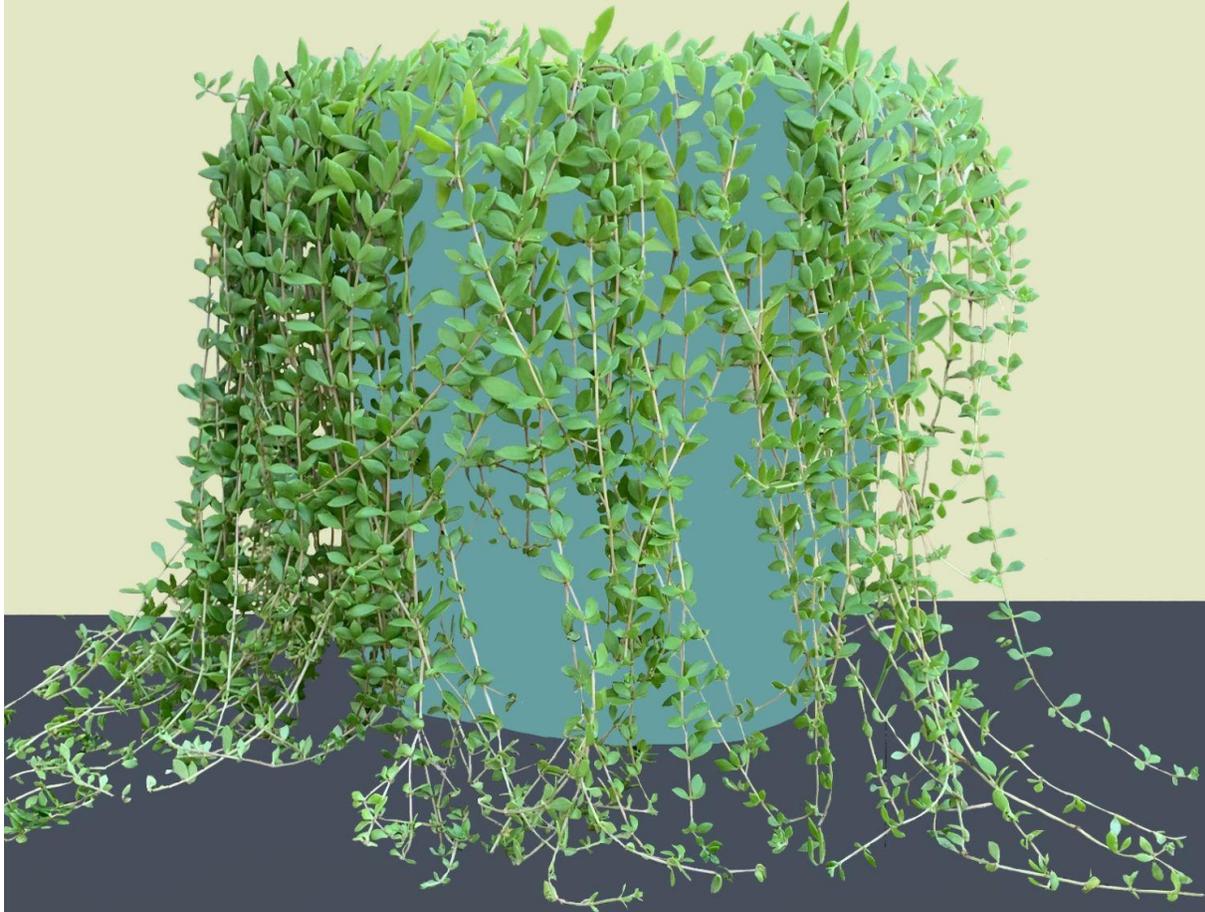




lessons at your leisure



Living the Theory:
Montessori Meets the
Real World

*We all know a lot about Montessori. We either trained, read, immersed ourselves, or learned on the job. We all know the basic curriculum and know the theory. But are we really **living** Montessori? The kids aren't exactly like our training said they would be - they don't all respond the same way, they don't all get it. What else do we need to do to really follow the child? If we are creating peace, there are issues we need to address. How do we do that? If we are **living** Montessori - we also need to do it outside of the classroom - advocate, support new parents and each other. We need to have our own inner peace -- to adapt to our time and place. Our conference aims at supporting you in **living your best Montessori life**.*

Everything you need to know about Lessons at your leisure...

