December 2019

Dear Montessorians:

We are pleased to present the schedule for our 17th Annual Conference, Education 2020: A Vision of the Past, Present and Future to be held at the Salt Lake Marriot Downtown at City Creek January 31st – February 1st 2020.

This year’s conference features Munir Shivji, President of the Board, American Montessori Society. Munir will be sharing ideas to enlighten our educational journey. On Friday afternoon we provide a chance to tour the Montessori Community School, a beautiful collaborative environment for toddlers through upper elementary. Friday evening will feature registration, Opening Ceremony and Appy Hour, featuring appetizers and social opportunities, for all UMC members. On Saturday we will offer workshops by presenters from across the country as well as our own local talent and poster sessions spotlighting some of the excellent research going on within our community. Montessori Mall will offer an assortment of local and national vendors and exhibitors. Your registration fee includes all of this as well as breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks. Our conference becomes richer each year as our members and friends step forward to contribute. Remember to bring a door prize from your school for our Door Prize Drawing.

Peruse the offerings and register early. Winter is always busy in Salt Lake City so make your hotel reservations early, too. There are limited rooms available at the Salt Lake Marriott for the UMC rate of $189/night. Contact the Marriott at https://book.passkey.com/go/UTmontessori2020 to reserve your rooms now!

We are grateful to the dozens of volunteer organizers and presenters who make this event possible every year. Only with your gracious support are we able to offer a professional and affordable conference for educators from Utah and surrounding states.

Vendors and exhibitors, contact duna@soaringwings.org for an application.

Early bird registration is December 13th. The final registration deadline is January 17th. No late registration can be accepted. Because this is a volunteer organization working on a tight budget to offer you the very lowest possible rates, we cannot offer refunds, credits or transfers. See you in January!

Namaste’

Duna Strachan, MEd
UMC Conference Coordinator
Utah Montessori Council
17th Annual Conference
Education 2020: A Vision of the Past, Present and Future
January 31st & February 1st 2020
Salt Lake Marriott Downtown at City Creek
www.utahmontessori.org

Friday
1:00 – 4:00pm Self-directed School Tour
- Montessori Community School – Toddler through upper elementary, 2416 East 1700 South, Salt Lake City

4:00 – 6:00pm Registration, Appy Hour and Opening Ceremony –
Lois Bobo, PhD & Nancy Lindeman, MA
Montessori Community School, 2416 E 1700 S, SLC
Join us for appetizers, beverages and Opening Ceremony to start your conference experience off with old friends and new ones!

Saturday
8:00am Opening
- Registration
- Continental Breakfast
- Montessori Mall
- UMC Member School Slide Show

Poster Sessions
Stop and visit with the authors of the latest Montessori research from our community.
8:00 – 8:30am
1:00 – 1:30pm

8:30am Welcome – Grand Ballroom
9:00 – 10:30am Keynote Address – Grand Ballroom
Expand Your Horizons: The Case for Lifelong Learning - Munir Shivji, MA
Growth is a critical goal for educators—the growth of our students, our prepared environments, our communities, and ourselves, the latter through professional development. Earning your teaching credential is only the beginning of your journey. Continually working to master the best practices in our field keeps us fresh and ready for our students. In this session, we will discuss specific tracks for your journey in a holistic way, create an ongoing personal and professional development plan that is meaningful and will guide your pathway to success. Munir Shivji serves as President of the American Montessori Society Board of Directors. He is a second-generation Montessori educator with a decade-long record of service to the national Montessori community. Munir is the Executive Director of The Institute of Montessori Education, an organization that advocates for and fosters the advancement of Montessori in Texas and California. He has extensive experience as a head of school, program director, teacher, and teacher educator. He holds AMS Early Childhood and Administrator credentials, has had AMS Infant & Toddler training, as well as his masters in education.

10:45 – 12:00 Workshop Session A
1. Infant and Toddler Environmental Design – Aja DeBruyn, PhD & Dain Griffin
Join us to explore environmental design techniques and to learn how the environment drives development for our youngest learners. Aja is a certified cognitive behavior therapist and is Montessori certified in infant/toddler, primary and lower elementary. She has worked with children and families in Montessori environments since 1999. She is the Head of School at Mountain Heights Montessori in Las Vegas, Nevada. Dain Griffin is a registered Music Together educator, infant/toddler guide and holds a Montessori early childhood credential. (Infant, Toddlers, Heads of Schools, Parents)
2. Explaining Executive Function to Parents – Martha Teien, MEd
Executive function is a term used in broader educational environments to address memory retention, cognitive flexibility and impulse control. The greatest growth in executive function occurs from 3 – 6 years old. Montessori education addresses the whole child and has dramatic impact on a child’s executive function – especially when the home and school environments are consistent. This workshop will aid Montessori teachers and parents in understanding the importance of executive function skills. Martha is the Founder and Executive Director of Mountain Montessori in Avon, CO which opened in 2004. She has previously directed three other Montessori schools and is in her 22nd year as a lead guide in an early childhood classroom. She serves as the President of the Board for MEPI, President of the Colorado Montessori Association, board member of Montessori Public Policy Initiatives and she is a Buell Early Childhood Leadership Fellow. (Heads of School, All, Parents)

