

2026 MSM Annual Conference Workshops

Morning Sessions

Title: Seeds of Confidence - Growing Together Through Shared Farm Work

Target Level(s): Elementary, Adolescent

Description: Farm work is dirty, difficult, and demanding - making it perfect for engaging and bringing out the very best in students of all ages. Join Red Gate Farm Directors Ben Murray and Sydney Treuer to see purposeful farm work adapted to a classroom setting. Together, we will save tomato seeds, getting hands-on with the entire process from ripe fruit to seed packet to soil. Along the way, we will share how Red Gate Farm educators use farming projects like this to help kids connect to nature, build confidence, and bond with peers. Participants of all experience levels and backgrounds are welcome. Attendees will leave with a packet of hand-saved seeds, new horticultural knowledge, and new ways to bring farming and nature to the classroom.

Red Gate Farm is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year! That's 25 years of inviting kids to dive into the real work of running a farm. Students from all over New England help us care for the animals, tend vegetable gardens, and manage our forest. They hold real tools and work alongside experienced farmers. The results of their hard work are tangible: a healthy lamb, a blueberry pie, a wood-heated dining hall. Over the years, we've discovered that our approach to working with kids aligns with and is enriched by the Montessori Method. Red Gate Farm partners with several Montessori schools each year, including Wellan Montessori, Kingsley Montessori, and Andover School of Montessori.

Presenter 1 Name: Ben Murray

Presenter 1 Bio: Ben Murray is the founder and director of Red Gate Farm Education Center. He lives on the farm with his wife Amy and two kids, Ainsley and Charlie. A graduate of Yale University, Ben has over 25 years experience as a teacher, non-profit leader, farmer, builder, and coach. Ben has also served as the Chair of the Four Rivers Charter Public School Board of Trustees, a Supervisor for the Franklin County Conservation District, a member of the Town of Buckland Finance Committee, President of the New England Wide Collegiate Rugby Conference, and the head coach of the Smith College rugby program. Ben is happiest outside on the farm, leading a gaggle of kids as they herd sheep, fix a fence line, or build something useful.

Presenter 2 Name: Sydney Treuer

Presenter 2 Bio: Sydney Treuer is the Assistant Director of Red Gate Farm Education Center. She graduated from Yale University with a degree in Environmental Science. An Americorps alum, Sydney has worked as a naturalist on Cape Cod, a photographer for Alaska Geographic, and a translator for the World Wildlife Fund Arctic Field Office. Sydney has been part of the Red Gate Farm team for over seven years. A significant accomplishment of Sydney's time at the farm has been the expansion and development of the farm's garden program.

Title: Pause, Reflect, Regulate: Responding Mindfully to Triggers in Teaching

Target Level(s): Elementary, Adolescent

Description: In this interactive and reflective presentation, participants will explore the power of mindful awareness in navigating the emotional complexities of teaching. Pause, Reflect, Regulate offers educators practical tools for recognizing internal triggers and responding—not reacting—from a place of grounded presence. Through a blend of informational slides, experiential mindfulness practices, and opportunities for personal reflection and group sharing, this session creates space to unpack the impact of stress on the nervous system, explore co-regulation in classroom dynamics, and cultivate practices that support resilience and compassion.

A special focus will be on understanding why working with pre-teens and adolescents can activate our own inner teenager—and how recognizing and integrating those past experiences can help us stay more regulated and present in the moment. Participants will leave with accessible strategies for self-regulation, more profound insight into their own teaching experiences, and a renewed sense of connection to themselves and their students.

Presenter Name: Kathi Martuza

Presenter Bio: Kathi came to Montessori through the education of her son and daughter, and immediately fell in love with the method and approach. She is now in her fourth year at Wellan Montessori as the Assistant Middle School Division Lead and Wellness Educator for grades 4-8. She holds a BA in Performing Arts and an M.Ed. in Integrated Learning, and she recently completed her Secondary Montessori Teaching Credential from CMStep. A former professional ballet dancer, health coach, and Pilates instructor, Kathi brings a mindfulness perspective to all her work with adolescents. She teaches a wide range of subjects, including Learning Through Service, Entrepreneurship, Careers/Occupations, Wellness, Human Sexuality, and Executive Functioning/Study Skills. Outside of work, Kathi enjoys rock climbing, spending time with her dogs, and crafting with her children.

Title: Intentional Connections: A Conversation with Teachers for Parent Engagement

Target Level(s): Infant/Toddler, Children's House

Description: This workshop is based on a collection of wisdom and suggestions gathered over 30+ years of working with children and parents, and on candid conversations with more than 100 educators in public, private, Montessori, traditional, and childcare settings.

It is intended to be a catalyst for thought, conversation, and action, bringing together educators and parents in service to the child. This workshop will explore nine big ideas, including trust, autonomy, accountability, intellectual development, play, and more, and offer attendees tools for bringing these candid conversations to their settings.

Presenter Name: Dorothy Harman

Presenter Bio: Dorothy Harman is a highly credentialed Montessori educator with extensive experience and a deep commitment to the field. She holds AMS Early Childhood and CGMS Infant and Toddler Montessori certifications and is a certified Teacher Education Instructor with AMS. Dorothy has retired from teaching Montessori in public schools. Still, she continues to contribute to the Montessori community through her roles as an Instructional Guide, Practicum Advisor, and Field Consultant for the Center for Guided Montessori Studies. Additionally, she serves as an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Nebraska-Kearney and speaks to national and international audiences at professional conferences.

