

THE MONTESSORI REVIEW

News from the Montessori Teacher Education Graduate Program at Oklahoma City University

NOVEMBER 2014

VOLUME 2, NO.2

2014-15 PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mandy Russ – Editor

Graduate Assistant, OCU

Carrie Gardener – Editor

Masters in Montessori Candidate, OCU

Ankie Yip– Founder

Masters in Montessori '13, OCU

Charlotte Wood-Wilson - Advisor

Montessori Program Director, OCU

HAPPY THANKSGIVING AND
HAPPY HOLLIDAYS



CASADY'S CANNED FOOD DRIVE

By Mandy Russ

During the first full week in November, Casady teamed up with the Regional Food Bank to help raise awareness of hunger in Oklahoma City. They asked students to bring in canned foods to donate to the food bank. They also asked for a money donation of one dollar, which can provide up to five meals. The Regional Food Bank feeds over 100,000 hungry people in Oklahoma alone every week! Casady Primary donated 186 cans that week and the school in total donated over 4,400 cans! 135 dollars was also raised meaning a possible 675 meals! For more information on the Regional Food Bank and how to contribute visit: <http://www.regionalfoodbank.org/>



Casady Lavender students
rolling canned foods to the
Regional Food Bank truck

REGIONAL
**FOOD
BANK**
of Oklahoma

PAMBE GHANA: ALICE AZUME IDDI-GUBBELS

By Mandy Russ

Meet Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels. Alice is the founder and current executive director of the non-profit organization, *PAMBE* Ghana that promotes mother-tongue learning in Northern Ghana. Her story is a fascinating one. Alice grew up in a small village in Northern Ghana. As a little girl, she and her fellow classmates were instructed entirely in English—a completely foreign language to them. In fact schools in Ghana when Alice was growing up absolutely prohibited students from using their own native languages. Strictly limiting instruction in English alone, and forbidding use of mother-tongue languages of Ghana, caused all students much hardship in their learning. As a result, not many children made it through school.

Fortunately for Ghana and OCU, Alice was one of the few in her village who did make it, and one of three who went on to receive a university education. She has gone on to effectuate change on an international level. Her non-profit organization *PAMBE* Ghana raises money to provide resources in promoting bilingual and mother-tongue instruction to school children in Northern Ghana. Alice currently lives in the small village where she was born, and teaches her students in the way she herself wished she had been taught.

PAMBE stands for Partnership for Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education. Mother tongue is Alice's way of describing a child's native language. She believes children will learn the best by not only learning in English but also in their original languages. Alice, through *PAMBE* Ghana, is working to change the way Ghana students learn for the better. Feel free to stop by the *PAMBE* Ghana seasonal market and support this OCU's alumni's wonderful cause this holiday season. The seasonal market is open November 4 through December 23 on Tuesdays through Saturdays at 12:00 to 6:00. The Market is located at 6516 N. Olive in Oklahoma City.



"I am passionate about
quality basic
education for children
that starts with and
builds on the local
language and culture
in poor, rural and
underserved areas."
- Alice Azume Iddi-
Gubbels



Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels receiving her Petree College of Arts & Sciences award (left)



Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels giving her speech (right)



OCU HOMECOMING DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS DINNER

By Mandy Russ

Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels, an OCU Montessori alumni and Masters degree holder of Early Childhood Education, was one of seven outstanding OCU alumni honored on November 7th during Homecoming weekend. Other award winners includes Kristen Bailey, Melanie Shelley, Auda Marie Thomas, Jennifer Grigsby, Claudia Lovelace, and Ruth Charnay. As part of Alice's speech in accepting the Petree College of Arts & Sciences award, Alice talked about how OCU helped her achieve her aspirations. She believes that OCU gave her a way to attain her goals. Alice says, "OCU really opened doors for me to take the dream that I had brought that was with me for a long time, to give me the opportunity to translate that dream into reality" (Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels). Due to her training in the Montessori department at OCU, she was able to open her own school in northern Ghana.

She goes on to talk about how she wanted to bring the Montessori method to her home in Ghana, but needed to adapt the concepts to meet the needs of a very rural population. She said there is a phrase in her native language that translates to "many hands make light work" (Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels). Due to the guidance and support of her professors and classmates at OCU, she was able to ask any questions she had and get advice from the experts on Montessori teaching. The way she was accepted in school also allowed Alice to be comfortable and thrive in this new environment. She talks about how she was confused and afraid when she first came to Oklahoma City in 2001, but quickly felt accepted as shown by her quote in her speech. She said the "people welcomed me as a person" (Alice Azumi Iddi-Gubbels). Alice has helped so many children and worked so hard to create a thriving school and growing organization, *PAMBE*, in Ghana and Oklahoma. Her humble words show the values that are instilled in Alice's thought process, and I hope her story inspires many more to achieve their dreams just like Alice.

