the school for both visits. She has fond memories of these visits.

St Otteran's School was demolished in December 1961. Sr. Gertrude continued her Montessori teaching in the new school premises until her retirement in 1970. Sr. Margaret Darcy her assistant continued the Montessori method for some years. When she was appointed as principal of the Holy Faith Family Junior School she and her staff gradually changed from the Montessori method to the recognised Department of Education Curriculum for Primary Schools.

Extract From *Waterford's Mercy Schools 1900 to 2000: A Centenary Record* Published with the permission of Sr. Rita Fennell, Mercy Convent Waterford



Dr. Montessori & Mario Montessori
Visit to Waterford 23rd June 1931



Montessori School Waterford 1925

Among School Children

*I walk through the long schoolroom questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and histories,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way - the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man.
W.B Yeats*

Past > > > > > > > > > > >

40 Years a Growing St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland

Fiche bliain ag fás agus fiche bliain faoi bhláth.

The seed for the formation of the St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland was sown at the Vacation Course held at the St. Nicholas Montessori Centre, Princess Gate, London at Easter 1969. Three members of the Irish Preschool Playgroups Association Patricia Collins, Anne Geary and Sighle Fitzgerald who had been studying for a period of three years through the Distance Learning Method were attending a series of lectures and demonstrations prior to taking the examination which would qualify them as Montessori teachers. Fuelled by the enthusiasm of the lecturers and aware of the need for such a training course in Ireland, the Co-Principals, Margaret Homfray and Phoebe Child were approached regarding the possibility of forming a branch of the St. Nicholas Montessori Centre in Ireland. They agreed and suggested a way forward.



An Introductory Vacation Course was held at Easter 1970 in An Grianán Adult Education College, Termonfeikin Co. Louth under the auspices of the IPPA. Margaret Homfray led the course. The desire to develop training courses in Ireland became stronger. Finance was needed to realise this dream.

On May 10th 1970 the first committee, St. Nicholas Society of Ireland was selected at a gathering of some students who had attended the course at An Grianan in order to progress the work envisaged. Each placed five pounds on the table as seed money to realise this objective. The committee was chaired by Tony Fitzgerald and the members included Patricia Collins, Una Convery, Connie Fahey, Sighle Fitzgerald, Anne Geary, Kay McDermott and Sean McDermott. Jack Fitzgerald was appointed Honorary Auditor

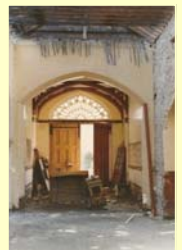
In June 1970, at an Open Day held at the St. Nicholas Centre London to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Maria Montessori, Dr. White, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, London gave permission to the St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland to be affiliated to the St. Nicholas Centre London. This meeting was attended by Connie Fahey, Sighle Fitzgerald, Jack Fitzgerald and Tony Fitzgerald. The next 10 years were busy and fruitful with everybody working hard to achieve the goal. Vacation Courses arranged by the members of the St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland were held at An Grianán each year from 1971-1976.

By now branches of the St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland were formed in Limerick, Cork and Galway where Vacation Courses were held on alternate years to cater for the students studying with the St. Nicholas Montessori Centre in London. The workload of the Society was growing and growing servicing these courses.



In September 1971 the first Evening Diploma Course was held. This was a very exciting development as it meant that students could attend courses in Dublin and take the examination at the end of the year in Ireland instead of having to travel to London. Lecturers from London visited three times a year at the start of each module and a group of lecturers from Ireland Patricia Collins, Sighle Fitzgerald and Anne Geary were appointed by the Centre London to continue the programme through the year. This was a very successful development but the goal was not yet realised. It was evident that a premises was needed where Evening Diploma Courses could be held and a model Montessori School could be founded.

The work of the Fund Raising Sub-Committee of the St. Nicholas Montessori Society was ongoing throughout the formation years. The main source of income was the St. Nicholas Montessori Annual Auction which was a most enjoyable and productive social activity. Eventually a reasonable amount of funds was accumulated. However, in order to have sufficient funds to purchase a suitable premises it was necessary to have a legal instrument in order to approach Financial Institutions. Hence in 1978 a Trust was formed in the name of St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland Limited by guarantee. The freehold premises at 16 Adelaide Street, Dunlaoghaire, Co. Dublin was purchased at auction in September 1979. It was necessary to reinstate, to a great degree, this historical building to accommodate the activities of the Montessori School and Training Centre envisaged.