Dorothy's academic credentials include a BA in Early Childhood Education and two Master's degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, with a focus on Integrative Creative Arts. She is also the author of two influential books on parent engagement: *Intentional Connections: A Practical Guide to Parent Engagement in Early Childhood and Lower Elementary Classrooms*, and *Building Parent-Teacher Partnerships: Intentional Connections for Parents*.

Title: Teaching Music in the Montessori Classroom

Target Level(s): Infant/Toddler, Children's House

Description: This interactive workshop provides Montessori educators with a developmentally appropriate, step-by-step music curriculum that guides young children from sound exploration to music literacy and composition. Participants will engage with Montessori bells, rhythm, and theory-based three-part cards, and a unique felt-board

composition lesson. The workshop introduces a bell board with removable note labels, created by Kara, to support visual and auditory recognition. Attendees will leave with practical tools and confidence to bring music meaningfully into their classrooms—no formal music background required.

Learner Outcomes:

- Participants will learn to present the Montessori bells and develop auditory discrimination through hands-on lessons.
- Participants will use three-part cards and other materials to introduce rhythm, pitch, and basic music theory.
- Participants will guide children in composing original music using Montessori-aligned materials and methods.

To promote sharing, reflection, and application, this workshop includes:

- Direct hands-on use of bells, felt boards, and manipulatives
- Small-group collaboration and music-making
- Visual presentation with printable take-home resources
- Group discussion and Q&A focused on real classroom scenarios

This session is ideal for Montessori educators of all experience levels. No prior music training is necessary. Whether you're new to music education or looking to deepen your practice, this workshop will equip you with accessible, joyful, and effective strategies to bring music to life in your Montessori environment.

Presenter Name: Kara Mulqueen

Presenter Bio: Kara Mulqueen received her Montessori Early Childhood certification through Age of Montessori and is currently pursuing additional training in Infant-Toddler education with The Institute of Montessori Training

Kara has served as an early childhood guide, school founder, and trainer of adult learners. She helped open a Montessori school in Colorado, focusing on authenticity and a positive school culture, and has also worked with teachers in rural communities in Mexico and Honduras. Currently, as Early Childhood Level Coordinator and instructor at IMT, she mentors adult learners through their Montessori training journey.

Title: Telling A New Story: Updating Literature Circle Practices

Target Level(s): Elementary, Adolescent

Description: This workshop will look at ways you can enrich your current Literature Circle practices at the Upper Elementary and Adolescent levels. We will share strategies for adapting reading programs to meet the needs of neurodiverse students. We'll share how to engage with social justice and DEI-related topics, using Literature Circle as a vehicle for meaningful conversations about race, class, body image, environment, gender and sexuality, and neurodiversity. Many students feel passionate about these issues, but many teachers are not sure how to address them. Let us show you how to do so through Lit Circle.

In addition, this workshop will outline steps you can take to build a "Community Literature Circle" event at your school to engage caregivers in these important conversations. We'll provide strategies to get the community involved and make these dialogues more accessible to a broader, more diverse body of students and their families.

Presenter 1 Name: Hannah Army

Presenter 1 Bio: This is Hannah's 21st year teaching. She taught in New England Boarding Schools for 7 years before finding Montessori and never looking back. She has a Master's in Liberal Studies from Wesleyan University, and completed her Elementary II credential at CMTE NY. Currently, Hannah is working on completing her Elementary I credential with METTC.

Presenter 2 Name: Sharlow Hitchcock

Presenter 2 Bio: This is Sharlow's 7th year teaching. She has taught for environmental education and arts organizations and has taught grades pre-K-8 in public and private school settings. She has a bachelor's degree in anthropology and a Teaching License from Mount Holyoke College, and completed her Elementary II credential at METTC.

Title: Is a Nano-Campaign in your School's Future?

Target Level(s): Administration

Description: What does it take to reel in major gifts at the preschool and elementary level? Can Montessori schools – with small staffs and modest budgets – compete for the time and attention of major donors? Absolutely. Join this session to learn precisely what a nano-campaign is and how to get one off the ground. Drawing on anecdotal information, trend data, and examples from recent projects, participants will examine what motivates donors to give (big) to Montessori schools and how to develop strategies that tap into these transforming gifts. In this highly interactive workshop, there will be robust “resource sharing.” Participants will leave with a portfolio of

materials – templates, samples, and the like – that they can put to immediate use. Also, attendees will be able to sign up for an hour of personal consultation at a mutually convenient time following the conference.

Presenter Name: Starr Snead

Presenter Bio: Starr is the founder and principal of Advancement Connections, a firm dedicated to serving development professionals and volunteers in schools throughout the United States and internationally. Based in Charleston, South Carolina, Advancement Connections provides fundraising, constituency relations, marketing/enrollment, strategic planning, and governance services exclusively to PK-12 schools. Before Advancement Connections, Starr was the executive director of the Advancement Program Council (APC) in Washington, DC.

Starr has worked in independent schools since 1972 as a teacher, administrator, and, more recently, as advancement director for Greenhill School in Dallas, Heritage Hall in Oklahoma City, and Ashley Hall in Charleston. From 1982 to 1997, she directed Starr Snead & Associates, an international consulting firm in New Haven, Connecticut.

Starr is a frequent speaker at NAIS, CASE, and Montessori conferences. Her popular workshops and seminars offer practical solutions to today's development, enrollment, and advancement challenges, combining more than five decades of personal and professional experience with the "best practice strategies" of many of our nation's leading independent schools.