- It is a video series of professional development videos - all approximately 30 minutes in length.
- The series will be available through the VMA website for a month for you to peruse as you choose.
- You can register as an individual member (\$10) a non-member(\$25) or as a group(\$100).
- You will be sent an access code on Friday, November 19th at noon.
- CEU's will be available upon request after the series is closed, on December 19th.
- There will be content for all Montessorians and parents.
- To get an idea of what it will be like - check out our virtual conference library from 2020 [here](#).
- Register [here](#).
- Browse other VMA resources [here](#).

Talk Descriptions and Speaker Biographies



BethAnn Slater | "Montessori Maneuvers" Living with Children and One Another in Community

How well do you support the graces of your community? How well do you choose your words and actions? Wouldn't you like to have your toolbox filled with options as you build community and support all the humans, young and old that are a part of your life? Montessori Maneuvers will connect us all to the relationships that we build in community with one another and with the children. We will talk about how we set ourselves and others around us for successful, positive interactions. We will support the skill of observation of children and one another in our homes, schools, classrooms and beyond in such a way that prevention can truly be our best medicine.

~ ~ ~

BethAnn Slater is an AMI 3-6 Trainer and has worked with children and families for over 30 years. She is currently training teachers at MINT in Dallas TX and in Cape Town, South Africa at Indaba Institute. BethAnn has worked on behalf of the Rights of the Child as a Mother, Assistant, Lead Guide, Head of School, Board Member and volunteer. She feels that while our focus is often what is happening inside the classrooms we support we must always keep in our vision the social mission that Maria Montessori left for us. She truly believes that living Montessori as authentically as possible in all that we do is the answer to promoting world peace and contributing to a new orientation of humankind.



Katie Brown | Following All the Children: An Introduction to Child Study

Child Study is a Montessori-based approach to meeting the needs of all children, resolving difficulties early, and using a wide range of data to support student development, analogous to RTI or MTSS. A commitment to serving children through Child Study has the power to help a school shift toward curiosity-based solution finding. This workshop will provide an introduction to the theory underlying Child Study and an overview of the process at the classroom and school levels.

~ ~ ~

Katie holds a PhD in urban education from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where she studied outcomes for African American students in public Montessori schools. She is an adjunct faculty member at Whitworth University, where she teaches the Montessori Surround arc of graduate-level courses. Her recent research projects have focused on creativity, executive functions, and distance learning in Montessori schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Katie has been working in Montessori since 2012, and with NCMPS since 2015. She also has the pleasure of being a Montessori parent. Katie lives in Cary, NC with her partner and two first-plane children.



Brei Stevenson | Community & Recruiting Through Parent Education

Building a robust Montessori school community requires buy-in from parents. And not just any kind of buy-in, but one of deep appreciation, understanding, and witnessing of the scientifically proven approach to childhood firsthand through their children's eyes. As educators and administration, you've got plenty on your plate already. But how can you strengthen your parent community, decrease recruiting efforts, and have an additional stream of program income?

~ ~ ~

Brei Stevenson is a mom, wife, LGBTQ+ community member, UX Designer & Strategist by day, and the Executive Director of Wild Fern Montessori late at night. Using her marketing, strategy, and empathetic skill sets, she works to amplify the need and build a foundation for equitable access to high-quality, authentic Montessori early education in Richmond, Virginia. Wild Fern Montessori School is a 501(c)3 organization and school aiming to make educational opportunities equitable and accessible in our community in a safe and affirming space. With our Sliding Scale Tuition Program, we can subsidize tuition costs for many deserving families.



