



ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE
ELEMENTARY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

AMI-EAA is a member-run professional association of AMI elementary teachers and trainers, providing a supportive community for the exchange of ideas and promoting the principles of Montessori education.



Who's on Board? *The EAA board is made up of 6 member volunteers. We meet monthly on zoom and occasionally in person! To be a board member, you must be an active EAA member for 3 of the last 5 years.*

- Melinda Nielsen: Chair chair@ami-eaa.org
- Rachel Kimboko: Treasurer business@ami-eaa.org
- Erik Rivas-Rivas: Conference Coordinator events@ami-eaa.org
- Ginger Kleiber: Membership Coordinator membership@ami-eaa.org
- Regina Sokolowski: Outreach Coordinator outreach@ami-eaa.org
- Becca Peters: Publications Coordinator publications@ami-eaa.org



Table of Contents:

From the Chair.....2
Birthday Traditions3-4
Online Offerings.....4
Book Recommendations.....5
New Songs6
Collage7-8
Refresher Course.....9
Community10
Publisher’s Note11
Advertisements.....11

From the Chair

By Melinda Nielsen

Dear AMI-EAA Community,
In the Northern Hemisphere summers provide significant time for rest, relaxation and my favorite pastime of immersing myself into a new inspirations and explorations. This summer led me to an appreciation of our wonderful geography charts.

From watching the wind teaming up with water as Hurricane Beryl passed over my home to the results of ancient glaciation forming Acadia National Park in Maine the impressions of the charts became incredibly real.

Due to the hurricane causing flight cancellations I arrived at the EAA Summer Conference on the last day. It was amazing to walk into the quiet buzz of attendees working on all their artistic endeavors. Over half of them were first time attendees and a handful attend every year. They left armed with new ideas, artistic confidence and many new friendships. Within the pages of this newsletter and the next issue, you can explore the many highlights of the conference.

After attending our recent refresher course in Dallas, Texas and attending the closing ceremony of the summer conference in Manchester NH I am encouraged by your joy, creativity, determination, intellect, integrity and the love you bring to your work with the children.

You are AMI-EAA, and we are strong! My friend, colleague and former Chair of AMI-EAA, John Snyder said it best, “There will always be a need for AMI-EAA as long as there is AMI elementary training because our mission is grounded in the very predictable needs of the developing elementary teacher, our individual and collective commitment to helping each other continually improve our understanding and practice of AMI Montessori, and in our shared AMI pedagogical practices. These are our anchors, our touchstones, the essence of who we are as an organization.”

Enjoy your journey with the children this year. We hope to see you at the Refresher Course this year with the experienced J. McKeever as she takes us beyond the grammar boxes to discover the Glamour of Grammar.

Peace and Gratitude!
Melinda Nielsen
AMI-EAA Chair

Don't forget to join us
in February for the
Refresher Course!

Details on Page 9.

Guidelines for Birthday Celebrations in the Columbia Classroom

Created by Tami O’Kinsella *Tami guides a 6-9 class at Lewis & Clark Montessori Charter School in Oregon*

Beyond having fun, my aim in the celebration of a child’s birthday is threefold. I want to give the birthday children the opportunity to reflect on and share their personal history; for all the students to gain a deeper understanding of each other and of the measuring of time, and I want students to engage in academic activities that appeal to them. My strategy is to have a celebration that speaks to the social nature of the elementary child; to design it in a way that engages their intense desire for friendship, acceptance and acknowledgement from their peers as well as giving them opportunities to collaborate!

Each month, we will designate a day as the celebration day for those children whose birthday or “half birthdays” fall within that month (half birthdays are for those who have summer birthdays—they aren’t exact but this gives us an opportunity to figure out what fraction of their birthday we are celebrating []). At the beginning of the month, all children having a birthday that month will have the opportunity to choose a classmate to interview them.

That classmate will then write down answers to quest certain questions and share that information to the Columbia class. This means they will serve as the spokesperson for the birthday child (a copy of these questions will be sent to you soon so that you can help prepare your child for these questions. They include such things as where they were born, their ethnicity, their birth order, etc.). There will also be students designated to create a card for the birthday children and for ensuring that everyone signs it with their name and a positive adjective they have chosen for the birthday student (the Columbia students help create a list of positive adjectives).