Title: Rooted in Montessori, Reaching Every Child as Whole and Unique

Target Level(s): Children's House

Description: Montessori classrooms prioritize independence, hands-on learning, and respect for each child, but they often lack formal systems to support children who need additional help—particularly neurodivergent learners or those from underserved communities. This workshop will share a model that integrates the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework with Montessori principles, providing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions directly within the classroom. Participants will explore how small-group and individualized instruction, embedded into the Montessori work cycle, can enhance literacy, math, self-regulation, and social-emotional growth without disrupting the flow of the day. Led by an experienced Montessori educator and advocate for inclusive education, this session will demonstrate practical strategies, tools, and resources that honor the child's individuality while offering consistent, targeted support. Attendees will leave with actionable approaches for building equitable, inclusive classrooms that serve all learners.

Learner Outcomes:

- Identify strategies to integrate Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports within Montessori classrooms, using hands-on materials and the work cycle.
- Apply inclusive teaching practices, including MTSS-aligned interventions and trauma-informed approaches, to support neurodivergent and underserved learners.
- Develop a plan for documenting and sharing interventions to foster sustainable, replicable, inclusive practices in early childhood settings.

This workshop is designed for early childhood educators, Montessori guides, and educational leaders with beginner to intermediate experience in inclusive practices. Participants should have a foundational understanding of Montessori principles; no prior experience with MTSS or formal intervention systems is required.

Presenter 1 Name: Devanshi Desai

Presenter 1 Bio: Devanshi Kapadia-Desai is a Montessori educator and a school leader dedicated to empowering children and mentoring educators through environments that foster independence, curiosity, and lifelong learning. She serves as Head of School at Dandelion Montessori in Somerville, MA, and plays a broader role in the Wildflower network, supporting new schools and advising on governance and innovation. Devanshi has served on the Teacher Advisory Board for The Teacher Collaborative and partners with the Somerville Partnership for Young Children to advocate for early education and Montessori pedagogy. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology from The University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Education from Gordon College. With a background in both science and education, she brings a reflective, research-informed approach to teaching, leadership, and community engagement.

Presenter 2 Name: Leena Wright

Presenter 2 Bio: Leena is dedicated to fostering children's growth and curiosity. Originally from Queens, NY, she moved to Massachusetts and wanted to align her professional pursuits with her values, transitioning from business management to early childhood education.

With a degree in early childhood development and an American Montessori Internationale diploma, Leena is passionate about changing the world one child at a time. She advocates for alternative education and is experienced in the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Her journey with the Wildflower Community began when her son attended Dandelion Montessori under Micki and Lindy's guidance.

Beyond her professional life, Leena enjoys exploring the outdoors—whether camping, hiking, taking beach strolls, or rollerblading. Her multicultural upbringing in New York sparked a love for global cuisine, music, and art. As a mother, she cherishes spending time with her son, believing that experiencing the world is the best way to learn. In her teaching, Leena is committed to guiding children with grace and courtesy, nurturing their confidence, independence, and connection to nature.

Title: The Invisible Curriculum: What Our Processes Teach Our Community

Target Level(s): Administration

Description: This hands-on workshop guides participants through analyzing one real process from their own school—from admissions to staff onboarding—using simple tools like process mapping and a values alignment checklist. Attendees will reflect on what messages their systems send, identify points of friction or exclusion, and brainstorm practical, values-driven improvements. Small group dialogues support peer coaching, and all participants leave with take-home tools to continue the work in their own communities.

Presenter Name: Dominique Mouthon

Presenter Bio: Dominique Mouthon brings 30 years of Montessori experience as an educator, school leader, parent and grandparent, and advocate for system-level transformation. She is AMI certified at the Primary level (3–6) and a graduate of the NAMTA Administrator course. She served as Head of School at Adams Montessori School (Quincy, MA) and Follow the Child Montessori School (Raleigh, NC), where she led both schools in strategic growth, staff development, and deep cultural renewal.

Dominique has served on the boards of Westabou Montessori School (Augusta, GA), with a mission to increase access to Montessori education for underserved communities, and previously on the board of Del Ray Montessori School (Alexandria, VA). Her governance experience centers on strategic planning, financial oversight, and supporting healthy Head–Board relationships.

Dominique is the co-founder and CEO of Clever Education Solutions, creators of Cordelia—a Montessori-aligned school management platform. In that role, she integrates Montessori philosophy with operational best practices, helping school leaders simplify administrative processes while centering on community values.

Dominique has presented at The Montessori Event (AMS 2023), the Montessori Alliance of Tennessee (2024), the Small School National Conference (2024-2025), and the Trillium Spring Conference. Her sessions focus on LEAN school administration, vibrant

school cultures, governance, and parent partnership—drawing on her experiences as both a school leader, Montessori parent, and grandparent.

Dominique is known for her ability to bridge the practical and the philosophical, offering tools and insights that help Montessori leaders create more equitable, values-aligned, and joyful communities.

Title: Is a Toddler's WORK their PLAY or is their PLAY their WORK?

Target Level(s): Infant/Toddler

Description: What would have happened if the Montessori movement had been inclined to use the word PLAY to describe children's activity, instead of the word WORK? This presentation highlights and builds on the research, perspectives, and musings in the article "Beyond a Work vs. Play Attitude" (published in the Infant and Toddler Journal) by Ginny Varga (an American Montessori Living Legacy recipient). Marcia was trained by Ginny in 2005-2006, and before her recent passing, permitted her to make use of her article.

This presentation highlights the continual opportunities we have to consider and reconsider our attitudes regarding a young child's activity. Specifically, in this session, we explore how the language we use to describe a toddler's activity reflects and influences who we are in relation to the child, to the parent, and to administrators alike. This is profoundly important because it has direct and indirect long-term implications for the child. Our attitudes, feelings, and thoughts determine our actions in the environment, ultimately impacting how we guide and what we provide for the unconscious absorbent toddler's vulnerable construction of the self.

