# The Montessori Leaders Collaborative Meeting in Austin, TX, January 13, 2013

## Communiqué

The Montessori Leaders Collaborative (MLC) group members convened in Austin, Texas from January 11-13, 2013 to build on our previous work over the past fourteen months in planning and implementing a collaborative and successful future for the Montessori movement. Our unanimous goal is to bring high quality Montessori to more children.

These face-to-face meetings of the leaders of several Montessori organizations continue to deepen the sense of shared purpose we feel. It is becoming more clear that it is possible to appreciate the diversity of thought in our movement while discovering commonalities. We are very cognizant that if we model the behavior, collaboration, creativity, respect, and enthusiasm that our students exhibit in the classroom, there is no limit to what the Montessori movement can achieve!

We rolled up our sleeves and got to work in small teams on the first day of our meeting, moving the collaborative needle forward in areas such as funding, communications/advocacy, an emphasis on ages 0-6, research, teacher training, and reaching parents/alumni. On the second and third days we convened the whole group in order to come up with concrete next steps within those areas where we found consensus and interesting opportunities for action.

A number of concrete next steps worth noting here:

- 1. It is clear that engaging a communications firm will help us to articulate the message of the Montessori movement as a whole more strategically and effectively. We want to influence policy through our advocacy work. The conveners (The McCall Kulak Family Foundation and the McTeague Catalyst Fund) are beginning a search process this month.
- 2. A focus and planning process on birth-6 was one of our key successes at this meeting. There is an opportunity for Montessori to play a big part in birth-6 education nationally. The group endorsed a proposal for the establishment of a task force to create a template for the development of early childhood education centers. There is broad support for this effort.
- 3. Research projects have been launched with the support of the MLC and the financial backing of the Foundations. Studies on topics such as student outcomes are essential for us to be able to use hard data to back up the results of the Montessori method that we have so often seen with our own

eyes. We are determined to collect this data and use it strategically in order to benefit all Montessorians.

- 4. The MLC began a discussion of differences and commonalities in teacher training offered by the various Montessori training organizations, including AMS, AMI, MEPI and other teacher training programs. We focused on establishing a framework for further discussion, identifying dimensions along which to compare the different trainings, and beginning to plan how to bring our pedagogical experts into the conversation. Bringing Montessori to more children, particularly in the public sector, means ensuring that we have the capacity to train enough excellent Montessori teachers. MLC has taken a giant step forward in changing the tone of this conversation about training from what we recognize it has been for the past half century. The MLC will continue to work through these issues to find ways to support each other in our broader goal of bringing Montessori to more children.
- 5. A state-mapping project is underway that will result in a database of state and local organizations involved in Montessori advocacy, professional development and networking. We also agreed to build on the data currently in the database of MACTE (the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) to develop a more comprehensive view of Montessori training resources. We want to know exactly where our movement's resources are.
- 6. The McCall Kulak Family Foundation and the McTeague Catalyst Fund continue to act on our behalf through collective fundraising efforts and have received offers from a number of grantmaking foundations to support Montessori in the U.S. They have also been invited to the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI-America) in June 2013 to participate in the early childhood development working group.
- 7. The MLC will host a panel discussion at the International Montessori Congress in Portland in August 2013.
- 8. We will continue to have in-person and virtual meetings of the MLC on an ongoing basis. We hope to meet at the Hershey Montessori School in Ohio in the Spring of 2013.

We will continue to proudly share the progress of the group.

### MLC Participants:

Jackie Cossentino, Jennifer Davidson, Steven Hughes, Jacquie Maughan, Janet McDonell, Virginia McHugh Goodwin, John Moncure, Rebecca Pelton, Sue Pritzker, Ginny Riga, André Roberfroid, Richard Ungerer, Trevor Eissler, David Kahn, Mark Powell, Tim Seldin, John Snyder

Conveners: Marianna McCall, Laurie McTeague, Stephanie Miller

Please see below for **participants bios** of the Montessori Leaders Collaborative.