The birthday children will also plan a celebration drink (a smoothie which they will each choose their fruit or 100% fruit juice to add—we will make it in a blender at school). This is where parents help as the students will bring home a written request for a small amount of a particular fruit or 100% fruit juice to share with their classmates. On the day of the birthday celebration, these items will be brought forward. In the morning or during lunch, the smoothie gets prepared. At the end of the day, the interviewers will present their birthday friend, the card will be delivered, and with a toast to all birthday students, the birthday drink will be served!

We will also do some applied math, figuring out such details around the solar based measuring of time which tells us how many years old each student is. For example, we may do some figuring around the number of months a student has been alive, calling on those who know their multiples of twelve; how many weeks, multiples of 52; how many days, multiples of 365; hours, minutes, seconds, etc. For those who have summer birthdays, we may also figure out what fraction of their birthday we are celebrating. Wow! I just did this for one of our summer birthday students, and discovered that it involved addition, multiplication, division, finding the Greatest Common Factor of 2 numbers and rounding of numbers! I love practical math application opportunities!

Here is the schedule for birthday celebrations. I have tried to use the Thursday of the 3rd week of each month, however, for some months I chose a different Thursday because of holidays or other events during the month. Also, last year I tried to have a June celebration, but it ended up being very complicated because of all else that typically happens during the last week of school. Therefore, those who have birthdays in June, July or August have been grouped with other monthly birthdays and we will celebrate their “half birthday” (or whatever fraction of the birthday we discover that it is).

Interview Questions for Student's Birthday Celebration

Student Interviewed: _____

Interviewer: _____

When is your Birthday (Month, day and year)?

How old are you? _____

Where were you born? _____

What is your ethnicity? _____

What is your birth order (eg. third child, only child, etc.)? _____

Tell me a food that you really like? _____

Is there a sport or game you really like? _____

What is something fun that happened to when you were () _____?

Do you know the farthest place to which you have traveled? _____

What is your sign or your birthstone?

What are the birthday traditions in your class? Please share with the rest of EAA! Send ideas to publications@ami-eea.org for a feature in the next newsletter!

Recent EAA Online Offerings

Have you caught all of our amazing recent online offerings? Click the links below for the recordings!



[Art Webinar](#)



[Community Songbook](#)

Read Aloud Recommendations from EAA *contributed by our members*

A tradition at the Summer Conference each year is to put a big poster on the wall and throughout the week attendees add to it with their favorite book suggestions. This year we also put the call out on EAA Talk and here are the results!

6-9

The Wild Robot
My Father's Dragon
The Great Cake Mystery
The Phantom Tollbooth
My Side of the Mountain
Frindle (or 9-12)
The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane
Around the World in 80 Days
Where the Mountain Meets the Moon
Aesop's Fables
Wind in the Willows
The Search for Delicious
Simon B Rhymin'
Charlotte's Web
Matilda
Sideways Stories from Wayside School
A Child's introduction to the Orchestra (Robert Levine)
Mamolina - all ages
Wonder - all ages
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory - all ages
100 Dresses - all ages

9-12

The Boggart
Freewater
The Eyes and the Impossible by Dave Eggers
Fish in a Tree
History Quest: The United States
Chasing Vermeer
Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus
When You Trap a Tiger (also 6-12)
The Swifts (Contains murder! It's a mystery.)
The Night Diary, by Veera Hiranandan
Greenglass House
The Last Mapmaker
Mister Orange
Eleven by Tom Rogers (a boy turns 11 on the day of 9/11 - intense story, shorter read, children were riveted)
The Inquisitor's Tale
The Girl Who Drank the Moon

6-12

The Mysterious Benedict Society
A Tale Dark and Grimm
Ban This Book
When the Sea Turns to Silver
The Tale of Despereaux
Before the Ever After
The Silver Arrow
The Girl Who Drank the Moon
Things Seen from Above by Shelley Pearsall

Have other ideas to share? Want to write a book review for something you or your class has been enjoying? Email publications@ami-eea.org and we'll add it to the next newsletter!