Corey Borgman | Redefining our Community: Parent Outreach Beyond School Walls

In this talk, Corey will encourage you to rethink Montessori Parent Education as we typically define it. When we share our knowledge and resources more broadly, and in particular with underserved and under-resourced families, we can engage and transform our neighborhoods and communities. Corey will profile a parent/infant/toddler education program being piloted in partnership with Charlottesville's City of Promise and discuss ways that such programs can benefit schools, parents, children, and the community at large.

~ ~ ~

Corey Borgman has been a Montessori teacher and administrator for 17 years, acting as lead adolescent co-guide at Mountaintop Montessori in Charlottesville, and then later as Director of the Upper School there. Recently, Corey completed her EdD in Educational Leadership at UVA's School of Education & Human Development and transitioned to work at UVA in a newly created position as Montessori Education & Outreach Director. Corey has presented frequently at educational and Montessori-specific conferences and served as a Montessori leadership consultant for several organizations nationwide. She is the mother to three Montessori children and, in her free time enjoys yoga, reading, and baking.



Christina Carroll | Openness and Teacher Beliefs among Conventional and Montessori Teachers

If you're anything like me, you've had experiences in the conventional school system. I was educated in public conventional schools and began my teaching career there. However, once I found out about Montessori, got my training and started teaching, I experienced a transformation. My beliefs about children and teaching shifted. Understanding this transformation is the core of my research. Here I present a mixed-methods study investigating the relation between openness and teacher beliefs among 360 conventional and Montessori teachers. Montessori teachers scored significantly higher on openness and beliefs about student-centered education compared to conventional teachers. Let's explore these results together!

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Christina is a graduate student working with Angeline Lillard at the University of Virginia. She received a BS in Psychology from Michigan State University. She taught middle-school science and social studies on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota for two years through Teach for America. She then attended AMI elementary teacher training at the Montessori Institute of Milwaukee. She spent the past 10 years in Montessori schools, teaching children ages 6 to 12 years old. Christina's main research interests lie in understanding the origins and development of teacher beliefs among conventional and Montessori teachers.



Denise Monnier | Advocacy for Montessori in Virginia

As Montessorians we have put so much energy into our classroom environments, and so much of that environment comes from the modeling of the teacher. This session will propose ways to bring that modeling to the public face of Montessori. MPPI is the policy arm of AMS and AMIUSA, and we advocate for policy change supporting the growth and accessibility of Montessori. We have been involved in exciting work in Virginia and invite you to come hear more about policy initiatives in your state and also learn how you can support and facilitate change as you interact with parents and others in your daily work and local communities.

~ ~ ~

Denise Monnier is a Montessori parent, advocate, and advocacy coach, striving for public policy that supports universal access to Montessori education. More than 15 years of teaching in and leading Montessori schools made her deeply aware of the need for equity in and access to high quality education. Denise's journey into education policy began when she founded an early childhood outreach program, securing funding for families to access Montessori early childhood experiences. As a head of school and through her involvement in the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools where she currently serves as Executive Director, her advocacy efforts turned to statewide and national advocacy. Her work with MPPI is centered around supporting our state advocacy groups and equipping them with the tools and training they need to be effective advocates for children.