3. Teaching Art: Balancing Technique and Imagination – Kindra Fehr
This workshop focuses on balancing imagination and creativity in the child while also teaching technique, art history and encouraging the student’s best quality work. There will be a hands-on art activity. Kindra Fehr earned a BFA in drawing/painting from the University of Utah and studied at Lacoste School of Arts in France. She has taught art for 25 years including at Montessori Community School and at Elizabeth Academy/Garfield School in Salt Lake City. (Early Childhood, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School)

4. Spiritual Preparation – Brandi Allen, MEd
True empathy for the human experience allows us to find the most effective way of interacting with all beings. Let’s explore perceptions and practices in creating a spiritual transformation. Brandi has been involved with Montessori education for almost 30 years. She has taught early childhood and elementary I and holds AMS credentials at the EI-I and EI-II levels. She has held three unique director positions at three unique schools. She holds a master’s degree with a Montessori emphasis. Being spiritually prepared in order to be the most present and effective teacher has been a passion of Brandi’s which led her to write her thesis on this subject. (All)

5. Fun with Phonology! – Joy Baty, MEd & Kacee Weaver, MEd
When children struggle with reading it’s often because they don’t have a solid phonetic base. Join us as we explore fun ways to build phonemic awareness; the foundation of literacy skills. Attendees will walk away with practical information that can be implemented immediately in the EC, LE or UE classroom for beginning and struggling readers. Joy holds an MEPI credential at the early childhood level and has taught for 11 years, currently in the Ogden School District. Kacee holds an MEPI credential at the lower elementary level and has been a teacher, curriculum coordinator, administrator and is currently an instructional coach in the Ogden School District. (Early Childhood, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary)

6. Musical Journey – Marie Griffith, MS, MA; Ben Gabrielson & Matt Johnson
This hands-on workshop will help you start an immersion music program for early childhood and elementary classes. Participants will play the ukulele and drums while they learn about the local resources they can use to create a great music program for your school. Marie has taught music at several different Montessori schools over the past two decades. She is the organizer of the Musical Journey program in Ogden. Ben is the director of Imagine Music’s rock band program in Ogden. Matt is the percussion instructor for Musical Journeys. (Early Childhood, Lower and Upper Elementary)

7. The Visual Language of Art – David Cowley
David has come from Cedar City to share his passion for art since the original presenter, Aimee DiBrienza, was called away on a family emergency at the last minute. David is an art specialist from Gateway Preparatory Academy in Enoch. Join him for a spontaneous art experience!. (EC, LU, UE, MS)

8. MACTE On-site Verifier Training – Teresa Noble
Would you like to be involved in promoting Montessori education outside your own sphere? Would you like to experience the best professional development for Montessori guides and Montessori teacher educators EVER? Do you have a Montessori credential? If so, please join me for this workshop where you will learn about how to serve as an on-site verifier for teacher education programs that are seeking MACTE accreditation. Teresa is retired from South Carolina public schools where she was a guide in a 3-6 classroom. Since 2006, she has served as a Montessori teacher educator and consultant. (All)

9. Further Steps on the Journey – Munir Shivji, MA
Join us to continue the conversation from the keynote presentation. You will have a chance to glean more specific information that will inform your journey. Munir serves as President of the American Montessori Society Board of Directors. He is a second-generation Montessori educator with a decade-long record of service to the national Montessori community. Munir is the Executive Director of The Institute of Montessori Education, an organization that advocates for and fosters the advancement of Montessori in Texas and California. He has extensive experience as a head of school, program director, teacher, and teacher educator. He holds AMS Early Childhood and Administrator credentials, has had AMS Infant & Toddler training, and has his masters in education. (All)
1:30 – 2:45pm Workshop Session B