It was very refreshing to see such distinguished alumni who have fulfilled their dreams. At the end of the award ceremony another award recipient shared wisdom of OCU as a whole as she talked about how complete the university is. She said that OCU is "big enough to be great, small enough to be special" (Claudia Lovelace). It was truly an honor to hear from such amazing people who understand and excel in their selective fields.

WESTMINSTER STRUCTURE OF MONTESSORI KINDERGARTEN

By Carrie Gardner

The Westminster School's interpretation of the Montessori classroom for kindergarten is actually composed of five classrooms. Each of these rooms, or home circles, has their own lead teacher, who fulfills the many needs of the Montessori prepared environment. Though each class returns to their own home circle for lunch every day, throughout the five-day week they are split into mixed sets, spending one full day in each room.

Yellow Circle, led by Toni Moses, focuses mostly on Practical Life, but also includes some sensorial and cultural works. Mrs. Moses brings her Lebanese heritage into the classroom daily with stories, recipes, and her love of the French language. Blue Circle, led by Euna Kim is the kindergarten's math area and the only place where students can focus on learning the decimal system with the golden beads, as well as numeral recognition, one-to-one correspondence, adding and subtracting.

Continued on page 3





Ashley's Brook's Red Circle focuses primarily on the Sensorial materials, like the brown stair and the knobbed cylinders, but practical life activities such as easel painting and tying complement these works, as do botany lessons from the leaf cabinet. Last week, Westminster's five kindergarten classes came together for a "Friendsgiving" Feast, to celebrate the holiday season. The children in each home circle prepared different foods in the classrooms, decorated the tables with candles and handmade paper sculptures, and then at lunch-time, shared the meal together with their teachers and friends. It was a magical day!

ONE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT FOR EARLY PRIMARY

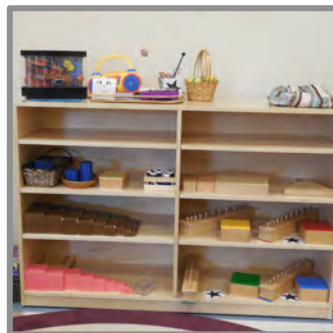
By Carrie Dannaway

My first priority in Casady lavender room for 2-4 year olds is to have the prepared environment safe, especially at the beginning when I am unsure of the students' individual habits such as placing toys inside the mouth. The elements of work are made with large, usually awkward pieces that are easy for little hands to manage but not small so that airways can be blocked. I keep it natural and very small materials for these works such as rice, coarse ground salt, split peas, whole buckwheat, kamut, dried pasta, and beans. Nature is a priority to me. Children need to feel the breeze on their faces, gather pinecones and stones, dig in the dirt, and observe the natural world. It will help them find peace in themselves.

The second major focal point is the difficulty of work. I analyze the work very carefully to make sure that I have broken it down into appropriately manageable steps for the students' development. I think about the number of steps that it takes for a child to utilize the work thoroughly and try to keep it so that the child feels successful. However, I also include other works on the shelves that provide a little challenge as well. I have to analyze the work very carefully to make sure it is presented in small manageable steps (as few steps as possible) so that they are successful in their own way. Yet, it is interesting to see that many children will set their own limits regarding their ability to undertake work. I remind myself that sometimes the achievement was to try something new and be successful in the effort and the knowledge of experience.

Life can be funny, so yes, the third key priority is to laugh and keep it fun with new elements to explore and express. I want the children to find their love of learning and walk away from the class with thoughts and songs in their heads –and the desire to walk back into to the classroom the next time. My childhood was delightful with rhyme, songs, and storytelling. I utilize these means to do the calendar, to open and close a day, and to transition at certain points. Rhymes of Mother Goose are not often used anymore, but they provide rhyme and rhythm, which aide in several components of language.

As a guide to children for over fourteen years (with and without my Montessori degree), I have found that the learning environment reflects the personality of the person preparing it. We all have our own backgrounds, gifts, and abilities. So, as I prepare my classroom, I keep Maria's profound insight alive, maintain my priorities, find my joy in my mission, and focus on keeping a "living" environment that is effective to its students.



**"Plainly, the environment must be a living one, directed by a higher intelligence, arranged by an adult who is prepared for his mission."
-Maria Montessori**

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

This publication serves as a platform for current students and alumni to communicate ideas, share experiences and stay in touch with colleagues. If you have any questions, comments or feedback, please write to us at:

Mandy at amanda.m.russ@gmail.com
Carrie at carriegardner76@gmail.com

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Charlotte Wood-Wilson, Director
Montessori Teacher Education Program, OCU
2501 N. Blackwelder Avenue, OKC, OK 73106
P: 405-208-5372 | E: cewoodwilson@okcu.edu