Sheri L. Bishop | Coming Out in Montessori School: The Importance of Teacher Competency and Support

How do I address this with my student? How do I discuss this with the family? What will the other parents think? How will it affect the class dynamics? These are all questions that may come to mind after one of your students comes out to you and fellow students as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. As prepared Montessori adults, we commit to see each person as a complete, unique individual and to teach the whole child. This means that the Montessori

guide, the classroom community, and the school community has to seek ways to affirm all parts of our students and their families. Hear how Montessori students, guides, a classroom, community and a school successfully navigated through this issue in a positive and supportive way. This is a panel discussion

~ ~ ~

Sheri is an experienced Montessori Elementary guide, holds an AMI 6-12 diploma from the Montessori Institute of Atlanta, a Masters in Montessori Elementary Education from Loyola University in Baltimore, MD and an AMI 3-6 diploma from the Montessori Institute of North Texas. Sheri serves at the AMI/USA Human Rights and Social Justice Advisor, the Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist Consultant for Montessori Institute of North Texas (MINT) and is pleased to serve on the Virginia Montessori Association Board of Directors. She is a proud mother of two sons, both who attended Montessori schools during their primary, elementary, and/or middle school careers. They were her inspiration to start a second career, pursue training to become a trained Montessori guide, and to become an ABAR/HRSJ advocate within the Montessori community.



Betsy Gladen | Montessori at Home

This talk is for a parent audience on how to incorporate Montessori principles at home. We will hear from teachers at each level (Infant, Toddler, Children's House, and Elementary) specific ideas and examples that parents can use immediately on how to make simple adjustments at home to incorporate the Montessori philosophy.

~ ~ ~

Betsy Gladen is the Head of School at CMS. Betsy has been a Montessori educator for 15 years, and holds a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Education. She is Montessori certified ages 3-6. Betsy also teaches adult learners seeking their Early Childhood Credential for the Virginia Montessori Teacher Education Center (VMTEC). Betsy has given her "Parent Communication Made Easy" workshop (with fellow Montessorian, Shanna Honan) at the AMS Conference in Chicago (2016) and for each VMTEC Early Childhood training cycle since 2016.



Alissa McKown and Cynthia Jordan Fisher

How do Montessori and newborns intersect? One nonprofit's approach



Nearby Baby's mission is to provide quality postpartum support to families with a newborn in the Charlottesville area, regardless of their ability to pay. Nearby Baby also developed a training curriculum to train Postpartum Doulas to expand their reach in the community. This customized curriculum incorporates Montessori principles and methods. Join Alissa McKown as she has a conversation with her mentor, Cynthia Fisher about her inspiration for founding a non-profit and developing a training curriculum and how a Montessori approach supports new families and communities.

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Alissa is certified at the Assistants to Infancy level and has worked with Toddlers and their families for over 10 years in Parent-Infant classes, in the Toddler classroom, as a virtual teacher with Guidepost Montessori, and as a Postpartum Doula. She also trained with Judi Orion in Autogenic Respiratory Training, a relaxation technique for childbirth. She serves on the board of the VMA. Alissa met Cynthia when she attended Cynthia's "Montessori Mornings" program with her daughter and a few years later she was trained and mentored by Cynthia as a Postpartum Doula and joined her efforts at Nearby Baby as a Doula and Advisory Board Member.

Cynthia Jordan Fisher is a graduate of Silvana Montanaro's AMI Assistants to Infancy program's second graduating class, in 1985. After giving birth to her first child in 1986, Cynthia supported mothers in their homes as a Child Development Specialist in Hawaii. She has been working with families in Charlottesville since 1996 where she began teaching Montessori parent child classes for parents with newborns - age 3 through her program Babies by the Blue Ridge. A DONA certified postpartum doula, Cynthia has been working to develop the Charlottesville nonprofit Nearby Baby.org for the past three years and training women interested in being postpartum doulas, from a Montessori perspective. She has two daughters and five grandchildren.



Michael Dorer | School and Home: Preparing Children for Life

How does Montessori education prepare children for life? How do we help children reach their potential and become the adults they want to become? What should the school-home relationship look like? Please listen as Michael is interviewed and gives answers to these questions and more.

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Michael holds several Montessori credentials, was trained internationally, and has taught students from age 2 to 14. He has been involved in Montessori education for over 45 years, including two decades of educating adults to be Montessorians. Michael holds multiple degrees including Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) from Argosy University. After 25 years as Director of Montessori education at St. Catherine University, he went on in 2012 to found a graduate level Montessori program at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, Utah called "The Institute for Montessori Innovation". Michael is a well known story teller and has a new book coming out called "Grammar Tells a Story", which is a story telling book about language.



