Exciting moments !!

PAMBE Ghana Global Market is open for Fall/Winter, 2016

Dates to remember:

*Market Days and Hours in December.

Hours: Tuesdays – Saturdays, 12:00-6:00 p.m.

Thursdays, 12-7 pm

Location: PAMBE Ghana Global Market, 6516 N. Olie in Oklahoma City

Welcome, friends, to the beginning of Global Market’s ninth season. Most notably, the first class of students, who began as pre-K children in 2008, graduated this year. Funds have been raised to help each of the graduates continue their educations at the district junior high school. Amazingly, there have been no dropouts. Money earned from Market sales has greatly contributed to the success of the school.

Save the Date!

American Montessori Society 2017 Annual Conference

March 9 – 12, Town & Country Resort
San Diego, CA

Join us for the Montessori Beyond Borders conference this coming spring. There will be an inspiring range of topics to discuss, such as Montessori’s new pedagogical and methodological alliances, to the ways the Montessori method bridges public and private schools. Come be invigorated by the global Montessori community that upholds Maria Montessori’s mission of peace. Together, we will explore the possibilities of Montessori education.
Experiments with Woodworking in Practical Life (Continued)

Dr. Marc Jensen
Westminster school Montessori Kindergarten Teacher

The introduction of Wood Clamping, Sanding, Wood Gluing, Sawing and Auguring

Wood Clamping – Practicing with C-clamps and vice grips is a good way to introduce the woodworking station at the beginning of the year. Clamping down wood will be an essential element of safety in working with all cutting tools later. This simple C-clamp activity pictured below includes a board, two clamps, and two control dots for clamp placement. The child practices clamping the board to the edge of a table so that it will not move. This pictured version has spaces to store the clamps recessed into the board, but one could make this more simply by just placing them on a tray with a board for clamping.

Wood Gluing – The child selects pieces of sanded wood, glues them together by painting on wood glue, and sets them in a safe place to dry overnight. Other operations can later be performed on the dried piece, such as painting it, gluing more pieces on, or more sanding. Because this work has to dry overnight, it also engages children in a longer work sequence and planning. Wood glue is best applied using a jar and watercolor brush. Every night, leave the brush soaking in water to keep the glue from solidifying. Initially, wood sculptures are created without any cutting or drilling of the pieces.

Sanding – Sanding with a folded quarter sheet of sandpaper is a great first woodworking activity. The lesson for this work introduces the protocols for the woodworking station (safety glasses). Children wipe their sanded wood with a damp sponge to remove most of the sawdust and put it in a basket for later use. As a sensorial point of interest, wiping sanded wood with a damp sponge also makes the colors of the grain instantly pop out. Dust is then swept up with a crumb brush. I like to initially place the trashcan at the opposite end of the room, obliging the child to carefully walk with the dustpan until someone suggests moving it nearer.

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Experiments with Woodworking in Practical Life (Continued)

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Sawing – The first introduction to the hand saw involves the child clamping a thin dowel rod or stick in the vice grip, marking a place to cut, and then cutting sections off of it with a hand saw. For safety, the child should always place two hands on the saw handle and let the clamp hold the wood. Later, children can use the saw to cut wood from the scrap basket for sculptures or other projects.

Auguring – The last tool introduced here is the hand auger to bore holes in wood. As a first step, the child can simply clamp wood in the vice grip and practice boring holes in it. Many later projects can be created using an augur and saw (button making, bead making, pencil holders, model cars, etc...).

As a first introduction to engineering for children, working with wood applies mathematical problem solving, motor coordination, and artistic expression in equal proportions. Woodworking is one of my lifelong passions, and I find that building with wood takes the same kind of clarity of thought and control that I apply in any other creative area (writing, cooking, music, etc.). It is delightful to watch the children discover their capacity to create in this medium.

Further Reading

Matthew Crawford’s 2006 article from the New Atlantis “Shop Class as Soulcraft” explores the importance of manual capabilities beyond the classroom and into life, focusing particularly on the decline of “shop class” as US educational culture has increasingly focused on technology: http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/shop-class-as-soulcraft

Ken Robinson’s 2015 Time article “Why Schools Need to Bring Back Shop Class” focuses on the problems associated with considering manual skills training as secondary in importance to academic learning through high school http://time.com/3849501/why-schools-need-to-bring-back-shop-class/

Tara Brown’s 2012 Forbes article “The Death of Shop Class and America’s Skilled Workforce” looks at the importance of DIY skills in self-identity and their elimination from the curriculum because they do not track toward college readiness. http://www.forbes.com/sites/tarabrown/2012/05/30/the-death-of-shop-class-and-americas-high-skilled-workforce/
A Turn in the Road

Kristen Salter
Oklahoma City University Montessori Graduate Student

The smell of pumpkin pie and fireplaces lofts through the crisp clear air, and I can feel the children stir with the special energy and excitement that the welcome chill of autumn can bring. The first month of school has come and gone and the leaves are beginning to fall. Though this seasonal excitement is familiar, it is altogether different for me this year. This year my excitement is colored with a new kind of apprehension.

