

The Cobbler

Ephesians 6:15

The Newsletter of the Christian Montessori Fellowship
June 2006

National Conference

San Antonio, TX

July 27-29

“The Icon of Faith”

Encouragement

“Cost vs Value”

The first definition of economics is the “allocation of scarce resources”. Most of us tend to think that the scarcest resource is money because it seems to be tied in to so much of what we want to do – or can’t do. I’m sure if we sat down and thought about it, we would find many things even scarcer than money. Time is certainly one of them. And when we look around there might seem to be a real scarcity of faith or justice or fairness. And if you are looking for trained and seasoned Montessori teachers – scarcer than hen’s teeth!

There might be one thing scarcer than all of the above – and that is encouragement. Consider the outstanding people in your life, the people who have made a positive impact on you. They were the encouragers in your life. They were the ones who helped you keep going until you got over the hill or turned the corner. Proverbs 25:11, “A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver”, reminds us of the value of encouragement.

There is not enough encouragement in life. It is always easy to see what

could have been done better, faster, smarter etc. It is very easy to be a critic. Theodore Roosevelt said, “It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to those who are actually in the arena, who strive valiantly; who know the great enthusiasm, the great devotions, and spend themselves in a worthy cause; who at the best, know the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if they fail, fail while daring greatly, so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.”

One of the endearing and enduring qualities of a Montessori environment, is that we do not sit in “critical” judgment but are guides to discovery and mastery.

One of the critical principles of Montessori is the development of internal motivation and drive. However, there is a delicate balance between not giving the children positive feedback for fear that their motivation will become external, and failing to encourage them. Also, failure to celebrate their achievements (in an appropriate manner) is discouraging.

We need to remember that encouragement is not manipulation; it is not reverse psychology. When someone reaches the halfway point of an achievement, you can tell him, “You have a long way to go.” or “You’ve

come a long way.” Both statements are equally true factually, but there is a big difference emotionally and psychologically between them.

Encouragement is not manipulation. And like salt, when judiciously used, adds wonderfully to the recipe of life.

And just as children are blessed by proper encouragement, so are teachers (and spouses). As joyous as teaching is, teachers need to be refreshed and revitalized.

We interrupt this Column to bring you this important commercial break.

The national conference is just around the corner. Yes, it costs a lot of money to attend – registration, hotel, transportation etc. We tend to look at that mountain and say, “I can’t afford it.” Robert Kiyosaki (Kiyosaki, Robert T. and Lechter, Sharon L. *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. New York: Warner Books 1997) in his book says the question should always be, “How can I afford it?” if it is something of great value. And I can think of nothing of greater value than the encouragement that comes from attending a conference. Yes, you will learn new techniques and new ways of doing things but even more importantly, you will be renewed in your own commitment to what you are doing. (It is obviously not for the big bucks.)

What are our real tools in Montessori but our knowledge and attitude. Sharpening both makes us better teachers and guides. A significant benefit of the national conference is the joy you get in meeting people who share your spiritual passion, and your Christian commitment. And knowing that you are not alone.

The ultimate benefit is the spiritual vitality that comes from hearing

Montessori discussed from its spiritual foundations and how that applies to our every day lives.

The cost of attending is certainly a factor; the value of attending far surpasses the cost.

Our goal is to get one person from every school to attend in order to see the value of the fellowship and learning. In 2000 Cindy Bussey from Christian Center School, Shreveport, LA attended the conference. The next year she brought her director, Mary Cook. The following year Mary brought her whole staff. This will be the fifth year that Mary’s whole staff will attend. Call Mary at (318) 688-9858 and ask her about the value that the conference has added to their school.

Let me leave you with a classic story. There were two lumberjacks chopping wood. The younger one kept his ax busy, never stopping. The older one would rest every hour for 5 or 10 minutes. At the end of the day, the younger lumberjack was amazed at how much more wood the older lumberjack had chopped. “I never stopped all day and you rested every hour. How can that be?” The older (and wiser) lumberjack responded, “You didn’t notice but when I rested, I sharpened my ax.”