Anne Adams: New Songs for New Humans *presented in Santa Fe, 2023*

In the summer of 2023, we were fortunate to have Anne Adams as one of our presenters. Anne performed over a dozen original songs that she wrote for Elementary students and was generous enough to share the sheet music and let us record. Her songwriting is a delight to children and adults. The links are to video clips of individual songs; the link for a google drive with PDFs of the sheet music is below. Enjoy!

[My Zipper is Missing a Tooth](#) [My Zipper is Missing a Tooth \(part 2\)](#)

[What is the Right Thing to Do?](#)

[Do you Know the Vertebrates?](#)

[The Continents Song](#)

[A Cute Angle](#)

[Undercoats](#)

[Overcoats](#)

[Four Way Stop](#)

[Downhill](#)

[Brand New Pencil](#)

[Ways of Staying True](#)

[Being More Gentle](#)

[Since Person Was Born](#)

[Sherwood Montessori School Song](#)

[New Songs for New Humans Sheet Music](#)



Creativity Through Collage with Golnar Parry by Lindsey Nelson

On Friday, July 12th, we were delighted to benefit from the wisdom of Golnar Parry. We began the morning by viewing and discussing a collection of photos of student follow up work. Golnar's photos were beautiful and inspiring! Some key take-aways include:

1) Provide mini lessons to demonstrate new skills and techniques that the children can apply to their projects.

During the conference this week, Golnar provided lessons on making books and collage. Check out her [website](#) for more ideas, including a bunch of free resources and an online asynchronous class!

2) Having a good set of materials available – for example:

- Chalk pastels
- Watercolors
- Watercolor pencils
- Good colored pencils (Prismacolor Scholar)
- Look into Prismacolor Sticks too
- Glue, Mod Podge
- Variety of paint brushes for painting and gluing
- Letter stencils for writing titles is a great idea! Look into buying big chunky ones so that there is room for students to decorate the inside.

3) Shelf organization! Some ideas:

- Long, open, deep shelves work well
- Find beautiful and functional containers to display art supplies
- Get strategic with paper storage; look for mini shelves or drawers
- Make it easy for the children to put things away and maintain order

(For example, take the chalk pastels out of the box and find a container with a lid that you can store them in.)

4) Storage of student work:

traditional drying racks are great, but expensive! One idea is to look for sweater drying racks. This is an ongoing area to discuss and figure out...



On the first day, our participants created fabulous painted papers to use for collage later on. Look at all the colors and patterns they made!

Then, we moved into the main event of the day: collage! Golnar showed us examples of student work and shared that she often compares collage to building with Legos. The main idea is to build shapes out of different pieces. For example, if you want to make a boat, don't just cut out the outline of a boat. Instead, cut out (or tear up) several small pieces of paper to construct the shape of the boat.

We talked about three techniques:

- 1) Cut paper collage
- 2) Torn paper collage
- 3) A mix of cut paper and torn paper

Then, we went to work! We each selected a few sheets of the paper that we had painted earlier in the week. Regina put on some 80s music, and we got to it! We learned that the Mod Podge has a strong smell – do it with good ventilation or outside! It works well, though you can also use regular Elmer's glue. The creativity was booming! Examples included a lilac, underwater scene, cherry blossoms, trilobite, bumble bee, elephant, canoe in the sea, and so much more.

Throughout both her presentations (on bookmaking and collage) Golnar emphasized that creating opportunities for creative expression opens so many doors. But first, we have to tend to our own perceptions about it. She wisely encouraged us to remember to notice if / when the negative voice of "this is horrible" creeps up. Golnar reminds us to be kind with ourselves. Just keep going. When you extend this grace to yourself, it will transfer to the children. Just keep going.



Just a sampling of the amazing collages created by our creative members!



*Elementary Refresher Course:
The Glamour of Grammar
with J McKeever*

How different grammar will seem to the young pupil, if, instead of being the cruel assassin that tears the sentence to pieces, so nothing is understood, it becomes the amiable and indispensable help to 'the construction of connected discourse!'
The Advanced Montessori Method, Vol. II

Join us as we examine elements of the Grammar and Syntax chapter of our Language Albums – and use them as springboards to inspire children to swan dive into deeper investigations. Our work with word study, parts of speech, and sentence analysis appeals to second-plane reasoning and imaginative abilities. It assists children in the development of their spoken and written articulation; and, as Dr. Montessori wrote, to the development of connected discourse. Our approach guides them to joyful discoveries. Children's explorations lead them to an appreciation of the structure and precision of our language, as well as to an appreciation of its nuance and complexity. Above all, children discover that the English language can be glamorous.