I am excited to be learning something new, traveling down a new and unfamiliar path into early childhood education and the Montessori Method. I enter school some mornings, half-rested and wondering to myself – Am I right for this? Will I do justice by the children I will one day teach? How could I? They have so many needs and I'm just learning! Who am I to attempt to fulfill any one of those needs?

I am just getting to know the children at my intern site, and I love being with them. They keep me in touch with the best aspects of being human. They provide encouragement for me to do what I can to try to make things better in our world for them, and for all of us. And, of course, they don’t expect that from me. They expect me to be there and show them the next step when they aren’t sure, to laugh at a silly face, to help them with a problem, or to talk to them about something that is on their mind. I hope to help them dream, inquire, question, create ideas, to yearn to find understanding in all they desire and need to understand, and most importantly to press on and never give up when something become difficult. At this point, I can help them sharpen their pencil.

Can I do any of these things? A bit of it? I don’t know. But I will certainly try. For it is in the faces of these kids that I see the value of my learning to do something new, something I’m unsure about. Even though I may never live up to what I would hope to offer these children, the potential for any positive contribution towards their futures, even in some small way, is absolutely worth my effort to learn to be a Montessori early childhood educator. Plus, I love adventures. Have you ever felt doubt about something and done it anyway? What was that like for you?
Lost in Translation (Part One)

By Kathy Carey
Adjunct Faculty, Oklahoma City University, Co-Editor Montessori Life

Montessori teachers and teacher educators are familiar with the command to “follow the child” although few may know where in her writing she says to do this. The 1967/1995 translations of The Absorbent Mind (Henry Holt and Company) refer to the concept indirectly in Chapter 15, “Development and Imitation.” Here she discusses the value of imitation on the part of the child but identifies a roadblock, “…before the child can imitate, he must be prepared for doing so, and this preparation derives from the efforts he has been making. The example set by adults only provides the aim, or motive, for imitation. It does not produce a successful result.” (p.159) She points out that the artist, in this case a pianist, must do much more than imitate his teacher to become a skillful musician. Then on page 162 she says, “The child has his own laws of development, and if we want to help him to grow, it is a question of following these, not of imposing ourselves upon him.” (p. 162) So, close to the venerable charge “to follow the child” but not quite.

Now let us switch to the 1949 translation by The Theosophical Publishing House, also Chapter 15. Here in the section “Walking and Exploring” (p.231) she states that “walking means for a child” something quite different from the adult perspective. We walk to get somewhere but the child simply wants to walk, deriving great joy from the use of his limbs. I recall the years my children and I lived a rather long block away from a well-maintained park. My idea was that we (a 2 year old and 4 year old) would go to the park using our red wagon to get there. But my children wanted to walk while I pulled the wagon. On the way every crack in the road, each storm sewer, every pile of leaves or abundance of pecans had to be explored and each extension of curb used as a balance beam. I was goal oriented—“get to the park!” while they were caught up in the journey.

This is what Montessori says in the 1949 translation: “The child does not want to ‘get there’, he wants to walk, but his legs are disproportionate to the size of his own body... so we must not make the child follow us, we must follow the child. The need to ‘follow the child’ is clearly demonstrated here, but we must remember that it is the rule for all education of children in all fields. The child has his own laws of growth and, if we want to help him grow, we must follow him, not impose ourselves on him.” (Montessori, 1949, p.231)

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Lost in Translation (Continued)

By Kathy Carey
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So there it is. * We, as followers of Montessori, are truly charged with “following the child.” But what does this really mean in post-modern society? It does not mean that children are left to their own devices. Following the child takes place within carefully prepared environments that meet each child’s need for development. So first, as followers of Montessori, we must be well informed about child development, developmental psychology, and the environments from which our children are coming so we can construct those environments.

* All credit for unearthing the “follow the child” quote must go to Stacy Jensen, who after a class discussion some years ago, sent me an email around midnight the same day, celebrating her find. I remain grateful to her for this discovery has enhanced my understanding and appreciation of Montessori.

The path of education has to follow the path of evolution; walking about made man see more things, so should the life of the child expand and expand. (Montessori, 1949,p.234)