

## **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

### **AMI USA**

#### **Events and Activities**

##### 2017 Refresher Course and Workshops

The annual Refresher Course and Workshops were held this February in Austin, Texas. The Refresher Course continues to be the largest gathering of AMI teachers, administrators, parents, and assistants in the United States. This year, 1,000 attendees participated in the weekend, with an additional 125 attending the concurrent NAMTA Adolescent Workshop.

With a theme of *The Calculating Mind: Cultivating Discovery, Persistence, Problem Solving*, this year's Refresher Course was designed to revisit the underlying human tendencies and experiences that form the basis for a child's mathematical experiences and provide a refresher on ways we can continue to support or perhaps think differently about the calculating mind in our environments and schools. This year's Keynote Address was delivered by Dr Ross Green, who gave an inspiring talk on the skills that foster the better side of human nature, such as empathy, collaboration and honesty, which must be taught, modelled, and practiced. As the weekend continued, our trainers provided meaningful ways for Montessori educators to strengthen their environments and deepen their practice. Workshops on Dyslexia, Anti-Bias, Music and Parent Relationships rounded out the offerings for the weekend. Next year we will reconvene in Phoenix, Arizona for another weekend of inspiration and refreshment!

#### **Publications and Media**

The AMI/USA Bookstore, hosted on the AMI/USA website, offers a wide range of Dr Montessori's writings and supplementary material written by AMI trainers and administrators. The offerings have now been expanded, with several of Dr Montessori's titles now available in Spanish. AMI/USA is also working to ensure that a variety of supporting books are available, as well as souvenir merchandise such as pins and note cards. Proceeds from several of the titles AMI/USA offers contribute directly to the Margaret E Stephenson Fund, supporting AMI teacher training in the United States.

The AMI/USA *Journal* is distributed to members two-three times each year, providing current insights and articles from AMI trainers and parent pages to help member schools involve families in learning more about Montessori principles and practices. Some highlights from this past year's journals include articles on class size, technology in the Montessori environment, and cultural revitalization. In keeping with environmental practices, the AMI/USA *Journal* will be moving entirely to a digital format in its next issue.

Montessori Guide continues to be a valuable professional development tool by providing beautifully crafted videos, articles, and writings from Dr Montessori about children throughout the planes of development. The entire website is a valuable

resource for parents, teachers, and Montessori advocates around the world, especially as it is used for on going training of Montessori principles.

## **Memberships**

AMI membership in the US has been on the rise for the last 2 years, and over this last year, we have welcomed 586 new-to-AMI members as well as continued to boost our retention of current members through active outreach, and by consistently demonstrating the value and benefits of AMI membership for individuals and for schools. The benefits of AMI membership in the US include

- Access to monthly newsletter publications with community updates
- Bi-annual journal publications with articles and parent supplements
- Access to the AMI/USA directory of members and schools
- Discounts at the bookstore, select materials manufacturers and on job placement ads on our website and in our publications
- Discounted educator's insurance programs

And perhaps most importantly, members know they are a part of a larger community of like-minded thought partners, with leadership who is actively engaged in the rigorous work of partnering and exploring outreach opportunities and advocating for a voice for AMI Montessori to grow and thrive.

## **AMI School Recognition and Consultations**

AMI/USA currently has just over 200 AMI recognized schools in the US. Two this year "re-joined" after a period of not being able to meet the school standards, and we welcomed 10 new schools from 10 different states to our pool. School recognition provides communities, parents and local agencies the assurance that their school is faithfully adhering to quality standards, and it provides schools and teachers access to regular consultations for on-going staff support. It also provides newly trained teachers opportunities and environments to practice with authenticity.

This year our pool of consultants will have completed over 120 school consultations at all 3 levels. One trend we identified last year that has only increased into this year, is the growth of new A-to-I and Nido environments at our member schools, and a shortage of consultants able to meet the demand. So in January we held a consultant's training for A to I Trainers and Trainers in Training in Denver, and following completion of their apprentice visit process, we will be excited to welcome them into the existing consultant pool. We also look forward to welcoming several new primary and elementary consultants to the ranks in the fall.

## **Special Projects & Outreach**

The Montessori Public Policy Initiative (MPPI), a joint initiative of AMI/USA and the American Montessori Society, is doing some very exciting work right now and has been helped by generous grant funding to compensate for some part-time staff as well as undertake a project with Bellweather Education Partners, a strategic advisory group, to conduct a state-wide policy landscape analysis to help us better prioritize those areas affecting Montessori programs in each state, and identify the best ways MPPI can support the state groups, either through letters of support or policy/position briefs for talking with local legislators. The work of MPPI is to help empower the grassroots

efforts of dedicated Montessorians effectively advocate for protection and proliferation of quality Montessori practice. Our annual retreats have both been very successful in providing a forum for the various state representatives to engage in peer learning about strategies and issues from other states, and have helped to establish a strong system for precedent-policy-making.

### **Board and Committees**

AMI/USA Board members Zack Nauth and Durkin Ledyard assumed their membership in August of 2016. In July, 2016, the AMI/USA board dedicated time to reflect on our mission and to think strategically about our short term and long-term goals. This process began with a polling of our membership and is continuing throughout the year. The AMI/USA board has accepted the resignation of Executive Director Bonnie Beste, effective June 15, 2017 and is launching a national search for a new Executive Director in collaboration with Bonnie and the staff at AMI/USA to ensure a smooth transition. Since Bonnie assumed the role of Executive Director, AMI/USA has broadened its reach and impact, and through its work continues to increase its membership and foster sustaining relationships to advance Montessori education in all sectors. The Board would like to thank Bonnie for her service and wish her well as she pursues other opportunities

AMI USA Board