In January 1980 Sighle Fitzgerald was appointed Director of Operations of the courses and Principal of the Montessori School which opened in September 1980 with eighteen children. Peggy McClatchie was appointed as the first teacher. The official opening was held on the Feast of St. Nicholas, December 6th 1980 and performed by Mrs. Waugh Cathlaoirleach, Borough of Dún Laoghaire in the presence of many local and visiting dignitaries representing Government, Colleges of Education, Church representatives and members of the St. Nicholas Montessori Ireland and St. Nicholas Montessori London Boards of Trustees.

Jack Fitzgerald was the Honorary Auditor St. Nicholas Montessori of Society.

In September 1981 a Part-time Evening Diploma course which had been held previously at various educational locations including Mount Anville Montessori School and Carysfort Teacher Training College was transferred to St. Nicholas House. In September 1984, the first Full Time Day Course was held with an intake of thirty students, with Sighle Fitzgerald, Connie Fahey and Mary Bowers as lecturers assisted by Peggy McClatchie, Paula Glasgow, Kathleen Turley and Peggy McMullen. During this time Una Cullen and Christine Nolan managed the office with great success. In 1986, the St. Nicholas Montessori had reached its full capacity with 125 students. Moya Healy and Noreen Tierney joined the teaching staff.



In 1989, Jack and Sighle Fitzgerald retired from the St. Nicholas Montessori Society Ireland to take up positions in Bermuda and Toronto Montessori Institute. The St. Nicholas Montessori Society, School and College continued to thrive under the guidance of Paula Glasgow as Head of College and Peggy McClatchie as Principal of School.

In September 1993 Mrs. Paula Glasgow tendered her resignation in order to take up a position in November at Toronto Montessori Institute. Mrs. Bernadette Burns, as Chairman of the Board, took responsibility for the College for the remainder of the academic year. At this time an invitation was extended to the College to apply for the designated College status from National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA). The Board led by
Continued on Page 7

Past >> > > > > > > > > > > >

The Vision.....

‘They weren’t mad of course. Along with a small group of individuals who, forty years ago this year, contributed five pounds each to set up the society, they had a vision for Montessori education in Ireland’.

St. Nicholas House

When Sighle and Jack Fitzgerald stood in the ruins of the hall of St Nicholas House, they could see the sky through the rafters. It was the late 70’s and they had just bought the building on behalf of the St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland. The architect who was with them said that either they could see something that he couldn’t see or they were mad.



They weren’t mad of course. Along with a small group of individuals who, forty years ago this year, contributed five pounds each to set up the society, they had a vision for Montessori education in Ireland. That vision, combined with dedication and hard work, resulted in the first evening courses for Montessori teachers in Ireland, St Nicholas Montessori School, which began in St Nicholas House in 1980, our fulltime course which commenced in 1984, and a vibrant Teachers’ Association which throughout its long history has been staffed almost entirely by volunteers.

So much has changed since then, but the vision remains, and remains strong. It is a vision that is shared by many, and all who share that vision bring their own perspectives and their own thinking. We enrich that vision when we talk to each other, at in-service meetings, at Teachers’ Association workshops, in staff rooms and in classrooms. At its core is the belief in the child and in the child’s potential. Our technique as Montessori teachers is based on two important insights: firstly, prepare an environment in which the child can be free to educate him/herself; secondly, observe the spontaneous activity of the child. Of course there are many other insights as well, but the one that fascinates me most is the second of these. Sometimes, I think, we forget how important it is just to observe, and to hold back from making judgements.