Ayize Sabater | Addressing the Teacher Shortage #ConsiderMontessori

Recently, Frontline Education, a non-profit educational organization, surveyed over 1,200 school leaders and found that "two-thirds of the survey respondents report teacher shortages, a record high" (May 2021). The Montessori movement is not immune from this teacher shortage, and given the pandemic, this crisis might be further exacerbated. Therefore, AMI/USA has been working diligently with AMI

global to understand and address this crisis. To that end, we have recently launched a two-month long soft campaign, called #ConsiderMontessori. With this campaign, we are asking individuals to explore Montessori as a teaching career option; as a holistic developmental educational option for children; and as a way to enhance one's parenting skills.

~ ~ ~

Ayize Sabater is a dynamic entrepreneur, educational researcher, author and thirty-year educator. He earned his bachelor's at Morehouse, Master's at Wesley and doctorate at Morgan State University in 2018. Dr. Ayize has co-founded several organizations, including an independent Black school and a Montessori Public Charter school in D.C.. Ayize has often been featured as a Keynote speaker and is a 2010 educational excellence award recipient for M.O.M.I.E's Inc., presented by First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House. Ayize recently co-founded the Black Montessori Educational Fund and was selected as the first Black Executive Director of AMI USA in November 2020.



Paula Lillard Preschlack | Explaining Montessori's Urgent Relevance, Where Theory Matches Reality

Using colorful photos of children working in Montessori classrooms, I will demonstrate for educators a way to explain to parents why Montessori's approach to education is more relevant today than ever. Much of my content comes from a book I am currently writing on this topic. My goal with this talk is to give other Montessori educators ideas for how they might create their own ways of explaining this amazing approach to skeptics, and to help enthusiasts to understand it more fully.

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Paula Lillard Preschlack writes blog articles at forestbluffschool.org/blog, a newsletter at paulalillardpreschlack.com and speaks about Montessori education at [Soundcloud.com/paulalillardpreschlack](https://soundcloud.com/paulalillardpreschlack) and at conferences and schools. Paula taught Primary and Elementary levels for 12 years and was the Head of Forest Bluff School for 15 years, in Lake Bluff, Illinois. She is AMI trained at the Assistants to Infancy, Primary and Elementary levels, and has audited the Adolescent Orientation from NAMTA. Paula led Forest Bluff School's Montessori From the Start Program for parents with infants and young children with her sister, Lynn Jessen, and their mother, Paula Polk Lillard, for 20 years. She is the parent of two Montessori graduates. She can be contacted at plpreschlack@gmail.com



Catherine Nehring Massie | Integrating Montessori & Orton-Gillingham: An Overview

The Montessori Language curriculum provides a rich and deep learning experience that meets the needs of most typically-developing children; but what about the estimated 1 in 5 children who need more? Catherine will give an overview of the Orton-Gillingham Approach and its compatibility with the Montessori approach to Language Development. She will give an outline of how Montessori and OG Approaches together can support the writing and reading development of children with Dyslexia and demonstrate a couple of multisensory OG exercises that benefit these children.

~ ~ ~

Catherine studied Montessori Elementary Education at CISM, Bergamo, Italy, and has a Masters in teaching Elementary and Special Education. Catherine has experience as a Montessori mom, an Orff Schulwerk music teacher, a Montessori Special Educator, an Orton-Gillingham tutor and a Montessori school director. She was a founder of two Montessori Public Charter Schools in Frederick, Maryland. Catherine has travelled and presented internationally advocating for more inclusive Montessori education. She is Co-Founder/ Co-Director of Montessori Medical Partnership for Inclusion.

Thank you to our sponsors!