It’s time to sharpen your ax.

Let “Monty” Help!

Monty is our Montessori bear who is helping celebrate the 100th anniversary of Montessori education. In conjunction with The Beary Thoughtful Company (www.bearythoughtful.com) Monty is helping schools raise funds. Visit our website www.crossmountainpress.com to get a look at how handsome Monty is.

“Follow the Child”

One of the great classic principles of Montessori is to “follow the child”. Unfortunately, left unexplained, this leaves parents (and others) with a skewed understanding of this dynamic truth.

Following the child is not a passive activity. It is not like watching the random wanderings of an animal in a meadow. It is the deliberate observation of the choices, inclinations, strengths and interests of the child; using these observations as a base from which to aid the child in the achievement, of not only the goals at hand, but in the preparation of the child to meet the goals and challenges of a lifetime.

It is the highest form of analysis, (detective work if you will) to unravel (to our minds) the unique puzzle of the personality before us. The ultimate service we perform for our children is to truly help them fulfill the Biblical commandment, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22:6. This has been used to spiritually nurture the child but it can also be interpreted as helping the child to find his “God-given” gifts – “the way he should go” and was intended to go. Following the child is following God’s leading.

National Conference Agenda

Thursday

10:00 A.M.	Contemporary Montessori History Group Introduction
12:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 P.M.	The Icon of Faith
2:00 P.M.	Exercise Patricia Wong
3:00 P.M.	Break

3:30 P.M.	Words at Work in Montessori Josh Thompson, Ph. D.
4:30 P.M.	Book Review - Secret of Childhood Edward Fidellow
5:30 P.M.	Break
6:00 P.M.	Dutch Treat Dinner

Friday

8:30 A.M.	Cosmic Education Betty Golightly
9:30 A.M.	Personalities of Children Carolyn Ely
10:30 A.M.	Break
11:00 A.M.	Play - Developmental stages Josh Thompson, Ph. D.
12:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 P.M.	My Favorite Lessons Panel
2:00 P.M.	Book Review - Secret of Childhood Edward Fidellow
3:00 P.M.	Afternoon break for the day

Saturday

8:30 A.M.	Toddler Good Shepherd Lessons Carolyn Ely
8:30 A.M. E	Elementary Language Susan Suberi
9:30 A.M.	Classroom Management Betty Golightly
9:30 A.M. E	Elementary Math Susan Suberi
10:30 A.M.	Break
11:00 A.M.	Hands on Bible
11:00 A.M.E	Elementary Writing Susan Suberi
12:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 P.M.	Stress Debbie Thompson
1:00 P.M.E	Elementary Bible Susan Suberi
2:00 P.M.	TBA
3:00 P.M.	Break
3:30 P.M.	Book Review - Secret of Childhood Edward Fidellow
4:30 P.M.	Lessons We’ve Learned Panel
7:00 P.M.	Dinner

*Life subject to change

National Conference

Cost and housing details

Conference cost

\$350 (an additional \$25 discount for CMF members). Conference includes 3 lunches, morning and afternoon breaks and Saturday dinner,

Location

Menger Hotel

1-800-345-9285

www.historicmenger.com

Lodging costs \$119.09 (tax included) per night

Double or single

Rates good if you register by June 27th

Alternate Hotel

Crocket Hotel (across the street from The Menger \$99.24 per night (tax included)

1-800-292-1050

Cross Mountain Forum

One of the best gifts you give your staff (next to sending them to a CMF conference) is to attend a Cross Mountain Forum – a management seminar for Montessori schools. The forum deals with the “10 P’s at the heart of management”. Visit www.crossmountainforum.com for more details.

If you want to start a school, a forum is a great first step.

Membership

Your membership is a gift you give to the future, a gift of spreading Montessori education to more and more children. Join Today!

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