I have been reading an American book, *A Child’s Work; the Importance of Fantasy Play* by Vivian Gussin Paley. The title alone might bring on an attack of ambivalence in a Montessorian, combining as it does, the notion of work and fantasy play, but what interests me about the book, and the notion of fantasy play, is that the fantasy play of children is spontaneous activity, and we can learn from it. Paley is a kindergarten teacher, and the environments she observed and taught in would be quite different from Montessori schools but she makes interesting points: When children initiate fantasy or “pretend” play, we can learn by observing them and not interfering, but they are learning too, or they may be articulating needs which they can’t consciously communicate. A personal example comes to mind: Darragh, aged about two, was put to bed by his mother as usual one night, but during the night, his mother was taken to hospital with appendicitis. He awoke to everything changed: his mother gone, all his plans for the day changed, and his father minding him. While I was in the kitchen, he emptied out all of his toy boxes on the living room floor. It was quite a small room anyway but when I stood in the doorway, I couldn’t even enter the room without stepping on something. It was only much later that I realised that this was his response to his world being turned upside down. Paley says that the pressure to get children into formal learning earlier and earlier is increasing and because something has to give, children’s free play time is being reduced. In this context, she makes an interesting link with television: Although we feared the influence of television, we were cutting down on the one activity that counteracts the mindlessness of cartoons. We blamed television for making children restless and distracted, then substituted an academic solution that compounded restlessness and fatigue. The children may have been the only ones capable of making sense of the confusion, and they did so whenever the schedule was cleared so they could play. (PALEY, 2004, p.46) Having read this book, I’m not suggesting that we should all become play leaders, or that we should turn our backs on any part of Montessori theory. What I am saying is that we need to continue preparing our environments, continue to observe the spontaneous activity of the child, and continue to restrain our impulse to jump in and correct or fix what the child has done. We need to reflect on what we observe and we need to communicate our reflections to each other, and to the wider educational establishment. In this way, the Montessori vision, and the seed that Sighle and her friends planted forty years ago, will continue to bear extraordinary fruit long into the future.

Reference: PALEY, V.G. (2004) *A Child’s Work; the Importance of Fantasy Play*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

Michael O’Connor Lecturer St. Nicholas Montessori College

St Nicholas Montessori School Reflection











The teachers and pupils of St Nicholas Montessori School offer their warm congratulations to the St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland on their 40th Anniversary. To celebrate its 25th Anniversary the History of the Society was compiled by Peggy McClatchie who had the first class in the school and who retired as Principal in June 1997. In her retirement Peggy was a regular visitor to St. Nicholas House. Her sudden death on April 4th, 2007 was a shock to us all. In September 1997 Moya Healy, who was a teacher in the school for many years, took over as Principal. Moya retired from this position in June 2008. She is enjoying an active retirement and is in regular touch with the School and Society. Kay Turley, who joined Peggy McClatchie in 1981 retired after a long period of ill health and passed away on November 15th, 1998.

St Nicholas Montessori School, as a member of the Association of Independent Junior Schools submitted documentation to the National Educational Welfare Board, who monitor registration of children, resulted in the School being accredited in May 2005. St Nicholas Montessori School celebrated its 25th Anniversary in September 2005. Many events were organised for this anniversary which included an afternoon when a large number of past pupils returned to the school. In the past two years three of the classrooms in the School have been extensively refurbished and re-equipped.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of the many Montessori teachers and assistant teachers to the success of St. Nicholas Montessori School since 1980. The teachers, parents and pupils are eagerly looking forward to participating in the Society’s Anniversary celebrations in April.

Noreen Tierney St. Nicholas Montessori School Principal

Timeline of Chairpersons 1970-2010

								
Tony Fitzgerald	Pat Collins	Peggy Mc Clatchie	Sighle Fitzgerald	Connie Fahy	Bernadette Burns	Paula Glasgow	Jackie Wallace Holmes	Noreen Tierney
1970	1972	1974	1976	1978	1981	1983	1986	1988

Concept of Time

The concept of time can be conveyed to the young child through series of activities. The Time Line of Child's Life, Child's Birthday Walk and Teaching The Time can be introduced to the child in preparation for the study of History.

									
1 year old	2 years old	3 years old	4 years old	5 years old					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;"> </td> <td style="width: 20%;"> </td> <td style="width: 20%;"> </td> <td style="width: 20%;"> </td> <td style="width: 20%;"> </td> </tr> </table>									
Rachel 2001	2002	2003	2004	2005					

Key: One Square = 1 Month

Time Line of Child's Life

Materials: 2cm/1 inch squared paper

Child's photographs of himself from birth -one for each year. (Get exact dates from parents)

Activity: Important the child does this activity himself.