Learning Objective/s

- To explore Montessori's use of the word work regarding toddler activity & development

To understand how the adult's attitude & communication can:

- Support the sensitive periods
- Support the intrinsic motivation of a toddler's activity
- Create wonder
- To amplify Ginny Varga's legacy

Presenter Name: Marcia Hubelbank

Presenter Bio: Marcia S. Hubelbank holds Montessori credentials in both Infant-toddler and Early Childhood. She has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Early Childhood, and has over 4 decades of experience working with and learning from young children in Montessori and progressive school settings.

She is an Infant-toddler teacher trainer (and field supervisor):

- Montessori Institute-New England (17 years-current).
- Shanghai China, (2013, 2014, 2015).
- Korean Montessori Federation (2025).
- She is a conference presenter:
- Montessori Schools of Massachusetts, (2008 & 2009).
- The Korean Montessori Federation annual conference, (2024).
- The Montessori Event, (2024 & 2025).

Marcia is the founder of Understanding the Nature of Childhood, a private parent/caregiving coaching practice where she draws upon current research, Montessori principles, and her own decades of experience, offering insights, guidance, and support to deepen the parent/caregiving child relationship at home and in toddler programs. Marcia's mission? To "bring out the best in you, and the best in your child."

Title: Looking for Leverage: A Systems-Thinking Approach to Classroom Leadership

Target Level(s): Elementary

Description: "Systems thinking" is a transformational approach to learning, problem-solving, and understanding the world used in many fields of study. Through this hands-on workshop, come learn how the perspectives and techniques of "systems thinkers" can be applied to our elementary classrooms. We will: 1) Explore the 14 habits of a systems thinker; 2) Identify systems thinking concepts already implicit within our Montessori environments and curriculum; and 3) learn to use concrete tools to visualize classroom dynamics, effectively address structural challenges, and explicitly teach systems thinking skills to enhance student autonomy & learning. We will also identify how these concepts relate to DEIB/ABAR practices.

Presenter Name: Seth Johnson

Presenter Bio: Seth Johnson, MS, is an Upper Elementary teacher at Lexington Montessori School in Lexington, MA. He is on the faculty of the Montessori Elementary

Teacher Training Collaborative, an AMS Emerging Leaders Fellow (2020), and received the AMS Impact Medal (2025). He co-authored the chapter, "Philosophical Underpinnings for the Incorporation of Digital Citizenship in Montessori Environments" (Chapter 5 of Montessori in Contemporary Culture). AMS-credentialed (Elementary I-II).

Title: Classroom Management in the Montessori Environment

Target Level(s): Children's House

Description: This workshop provides practical strategies and insights into effective classroom management within the Montessori environment. Participants will explore techniques to create a harmonious, respectful, and engaging classroom that supports children's independence, concentration, and social development.

Key Topics:

- Smooth Transitions: Learn how to minimize interruptions and guide children through calm, seamless transitions between activities.
- Establishing Routines: Discover how consistent routines build a foundation for adaptation and responsibility while accommodating individual needs.
- Fostering Responsibility and Respect: Explore methods for setting clear expectations, modeling behavior, and allowing children to learn from their mistakes.
- Grace and Courtesy Lessons: Understand the importance of teaching social behaviors, such as greeting, serving food to others, and respectful movement, to support classroom harmony.
- Engaging Activities: Learn how to connect children to meaningful activities using engaging hooks, emergency tricks, and sensorial games.
- Observation and Adaptation: Develop skills to observe children's body language, concentration, and engagement to tailor classroom management techniques effectively.

This workshop is ideal for Montessori educators, assistants, and administrators seeking to enhance their classroom management skills. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to create a peaceful and productive learning environment.

Presenter Name: Veronica Burbano

Presenter Bio: My name is Veronica Burbano, and I'm a 3-6 AMI Primary Trainer with 16 years of experience in Early Childhood Education. I'm proud to be working with the Montessori Training Center of the Northeast. My journey began as an early childhood educator at the GVSU Lab School in Michigan, where I spent two wonderful years nurturing young minds. While earning my Primary AMI diploma from MTCNE, I also served as a Spanish specialist and assistant at Amherst Montessori School in Massachusetts. After completing my training, I had the exciting opportunity to develop and launch a bilingual program for one of the Casa de Niños classrooms, where I spent over a decade guiding children, supporting families, and mentoring both assistants and new guides.

I hold a Bachelor of Science in Business and Marketing, with a minor in Organizational Communication from Universidad San Francisco de Quito, as well as an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from Grand Valley State University. Currently, I serve as a Montessori Mentor for GCLL and lead workshops across the US, Europe, and South America.

As a mother of two, I've seen firsthand the benefits of Montessori education through my own son and daughter. I love returning to my native Ecuador to spend time with family, and when I'm home, you'll often find me gardening, beekeeping with my husband, or caring for our seven chickens.

Title: Growing with Intention: Strategic Marketing for Montessori Enrollment Success

Target Level(s): Administration

Description: In an increasingly competitive educational landscape, Montessori schools must go beyond word-of-mouth and embrace intentional marketing strategies to sustain and grow enrollment—without compromising their core values. This session will provide school leaders with clear, actionable tools to reach and resonate with the right families.

We'll explore how to craft a compelling message rooted in your school's mission, identify and connect with your ideal audience, and create marketing systems that build trust and drive engagement. Attendees will learn how to combine digital strategies (such as search engine visibility, a powerful school website, social media storytelling, and email marketing) with traditional methods (such as community outreach, print materials, and events) to attract and nurture prospective families throughout the enrollment journey.