The bridge between the words glamour and grammar is magic. According to the OED, glamour evolved through an ancient association between learning and enchantment.

The Glamour of Grammar: A Guide to the Magic and Mystery of Practical English
Roy Peter Clark

Our role of Montessori educators includes assisting children in meeting certain writing standards of core curriculum before they leave us at the end of the elementary experience. These standards may vary from state to state, district to district. Our presenter will offer guidance about how to meet some of these expectations, particularly regarding position/opinion essays, without abandoning the explorations that bring life to our vibrant elementary classrooms.

How is Community like a Wheel ? By Maryse Postlewaite

Consider the hub of the wheel to be what joins a group of people. What are your common interests? Imagine that each spoke represents a person in that community. The wheel can be an apt metaphor. It moves well when all are supporting one another. When presenting this to a group, begin by drawing (on a white board or large paper) a circle and then the hub at the center. Ask about the different communities members of your group are a part of. Draw spokes from the hub to the edge of the circle.

Explain how each spoke represents a person in the community.

Some groups are small and others so large that we have to imagine that many spokes in the wheel.



The spokes joined at the hub provide strength, stability, and ease in moving the group along. In order to keep the wheel turning easily, each person needs to feel seen and heard. Every member counts.

Each person is interdependent as are the spokes of the wheel.

Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk and peace activist, coined the word “interbeing”, meaning the interconnectedness of all things in the universe. He famously gives the example of how a sheet of paper is an interbeing as it is connected with a cloud through a chain of relationships. In this same way, all humans are connected and affect one another.

Imagine if one spoke breaks. The wheel no longer moves smoothly. There are many reasons why someone in a group is not able to contribute at any given time. In order to keep the integrity of the community, we need to support one another. There are many stories how a single individual or a group effort has made a difference. When some are needing greater care, it’s important for other members to provide encouragement and assistance, as needed and in consideration with time and energy.

An extension:

Identify the different communities each is a part of...family, sport teams, clubs, classes, city, country, even the world. Consider how we may be members of multiple communities to which we have an allegiance.

Sometimes our allegiances conflict with another. With any group, this can provide a platform for discussion. For example, with young learners, it may happen that children from the same classroom find themselves playing on opposing sides of a team sport. The following question may arise... to which community is your strongest allegiance? Some of us may have experienced this with family members of a different faiths, a political perspectives, or values? Regardless of these separate communities, we are all members of the human race, a community as a whole.

Discussion Activity:

Consider the questions below further discussion.

List the various groups you are a part of. How do they differ in the way that they are managed?

What makes a difference in the groups that proceed smoothly vs. those that do not?

What common values does each group adhere to? If none, how does this affect your experiences with the group?

How does Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of “interbeing” influence you? Your group?

Might you be one to improve the process of the group, if needed? If so, how would you do so?

This is one of many activities in the Conflict Resolution Pathways online course in collaboration with Kidpower International. To learn more visit www.kidpower.org/pathways

From the Publications Coordinator:

Dear Members,

This issue of the newsletter has been a long time coming, and I want to thank everyone who contributed! Getting submissions is not always easy, so I am grateful for everyone who sent something in. EAA is a volunteer run, grassroots organization of elementary teachers supporting each other. I invite each of you, members new and old, to think of what support you'd love to see in a future newsletter, and/or what support you can offer to other members and send it my way. I have yet to meet an EAA member who is not a treasure trove of ideas, passion and questions!

If you have questions, suggestions, requests, comments or advice, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at publications@ami-eea.org

With Gratitude,

Becca Peters

The AMI-EAA Newsletter provides a vehicle for professional communication, discussion, and argument. It contains articles which are written by and for its own membership. The contents of this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of AMI-EAA or AMI.

Copyright 2024 all rights reserved. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced in any form, stored in any information retrieval system, or transmitted by any means without prior permission of the publishers.

Advertisements

[Visit our Job Postings at our website](#)



Stay tuned for more Summer Conference fun in our next issue!