- Measure off the paper for each year- twelve squares per year
- Place photographs on the squares at appropriate intervals. e.g. A child's photograph dated 1year 3 months goes along the line at 15th square.

Illustration: As Rachel's above

The Birthday Walk

Materials: The sandpaper or coloured globe, an ellipse drawn on the floor. Get details of some of the milestones in child's life from parents e.g. when sat up, first tooth etc.

Presentation: Invite the children to sit outside the ellipse and explain it is birthday boy's (name) special day. Place candle in the centre of the ellipse, light and explain that this represents the sun, the centre of our universe. Tell the children that the Earth orbits the sun and this takes a whole year. Invite the birthday boy (name) to hold the globe and stand on the ellipse. Explain the birthday boy (name) is waiting to be born. Invite birthday boy (name) to begin walking slowly on the ellipse carrying the globe. Recount the details of his life to one year to coincide with the child arriving back to the starting point. Explain that this is his first birthday and the Earth has taken one whole year to orbit the sun. Continue in this way for each year noting the child's birthday each time he reaches the starting point and repeating the Earth has taken one whole year to orbit the sun. So birthday boy (name) on his fourth birthday has orbited the sun four times. Birthday boy (name) may then be invited to blow out the birthday candle.

Illustration: As Jake's below





Jake's Birthday Walk



Drumcondra Montessori School

> > > > > > > > > > Present

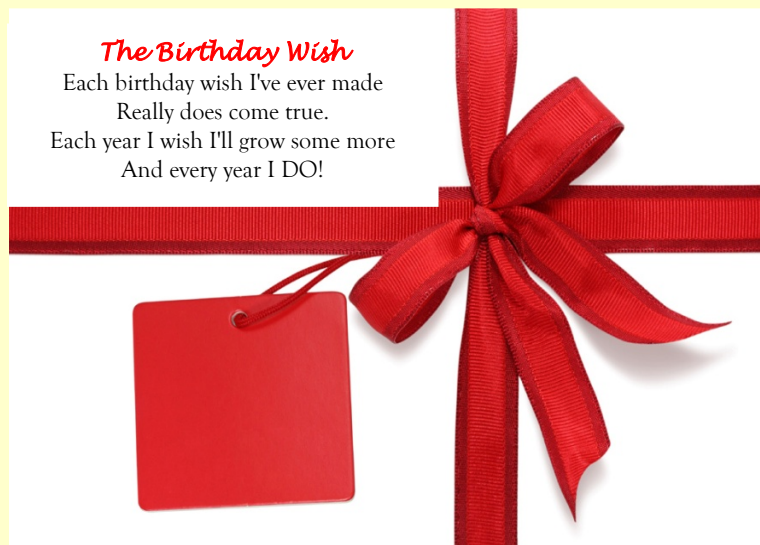
								Future
Mina Walsh	Christine Martin	Aileen O'Brien	Niamh Wallace	Deirdre Sheridan	Carol Ann O'Siorain	Tracy Costello	Katherine Dunn	
1991	1995	1997	1997	2001	2003	2004	Present	

	6 years old		7 years old		8 years old		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2006		2007		2008		2009	

Birthday Poems

The Birthday Wish

Each birthday wish I've ever made
Really does come true.
Each year I wish I'll grow some more
And every year I DO!



The Birthday Cake

Today is my birthday.
I think I'll make a cake.
Mix and stir, stir and mix,
Then into the oven to bake.

Here's the cake so nice and round,
I'll put icing on so white.
I'll put on all the candles
To make my birthday bright!

The Faces of the Clock

The Big Hand is busy
But the Small Hand has power.
The large one counts the minutes.
But the Little One names the hour.
When both Hands stand at the top together,
It's sure to be Twelve O'clock. But whether
That's twelve at noon or twelve at night
Depends on if it's dark or light.



Teaching the Time

Materials: Clock with movable hands and movable numerals 1 to 12
You can make a teaching clock using circle and make numerals detachable using Velcro, Laminate for durability.
Child can make his own clock in this way also.
Presentation 1 Teach name of hands Using Three period lesson.
Presentation 2 Teach o'clock
Presentation 3 the half hour
Presentation 4 quarter to
Progress in this way to teaching all the

Our Erasmus Experience

Elaine Fahey and Lynda Dolan were selected to be the first ever student from Saint Nicholas Montessori College to go on Erasmus. The following is an account of their time away.