Whether you're a small school looking to expand or an established program seeking sustainable growth, this session will offer practical, scalable solutions you can implement right away. Leave equipped with tools not just to increase numbers, but build a thriving, mission-aligned school community.

Presenter 1 Name: Camila Campuzano

Presenter 1 Bio: Camila is passionate about connecting like-minded Montessorians through a variety of online platforms so they can find the tools they need to succeed. Her work at Nido Marketing ensures that Montessorians have a place to connect, ask questions, and exchange resources.

Before joining the Nido Marketing team, Camila grew up in a Montessori environment. She attended Northwood Montessori School and spent her summers volunteering there. She loved working with younger children and often assisted teachers and school administrators with the inner workings of running a non-profit organization.

Camila went to university in New York City, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Marketing and Communications with a specialty in Social Media and Public Relations. Her work at Nido Marketing has helped Montessori school leaders gain access to resources that have helped them grow their enrollment for over 5 years.

Presenter 2 Name: Elizabeth DeMoulin

Presenter 2 Bio: Elizabeth has a desire to help Montessori schools grow through strategic planning, marketing methods, and her passion for the Montessori method. She was a client of Nido Marketing before joining the team as our Executive Director in 2023. Her experience as a client makes her invaluable to our team.

Previously, Elizabeth was an administrator at a Montessori school. She then turned into a Montessori parent. Learning a ton about Montessori while at her school and gaining valuable insight as a parent led her to a desire to bring Montessori to more people and become more involved in the Montessori community.

Elizabeth has a Bachelor's degree in Middle Childhood Education and was a middle school teacher in public education before becoming a Montessorian. She is a military spouse and currently lives in Virginia with her husband and three young children.

Title: Science of Reading in Montessori: What's Missing?

Target Level(s): Children's House

Description: We know the Montessori early childhood language program is rich, but does it align with the Science of Reading research? In this workshop, we'll review Julia's quest to align the Montessori 3-6 language album with the Science of Reading. We'll specifically look at the "gaps" that are sometimes noted and how we can address them by adapting current lessons and making the intangible things we already do explicit and repeatable

We'll also identify resources available for your own use (e.g., the Reading League's Curriculum Workbook). You'll leave with a clearer understanding of the research and how to adapt your Montessori Language lessons so they align with the science.

Presenter Name: Julia Volkman

Presenter Bio: Julia Volkman has been teaching children and mentoring teachers in private and public schools since 1997. She is a Faculty Member of the Brain Health Initiative, a guest lecturer for Harvard University's Neuroscience of Learning course, an educational researcher, a teacher mentor, and the founder and president of the educational project Maitri Learning. Among other things, she has worked as a primary consultant for the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS), a columnist for the Public School Montessorian (now Montessori Public), and as the teacher's representative on the Advisory Panel for the Annenberg Foundation's course Neuroscience & the Classroom (developed in conjunction with the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics). Ms. Volkman earned her AMI 3 to 6+ diploma from the Montreal Montessori Training Centre (a bilingual program) and her Master's degree from Harvard University. Her graduate research on early literacy (the Montessori movable alphabet) won the Harvard Dean's prize for outstanding research. Her work focuses on transforming education into a transdisciplinary, scientific pedagogy grounded in mind, brain, and education.

Master Class with a Montessori Trainer

Title: Growing and Supporting Executive Function Skills in the Classroom

Target Level(s): General

Description: Whether you are a new or experienced Montessori guide, there is a critical need for tools and strategies to support children who don't YET have strong executive functioning (EF) skills. From this presentation, we hope that attendees will:

- Gain an understanding of EF through discussion and self-reflection
- Obtain knowledge of how Montessori naturally supports and promotes EF through shared insights
- Acquire specific strategies and tools to help children who struggle with EF in both Early Childhood and Elementary classrooms.

Presenter 1 Name: Elizabeth Goodman

Presenter 1 Bio: Liz Goodman is an Early Childhood lead guide at Hans Christian Andersen Montessori School in Bolton, CT, and formerly a lead guide at King's Wood Montessori School in Foxboro, MA. In addition, Liz works as an online instructor and faculty advisor for a MACTE-accredited teacher education program. Her experience as a heart-centered educator spans over 20 years as a high school teacher and 14 years as an Early Childhood Montessori teacher. Liz has also presented on many topics at various regional Montessori conferences. She holds an M.Ed. in Montessori Education from Xavier University and is MACTE credentialed (Early Childhood).

Presenter 2 Name: Suzanne Tipton

Presenter 2 Bio: Suzanne has worked with children from kindergarten through 12th grade in both the United States and Southeast Asia. In addition to her experience as a Montessori lead teacher, she has taught a range of subjects, including singing, drama, math, science, and English as a Second Language.

Suzanne holds a BBA from Eastern Tennessee State University. Her passion for adult education was sparked during her time in Thailand, where she served as the lead trainer for a TEFL program on the island of Koh Samui. Upon returning to the U.S., Suzanne pursued her MACTE-accredited Montessori Elementary Certification and discovered her true calling in Montessori education.

After leading her own Montessori Elementary classroom in Kentucky, Suzanne joined AIM as a full-time teacher trainer. She quickly stepped into leadership, becoming the

Elementary Level Coordinator, where she now serves as the lead instructor and mentor for students in the Elementary Certification Programs.

Suzanne also travels to provide customized professional development for Montessori schools and has shared her expertise at conferences in Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Massachusetts.