1. Baby Work: Honoring the Unfolding of Natural Development in an Environment Free from Obstacles – Mercedes Castle, MEd & Mitra Hasan
   Practicing Montessori education with our tiniest friends is a unique endeavor. Using Montessori and RIE (Resources for Infant Educarers) principles and values let’s take a deeper look at what comprises the infant/toddler curriculum. Once we are grounded in our philosophy, we can develop the perfect environment for freeing the human potential. Mercedes is an Assistant to Infancy (AMS), Montessori advocate, teacher educator, wife, mother and agent of change. She has been guiding toddlers towards independence since 2003 when she founded a little school in her home. In 2012 Mercedes became captain of the ship at Portland Montessori Collaborative, where teamwork makes the dream work. She co-founded Heart and Hand Montessori Teacher Education Program in 2014. Like Dr. Montessori, Mercedes believes that, “The task of educators is immense because human progress and world peace are in their hands.” Mitra has worked with Mercedes since 2008, and in 2013 founded the Nido at Portland Montessori Collaborative, where she is the lead infant guide. Mitra holds a Montessori credential at the infant/toddler level. (Infants, Toddlers, Parents)

2. Employing the Transformative Power of Dance to Connect Students to the Curriculum – Jessica Rawlings, MEd & Chassie Bunker, MA
   Connect with your inner dancer and engage in Montessori curriculum through movement! You will depart with resources and simple lesson plans that will help you implement what you have learned. Jessica has a degree in dance from Southern Utah University and a Montessori credential at the early childhood level completed in 2000. Jessica is Director at Elizabeth Academy. Chassie has taught ballet and creative dance to students of varying ages and has trained in many dance forms. She currently teaches at Elizabeth Academy in Salt Lake City. (Early Childhood, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary)

3. Teaching Art: Balancing Technique and Imagination – Kindra Fehr
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6. For the Love of Science! – Brittany Feinauer, MEd
   Are the nomenclature cards on your science shelves collecting dust? This hands-on workshop will provide ideas about how to breathe new life into the Montessori early childhood science curriculum. You will come away with ideas about how to teach science in a way that cannot be contained on trays and shelves. Brittany has been guiding
children in the Montessori philosophy since 2011. In addition to teaching at Garfield School, Brittany leads teacher training courses in science and classroom management for the Institute of Montessori Innovation at Westminster College. (Early Childhood)

7. Engineering in the Classroom – Frances Bradshaw
This workshop will give you an understanding of and application for engineering skills in the Montessori classroom. We will experience hands on activities to use for individual, small group and/or large group instruction. We will review how to create leveled curriculum for multi-age group classrooms spanning early childhood to lower elementary in Session B and upper elementary to middle school in Session C. Frances has been the Director of STARBASE Hill, a STEM lab at Hill Air Force Base since 2011. She holds Montessori credentials for lower and upper elementary, has been an educational consultant since 1991, a teacher and administrator in Dallas Montessori school and a teacher trainer for Center for Montessori Education in Dallas. (Early Childhood, Lower Elementary)

8. Assessing Student Learning in Montessori Classrooms – Seth Webb
How do we implement Montessori faithfully within an educational system that has identified standardized testing as the primary means of ensuring accountability? Come learn about the wide-scope outcomes that matter most for children, and how the various assessment techniques can help schools support children’s natural development. Seth is the Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinator for the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. He has 20 years’ experience as an elementary teacher, instructional leader, dean of students and principal in charter Montessori schools. He holds AMS credentials at the lower elementary, upper elementary, middle and high school levels. (Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School, Heads of Schools)

9. Living Montessori Through Courageous Conversation – Cassi Mackey, MEd
In this transformative workshop, you will learn how to integrate open communication into your school community to the point where the expression of honest concern is expected, required and desired by everyone. Cassi has been involved in Montessori over the past 27 years as a teacher, principal, and consultant. She provides advice to Montessori communities that are intent on generating positive and lasting change through honest conversations. She comes to us from Phoenix. (Parents, All)

2:45 – 3:15pm Coffee, Tea and Chocolate – Exhibit Hall

3:15 - 4:30pm Workshop Session C

1. Baby Work: Honoring the Unfolding of Natural Development in an Environment Free from Obstacles – Mercedes Castle, MEd & Mitra Hasan
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3. UMC Annual Meeting
We invite representatives of each school to join us to review the year’s highlights and plan for future UMC events. If you have an item for the agenda please contact Duna Strachan at duna@soaringwings.org by January 15th. The general membership of the UMC normally only meets once each year so if you have comments on building a better UMC, please join us!

4. Supporting LGBTQ Youth & Families – Aja DeBruyn, PhD
Dr. Aja Debruyn is a certified cognitive behavior therapist and is Montessori certified in infant/toddler, primary and lower elementary. She has worked with children and families in Montessori environments since 1999. She is the Head of Curriculum at Mountain Heights Montessori in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Parents, All)

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4:30pm Closing Ceremony – Brandi Allen, MEd
Grand Ballroom