Erasmus is a term often heard but not understood, Erasmus stands for "European Region action scheme for the mobility of University students". The aim is to achieve the movement of 3 million students and teachers by 2012. Erasmus is part of the European Union's life time learning. We went to Rotterdam for three months on Erasmus. Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands (Holland), with over half a million inhabitants. Rotterdam is a multi cultural city and the second largest port in the world. During our time in the Netherlands we became fully immersed in their culture. Dutch is the National language of the Netherlands and we had a few lessons each week to help us develop conversational Dutch, however this was rarely needed as the Dutch have impeccable English.

Multi-cultural school

There are many stereo types about the Dutch and most of these we found to be true. The first being that everyone cycles, as soon as we came out of the train station in Delft (a gorgeous town outside of Rotterdam) we were almost blinded by the glistening sun off the rows of thousands of bikes. We soon joined this trend and bought ourselves bikes in a second hand bike shop. We soon began cycling everywhere, to college, to the supermarket and even on nights out! Another stereo type about the Dutch is that they are all really tall, this is most certainly TRUE. The benefits of our Erasmus experience will stay with us for life; we learned an incredible amount about the Dutch culture and in doing so, discovered so much about ourselves. We gained independence and most importantly we now understand the importance of punctuality as in Netherlands being 10 minutes late is highly disrespectful. We were in college 3 days a week in the PABO, from 8.30am to 17.30pm. We were in an international class where we made friends for life with girls from France, Spain, Portugal, Greece and the Basque country .



in-

The other two days of the week we were on work experience in a whole range of schools. We had the opportunity to visit a number of different special schools, multicultural schools, national schools, Montessori schools and Early Bird Schools.

Early Bird 2009 Class

Early Bird schools offer extracurricular activities in inner city schools where the children do not have much exposure to English outside the classroom. Once a week we took a group of Dutch children of 6 and 7 years, we introduced them to English in a fun way: Sang songs, played games, told stories etc.



Along with our visits to schools we also had the chance to explore the Netherlands. We were invited to a conference in Amsterdam called "Teacher in Europe". We worked in groups of 4-5 with other teachers in training to develop an international project. This was a hand on experience developing a project plan, organising financing, getting a grant etc. During our three months away we made friends for life, travelled, learned Dutch, learned about the Dutch Education system and gained vital skills as future teachers. This was a once in a life-time opportunity and one that we are truly grateful to have experienced.

Elaine Fahey & Lynda Dolan



St. Nicholas Montessori College – The Journey !!

Looking over the past 15 years since the 25th Anniversary of the Society/Teachers' Association which started with Síghle Fitzgerald and some like minded friends who had a burning desire to deliver Montessori Teacher Education programmes for prospective teachers who in the early days were unable to attend the College full time continues to be work in progress.

The result to date, is a thriving Montessori school with four classes, two (3 - 6yrs), one (6 - 9 yrs) and one (9 - 12 yrs) classes under the direction of Mrs. Noreen Tierney which is an perpetual best practice in Montessori Education and an excellent resource for students who are able to observe the integration of theory and practice.

The College also continues to develop with 3rd level education status delivering Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) validated and accredited programmes for National Awards at Levels 7 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin and in Cork, Galway and Limerick.

Looking back at the 15 years since the 25th Anniversary of the Society/Teachers' Association I would particularly like to pay tribute to Kay Turley, Bride Gahan and Peggy McClatchie, sadly not still with us, who each showed a love of learning, a unique manner for sharing skills and ideas, and a warmth and openness to all (adults and children) which epitomised the many attributes and very essence of the Montessori teacher. We all share happy memories of each of them.

Bernadette Burns, a tireless advocate of Montessori education with exceptional commitment and vision, former Board Member and Chairman of the Board of St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland Limited and latterly Director of the College until her retirement in 2003. She continues to share her expertise with current students as she travels the country supervising teaching practice. Moya Healy, Principal of the school until her retirement in 2008 worked closely with the College to ensure that the best practice in Montessori Education was always visible for our student teachers.

The Board of Trustees led by Chairman, Myles Kelleher give freely of their time and I would like to thank each of them for their ongoing support as we endeavour to ensure that the Montessori Teacher Education programmes delivered at this College prepare our graduates for the changing face of teaching as a career in the 21st Century.