Afternoon Sessions

Title: Observation: a Way of Life

Target Level(s): Elementary

Description: Maria Montessori stated, “The fundamental quality that should distinguish the teacher is the capacity for observation.” Montessori training underscores the critical importance of classroom observation. Even experienced educators can find it challenging to carve out time to document observations amid the flow of daily classroom activity. This workshop offers participants an opportunity to renew their observational practice with the intent of deepening their understanding of the students in their care. Dialog and guided interactive experiences will promote the refinement of sensory awareness, rediscovering a sense of awe and wonder in our classroom environments, and viewing both ourselves and students as scientists. Participants will recognize the benefits of observation-based strategies for expanding consciousness, reducing stress, and scaffolding their students' learning. Join fellow Montessori educators in making observation not just a practice, but a way of life.

Presenter Name: Diana Traylor

Presenter Bio: Diana Loeb Traylor is a Lower Elementary teacher at Summit Montessori School. She has taught Montessori at this level since 2004 and began training adult learners with METTC in 2014. She continues both roles to this day. Diana has presented about creativity as a way for adults to deepen relationships with children for AMS and MSM. She earned a B.A. in Art History from Oberlin College and an AMS 6–9 credential (CMTE/NY-Lexington). She hones her observation skills daily by writing, playing violin, and creating visual art.

Title: Build a Top-Notch Development Program for Your Montessori School

Target Level(s): Administration

Description: This practical workshop will help you build (or rebuild) a “big picture” fundraising program for your school – one steered by a steady guiding strategy that will make it easier to distinguish the long-term from the short-term, the critical from the coincidental, the realistic measures from the overly ambitious. It requires vision, confidence, collaboration, creativity, and action plans. Combine these elements into a strong, sustainable, and leading-edge development program for your Montessori school. In this highly interactive workshop, there will be robust “resource sharing.” Participants will leave with a portfolio of materials – templates, samples, and the like – that they can

put to immediate use. Also, attendees will be able to sign up for an hour of personal consultation at a mutually convenient time following the conference.

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Title: Supporting Neurodiversity through Community Building

Target Level(s): Elementary

Description: In this workshop for new Montessori teachers, we will explore how different structures within your classroom community can help engage neurodivergent students who have difficulty with social initiation, developing friendships, and following established community expectations. Participants will collaborate and brainstorm ways they currently build community and how they see neurodiversity affecting students' ability to engage socially. Then, presenters will provide a series of different solutions and structures they use to support these learners.

Learner outcomes:

- Will be able to identify 2-3 activities/projects/classroom structures which make "community" accessible.
- Create an outline for the implementation of one classroom structure to achieve this goal.

- Will be able to develop student leadership roles within the classroom community.

Presenter 1 Name: Ethan Dauphinais

Presenter 1 Bio: Ethan has worked as an Upper Elementary teacher for over six years, with the last four being as a Lead in the classroom at Oak Meadow Montessori. He is certified to teach Upper Elementary through the Institute of Montessori Training and holds Master's Degrees from Endicott College and Ashland University in Education, American History, and Government.

Presenter 2 Name: Courtney Havens

Presenter 2 Bio: Courtney holds a M.S. in Language and Literacy Studies and a B.A. in Humanities and Elementary Education with a Minor in Theater, both from Wheelock College. She is certified in Montessori EL-II and has been teaching in the elementary grades for almost 20 years in public, charter, and private schools. Courtney has been an Upper Elementary Montessori educator for four years.

Title: How Great Governance Supports Great Schools: How the Head of School can Strengthen School Leadership in a truly Montessori Way

Target Level(s): Administration

Description: Today, school leaders are navigating increasing complexity in their roles. Join us to learn how the relationship between the Head of School and the Chair of the Board has never been more critical. A well-governed school doesn't just benefit the Head of School—it strengthens the entire school community. Special attention will be given to the unique and powerful relationship between the Head of School and Board Chair—and how Heads need to lead that partnership thoughtfully. We will also focus on the Head of School's role in shaping the structures for a strong, effective, and collaborative Board.

This session is designed for Heads of School, trustees, and school leadership teams who want to deepen their understanding of effective governance practices—and how to lead them well. We will explore how a high-functioning board, guided by Montessori principles, can serve as a true partner in helping a school flourish.

We'll examine the essential components of effective governance and the pivotal role the Head of School plays in leading, managing, and partnering with the Board. From building a strategic and respectful partnership with the Board Chair to ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities to creating inclusive board practices, this session will offer actionable insights for both emerging and experienced leaders.

The presentation will include active participation from attendees, scenario-based play, problem-solving, and the sharing of actual school leader experiences with Boards.

We'll highlight the essential components of board leadership, including how to build trust, clarify roles, and create systems that foster shared accountability and long-term planning. The session will be co-presented by Renee DuChaine-Farkes, a veteran school leader and founder of Kingsley Montessori (Boston) and a governance consultant, and Amy Mitchell, a second-year Head of School (Clementine Montessori School) who has courageously taken on board development and leadership in her own school community and in her personal goals. Her reflections will offer practical, honest, and inspiring insight for others navigating similar waters, along with some practical examples of actions she implemented with her Board.

Participants will engage in breakout discussions using real-life governance dilemmas, walk away with greater confidence and best-practice protocols to strengthen their governance structures, and reflect on how Montessori values—such as respect, stewardship, and collaboration—can shape more effective boards.

Whether you're a seasoned leader, just beginning your Headship, or a trustee seeking clarity on your role, this session will provide the tools and perspective needed to build a stronger, more aligned partnership at your school.

- Understand the role of the Head of School as both educational and governance leader—and how to manage that dual responsibility effectively.
- Identify the characteristics of a high-functioning Board of Trustees and understand how those characteristics support long-term school health and stability.
- Learn strategies for cultivating a strong partnership between the Head of School and Board Chair, including communication protocols, shared vision, and goal-setting.
- Examine governance practices aligned with Montessori principles, including mutual respect, community partnerships, and whole-school stewardship.
- Leave with concrete next steps to strengthen their school's governance structure and create a culture of continuous improvement and partnership.