The many teachers, lecturers and members of the administrative staff previously and currently employed by St. Nicholas Montessori Society Ireland over the past 40 years have each in their own way contributed to where we are today. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge everyone's input and commitment as we head for the big "50".

June Hosford- Director St. Nicholas Montessori College

Looking to the Future



th 40 Anniversary Conference Keynote Speakers Friday 23rd & Saturday 24th April 2010



Trevor Eissler

Trevor Eissler, father of three Montessori students, is a business jet pilot and flight instructor. Over the last fifteen years, he has taught hundreds of pilots, from beginners to professional pilots. He is an author, a juggler, a unicyclist, a Toastmaster, a pianist, a triathlete, and a husband. He wants to be a Montessori student when he grows up. If you are the parent of a young child, this book is a must-read!

Montessori Madness!

A Parent to Parent Argument for Montessori Education

We know we need to improve our traditional school system, both public and private. But how? More homework? Better-qualified teachers? Longer school days or school years? More testing? More funding? No, no, no, no, and no. *Montessori Madness!* explains why the incremental steps politicians and administrators continue to propose are incremental steps in the wrong direction. The entire system must be turned on its head. This book asks parents to take a look—one thirty-minute observation—at a Montessori school. Your picture of what education should look like will never be the same. *Montessori Madness!* follows one family with young children on their journey of determination, discovery, and delight. Learn the who, what, when, where, why, and how of Montessori education.



Angeline Stoll Lillard Montessori The Science Behind The Genius



Angeline Stoll Lillard was a Montessori child, took Montessori training, and then became a Montessori parent. An interest in child development research led her to a doctorate in Psychology from Stanford University in 1991, after which she became established as one of the leading developmental psychologists of her generation, receiving the American Psychological Association's Boyd Mc Candless Award in 1999. She is currently a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia. Recently she returned to the issue of how scientific research bears on Montessori principles, and *Montessori: The Science behind the Genius* is the result. Impeccably researched and highly readable, her book is a must-read for all parents interested in considering educational alternatives for their child.



research bears on Montessori principles, and *Montessori: The Science behind the Genius* is the result. Impeccably researched and highly readable, her book is a must-read for all parents interested in considering educational alternatives for their child.

Continued from page 2

Mrs. Bernadette Burns willingly undertook the responsibility for the submission of this application which was submitted in December 1993. An NCEA on site visit took place thereafter. The College was approved as an NCEA Designated College in 1994. Bernadette Burns was appointed Chairman of the Board of St. Nicholas Montessori College in 1997. The Diploma Course was upgraded to Degree status. This is a great recognition of all the hard work by all involved.

In 2003 June Hosford replaced Bernadette Burns as Director of College and Aileen O'Brien was appointed Assistant Head of College. In 2003, Peggy McClatchie retired as Principal of St. Nicholas Montessori School, Moya Healy was appointed to that position. In 2008, Moya Healy retired and Noreen Tierney was appointed to the position of Principal of School.

The St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland together with the St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland Limited, the Trust, worked in tandem to realise the goals. The St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland was responsible for all the organisations on a day to day basis in the running of the various courses as well as supporting the members throughout Ireland who were studying to become Montessori teachers. The Trust, the legal body who guided the business of the organisation dealing with the financial institutions and the ongoing developments of the restoration of the building to connect the constant need to house the rapid growth of applicants for the School and College. As numbers in the College expanded it became necessary to create more space and the second and third floors of Block C, Century Court Dunlaoghaire, were acquired.

The team of Montessori teachers under the Principal, Noreen Tierney continued to educate and develop the children through the Montessori philosophy of education. The College, under the leadership of the Director, June Hosford and Aileen O'Brien and a dedicated group of senior lecturers continue to offer Training Courses of the highest educational calibre. The Trust continues to guide the financial and business organisation under the guidance of Myles Kelleher. The Society under the Chairmanship of Katherine Dunn continue the great voluntary work with enthusiasm and dedication. Congratulations to all who have developed a tiny acorn into a great oak tree!

Happy 40th Anniversary to each one.