Presenter Name: Renee DuChaine-Farkes

Presenter Bio: Renee DuChaine-Farkes, M.Ed., is the founding Head of School of Kingsley Montessori in Boston, Toddler through Grade 6. She is a dedicated advocate for and driver of excellence in the Montessori educational experience of students, parents, faculty, and Boards. She served as the Chair of Kingsley's Board for 10 years.

Renee served two terms on the AMS Board as Chair of the Heads Section and has developed a reputation as a presenter, instructor, and writer on Montessori school leadership topics.

Renee is currently coaching, advising, and consulting with Schools and leaders through ReneePartners on topics including Board Governance and Leadership, Enrollment Management (retention and new enrollment), Communications, Marketing, School Operations, Parent Relations, and Long-range planning. Her Governance work focuses specifically on the unique role of the HOS as the Board's leader.

Since COVID, Renee has completed the Montessori-In-Action coaching program with Elizabeth Slade, gaining valuable insights. And she completed the Certificate of School Management and Leadership at Harvard University. Renee shares that “both programs have provided me with new insights and learning beyond my own personal experience, which is proving to be of great added value.”

Title: Listen Then Transition: Influence and Adapt Your Communication, Leadership, and Emotional Intelligence

Target Level(s): Administration

Description: Listen Then Transition explores how emotional intelligence shapes interpersonal communication and leadership. Based on the book *Thor* by award-winning speaker and EQ expert Vincent Phipps, this high-energy presentation helps professionals identify gaps between perceived listening and their actual listening aptitude. Using a fun, fast-paced assessment, delivered either as a live poll or full-group activity, attendees compare their perceived strengths with data-driven results measuring both factual and emotional listening. Participants also complete a customizable emotional intelligence self-test using their own mobile devices. The results uncover how their behavioral EGO (Emotions, Goals, Obstacles of others) enhances or hinders collaboration. This insight equips leaders and teams with strategies to strengthen trust, resolve conflict, and increase impact across roles. Whether in public safety, healthcare, education, or business, attendees leave with practical tools for listening with intention, communicating with clarity, and leading with empathy.

Presenter Name: Vincent Phipps

Presenter Bio: Vincent Ivan Phipps, MA, CSP (PhD’26), is a business owner, college professor, author, humorist, and 100% communication strategist. As the CEO of the training company Communication VIP, located in Chattanooga, TN, Vincent has earned the designation of a Certified Speaking Professional. He is featured among the top 1% of the world’s best communication experts. Vincent is the author of two books: *Lead Out*

Loud and Um-believable Presentation Impact. With an MA in Leadership and a forthcoming PhD in Communication (2026), Vincent blends academic insight with real-world application in a way that's energizing, interactive, and—yes—laugh-out-loud funny. Known as “The Attitude Amplifier,” Vincent has spent over 28 years helping leaders, educators, executives, and everyday professionals improve how they listen, speak, resolve conflict, and build stronger teams. His signature style fuses storytelling, strategy, and side-splitting humor, keeping audiences engaged while delivering tools they can use immediately. Vincent’s presentation philosophy is the following: “If I can get you to laugh, I can get you to listen. If I can get you to listen, I can help you amplify!”

Title: Amplifying Voices: Student, Community, and Professional Development for Inclusive Montessori Leadership

Target Level(s): General

Description: This Interactive workshop explores the interconnected nature of amplifying diverse voices across three critical spheres: student empowerment, community engagement, and ongoing professional development. Participants will learn concrete strategies for creating systems in which student voices drive educational decisions, community perspectives shape institutional practices, and continuous professional growth ensures that adults remain prepared to facilitate meaningful, inclusive leadership.

Presenter Name: Carrie Horwitz Lang

Presenter Bio: As the Director of Montessori Education, my focus on bringing diverse voices to the table to discuss how we can uplift inclusive education in our practice drives transformative educational change and shapes my programming. With over 20 years of experience across public, independent, and higher education within the Montessori community, I am deeply passionate about advancing equity and accessibility in Montessori education. This extensive background has shaped my commitment to ensuring that Montessori principles reach and serve all children, families, and communities.

Title: Dual Language Montessori Programs: Strategies for Success

Target Level(s): Children's House, Elementary

Description: Participants will gain an understanding that a successful Dual Language Program stimulates and contributes to the development of the child's intelligence, independence, and social interaction in a respectful environment. Other benefits are the

development of critical thinking, positive decision-making, and the ability to express oneself creatively.

Workshop participants will receive sample lesson plans to help them start implementing a dual-language Montessori program with their students.

This session's objectives are for participants to learn how to start a dual language Montessori program (Spanish and English) that follows literacy from primary through elementary. Participants will also understand how to introduce multiple languages to students without confusion and will explore resources and techniques to promote language development in a bilingual or multilingual setting.

Margarita will draw from her wealth of experience to address these questions and more, offering actionable advice for fostering linguistic diversity and proficiency that promises to provide invaluable guidance and inspiration through opportunities for discussion and Q&A. Participants will be able to observe firsthand how to deliver three period language lessons in a dual language classroom, how to work with Montessori language materials, and ideas to set up a dual language Montessori environment. Through these different activities, participants will have tools to celebrate linguistic diversity and open doors to new opportunities for learning and growth.

Presenter Name: Margarita Diaz

Presenter Bio: Margarita Diaz is an experienced, certified bilingual Montessori educator with a demonstrated history of working in Montessori education for more than 20 years. Margarita's passion is to motivate educators and parents about the importance of bilingual and multilingual education within the Montessori philosophy. She is a teacher trainer at the Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies (IAMS), a regular speaker at American Montessori Society (AMS) conferences, the Founder of the AMS en Español Affinity Group, and serves as an AMS Board Member. She is a Montessori-certified Elementary I and II, a Montessori coach certified by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS), and AMS Director Academy certified.

Margarita was the first Spanish elementary teacher at a bilingual Montessori public charter school in Washington, DC, where she developed the entire 1st-5th-grade dual-language curriculum. Later, she assumed the role of Montessori Coach, Assistant Principal, and Director of the Elementary program.

She regularly gives conferences nationally and internationally in English and Spanish about Montessori education, with an emphasis on Dual Language Education, Multilingual Education, Peace Education, Cosmic Education, and Public Education.

Now she works independently as a Bilingual Montessori Consultant and Coach. She helps implement dual language programs in Montessori schools in Texas, Indiana, New Jersey, California, and Virginia for infant toddlers, primary, and elementary programs.

Margarita speaks, reads, and writes with fluency in Spanish, French, and English, and also speaks basic Portuguese.

Title: How to Teach Writing in the Montessori Elementary Classroom

Target Level(s): Elementary

Description: All children can develop the foundational writing skills they need to fulfill their cosmic task in the world—to connect with others, to make their dreams a reality, to bring about change in the world, etc. For some children, developing writing confidence happens organically. Most children, however, need more systematic and explicit instruction. This workshop will address how to equip children with the foundational writing skills they need to love writing and feel confident with it in the elementary (6-9 and 9-12) classroom. Specifically, we will address: the Writing Process: collecting and developing ideas, drafting, revising/editing, and publishing; building stamina in writing; using age-appropriate conventions and mechanics; being exposed to a variety of purposes and styles, including narrative, poetry, expository, letter writing, etc.; building motivation through relevant learning experiences that bring in Choice and Voice; and learning skills to deepen their work in Cosmic Education.

Presenter Name: Sara Cotner

Presenter Bio: Sara is the Founder & Co-Executive Director of Montessori For All. This organization builds tools and resources and offers coaching to ensure more equitable outcomes for children in Montessori programs. Montessori For All launched Austin's first free public Montessori school, serving nearly 500 children, infants through Upper Elementary. Sara has cultivated broad insight into educational reform as a Teach For America national staff member, the founder of an independent consulting firm, an adjunct professor, and a teacher across various environments, including charter, traditional districts, and public Montessori schools. She holds AMS Elementary certification and a NAMTA Adolescent certification, and attended a Montessori school as a child.

Title: Cultivating Your Tribe: Training, Support, and Appreciation

Target Level(s): Administration

Description: This interactive workshop, designed for School Leaders, will explore the symbiotic relationship between empowered staff and engaged parents as the driving forces for student success and long-term sustainability in Montessori education. We will explore how to move beyond traditional professional development to foster a true 'community of practice' among your staff, igniting their passion and expertise. Simultaneously, we will examine innovative strategies for cultivating authentic parent partnerships, transforming them into active collaborators in the educational journey. Together, we will sow the seeds of a vibrant learning community that honors the child, supports the educator, and embraces the family.

Learner Outcomes:

- Identify and implement strategies to foster a 'Community of Lifelong Learners' among staff, promoting ongoing professional growth and collaboration.
- Design and implement innovative approaches to cultivate authentic parent partnerships, increasing parent involvement and investment in the school community.
- Develop a sustainable model for professional development and parent engagement that empowers both staff and parents, ensuring the long-term vitality of your Montessori school.

Presenter Name: Rupali Sharma

Presenter Bio: Rupali Sharma, a Montessori educator, is trained as an architect and now runs The T.E.C. Schools-Think. Explore. Create in Worcester. She is passionate about education and founded Imagination Unbound and The T.E.C. Schools, two educational organizations that lay the early foundations for creative thinking and problem-solving through hands-on learning experiences. Her training as an architect taught her to create the big picture for large projects and identify detailed steps for bringing projects to fruition. She applies this technique in business management as well. Rupali is a mentor to many women entrepreneurs and professionals in the USA and India.

Title: Seamless Transitions

Target Level(s): General

Description: Seamless Transitions is an approach that reimagines the entire process of how children and families experience the move from one classroom to another. In conventional settings, this happens every year and is often done by the main office staff

or by a computer. In contrast, in Montessori schools, children move to a new classroom only every three years, and so the transition can be anywhere from unsettling to upsetting if done without a process that allows for preparation and planned steps taken over time. Everyone should see what's coming —children, families, school adults —and be able to walk towards it with a sense of excitement. Class transitions can then be a celebration of the child's growth and readiness rather than an unknown event that happens to the child.

This presentation introduces a whole school approach to the classroom transition process, as well as previews a bank of time-tested, useful tools and resources.

Presenter Name: Elizabeth Slade

Presenter Bio: Elizabeth Slade is an author and educator with thirty-eight years of experience working in Montessori education. She has worked as an elementary teacher, Montessori coach and administrator, and spent six years at the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector working with public Montessori schools across the country. She now serves as the Executive Director of Public Montessori in Action International, an organization created to ensure the full implementation of Montessori education for children, families, and educators of the global majority. Her book *Montessori in Action: Building Resilient Montessori Schools* was released in July 2021, and her historical fiction novel *Momentum: Montessori, a Life in Motion* was released in August 2023. *Finding Ground: Building Strong Elementary Practice*, co-written with Allison Jones, is forthcoming. Elizabeth holds an AMI Elementary diploma, an AMS Montessori Administrators credential, and