Sighle Fitzgerald President St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland



History of Peace Day—Playmates Montessori Preschool, Drogheda

On Monday, 21 September 2009 world peace day, Montessori schools from around the world joined together in celebration for world peace day to sing "Light A Candle For Peace." This children's song about peace was sung continuously around the world for the entire day. The singing started in New Zealand and finished in the Hawaiian Islands. Playmates Montessori school signed up for "Peace Day light a candle for peace marathon sing-a-long around the world". It meant the Montessori world came together to celebrate peace and Playmates was a part of this.

Looking to the Future > > > > > > >

The Executive Committee of St Nicholas Montessori Teachers Association is delighted to be involved in the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland. The Society's aim is to promote the Montessori Method of Education in Ireland, and from the beginning, the Executive Committee have organized workshops and lectures to support Montessori teachers around the country. The Executive Committee and the NCIP team continue to provide workshops, network meetings and school visits. The first newsletter was produced by the Executive Committee in 1981 and has kept members informed of new developments and changes in Montessori Education over the years.

This year sees the retirement of Mrs Sighle Fitzgerald as Honorary President of St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland. The Executive Committee wishes to thank Mrs Fitzgerald for her enormous contribution to SNMSI and to the advancement of the Montessori Method of Education in Ireland and around the world. We now welcome Mrs Bernadette Burns as Honorary President of St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Executive Committees down through the years, led by the chairpersons as seen in the timeline, for their dedication and support for Montessori Education in Ireland.

Katherine Dunn Chairperson St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland

Programme of Events 2010

5th May	Network Meeting Portlaoise
10th May	Network Meeting Mayo
11th May	Members Meeting Dublin
17th May	Network Meeting Kildare
24th May	Network Meeting Limerick
25th May	Members Meeting Dublin

8th September	Network Meeting Portlaoise
18th September	Drama Workshop Portlaoise

4th October	Network Meeting Kildare
5th October	Members Meeting Dublin
11th October	Network Meeting Limerick
19th October	Members Meeting Dublin

6th November	Science Workshop Dublin
20th November	Geography Workshop Portlaoise

3rd December	St. Nicholas Night Dublin
--------------	---------------------------

National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) - Be prepared

The National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) was established on a statutory basis in 2008. NERA aims to secure compliance with employment rights legislation and to foster a culture of compliance in Ireland. NERA is an Office of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Suggested websites are: NERA www.employmentrights.ie and Dept of Enterprise and Employment www.entemp.ie. These sites are worth checking out to ensure you as an employer are fully compliant with all employment legislation. Some areas you should look out for are: Staff contracts, Employee holiday & break entitlements, Minimum wage, Employment terms, Records to be available at inspection. Local County Childcare Committee may be holding workshop.

Siolta - The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education

Author: Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) 2006

Siolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education was developed by the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) on behalf of the Department of Education and Science. The Framework was published in 2006 following a three-year developmental process, which involved consultation with more than 50 diverse organisations, representing childcare workers, teachers, parents, policy makers, researchers and other interested parties. Siolta provides a common set of quality standards across a diverse range of settings for children aged from birth to six years. Information on Siolta can be found at www.siolta.ie.

Aistear - The Framework for Early Learning

Author - National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) 2009

Aistear is the new curriculum framework for all children from birth to six years across the range of early childhood settings in Ireland. It provides information, ideas and suggestions to help you support children's learning and development in these early years.

Aistear has four elements

- *Principles and Themes* describes children's learning and development
- *Guidelines for Good Practice* focuses on partnerships with parents, interactions, play and assessment
- *User Guide* gives practical information about using the Framework
- *Key Messages* summarises important points from research used in developing Aistear.

Aistear was developed in partnership with the early childhood sector and supports many other developments including *Siolta, The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* (2006), the *Child Care (Pre-School) Regulations* (2006) and the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999).

Download copy of Aistear on www.ncca.ie/Early Childhood Education

Aistear links with Siolta

Siolta

Self-reflection tool to review and develop your early years practice.

Supports the improvement of quality in all aspects of early childhood practice.

Aistear

Focuses specifically on children's early learning and development.

Helps develop and improve a number of the standards in *Siolta* such as curriculum, environments, identity and belonging, partnership with parents, interactions and play.

Mina Walsh St. Nicholas Montessori Society NCIP Team Leader