#### Bios

# **Jackie Cossentino**

Jackie is the Senior Associate at the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. Her 26 years in education have included roles as a middle and high school English teacher, an elementary school principal, a professional developer for schools, districts, and museums, and a professor of educational leadership at the University of Maryland. As part of her work for the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, Jackie is currently "embedded" at Crossway Community, where she is supporting the launch of Montgomery County Maryland's first charter school and first public Montessori program. An ethnographer by training, for the past twelve years, Jackie has drawn from her work in public and independent Montessori schools to develop an internationally recognized body of research on Montessori culture and practice. That work appears in American Journal of Education, Teachers College Record, Journal of Teacher Education, Curriculum Inquiry, and an array of practitioner journals. She is also a Lecturer in the Master's Program of Lovola Maryland's Washington Montessori Institute. She received a B.A. in History from Smith College and an M.Ed. and Ed.D. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

# Jennifer Davidson

Jennifer is the Executive Director of the Montessori Institute Northwest and is a leader in the administration of Montessori teacher training centers in the United States. Her Montessori career began at the Montessori Institute Northwest in 2001, helping to develop MINW's current organizational structure. Jennifer has presented at the AMI North American Trainers Meeting and at the Australian Refresher Course, and is currently directing the 2013 International Montessori Congress planning committee. She holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Lewis and Clark College, an AMI Primary diploma from the Montessori Institute Northwest, and an M.Ed. from Loyola University Maryland. Jennifer is also a third-degree black belt in Poekoelan Tjimindie Tulen, which is an Indonesian form of kung fu. She believes that compassionate and respectful education contributes to peace, and that peace is possible.

#### **Trevor Eissler**

Trevor Eissler is a Montessori parent turned advocate. He is a flight instructor at Netjets, a corporate aviation company. He has written Montessori Madness! A Parent to Parent Argument for Montessori Education (which has sold over 20,000 copies) and 4,962,571, the first of a series of Montessori-themed children's books targeting mainstream parents, introducing them to Montessori principles, and inviting them to visit their local Montessori school. He is also a founding member of the Montessori MadMen and of June Books. His Montessori Madness YouTube

<u>video</u> has been seen by almost 200,000 people in five languages in the past four months. He has spoken at over 100 schools in the past two years.

His list of Montessori failures include: failure to organize a collaboration among hometown Austin schools to buy newspaper ads, failure of Montessori Super Bowl ad purchase, and failure of Project Montessori, a collaborative advertising fundraising website.

# **Steven Hughes**

Steven J. Hughes, PhD, ABPdN is chair of the Association Montessori Internationale global research committee, a lecturer at the Maria Montessori Institute in London, and a member of the board of trustees for the Montessori Institute Northwest, and AMI teacher training center. Formerly a member of the faculty of the University of Minnesota Medical School Division of Pediatric Clinical Neurosciences, he also served as director of research for The TOVA Company, publisher of neuropsychological tests used to assess attention and concentration skills. He now maintains a private pediatric neuropsychology practice in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dr. Hughes's research interests are in the area of attention and executive functioning, and in the role of early childhood education in promoting the development of these capabilities. Dr. Hughes is an advocate for activity-based, developmental approaches to education, and is a frequent speaker and consultant to Montessori education organizations around the world. He is the current president of the American Academy of Pediatric Neuropsychology.

#### David Kahn

David Kahn is Executive Director of the <u>North American Montessori Teachers'</u> <u>Association</u>. He is a leading implementer of Montessori adolescent projects, including having been Founding Director of both the Ruffing Montessori School East and the Hershey Montessori School Farm adolescent programs, as well as the Montessori High School in University Circle where he remains the Executive Director.

He also directs Project 2012 Adolescent Research and Development, an eightyear grant-funded project on Montessori curriculum designs for adolescents ages 12-18. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame with majors in Great Books and Fine Arts and a specialization in filmmaking. He has been in Montessori education since 1969.

## Jacquie Maughan

Jacquie received her AMI training with Miss Lena Wikramaratne in Palo Alto, California. In 1980 she founded Woodland Montessori School in Spokane, WA and after she and her family moved to Seattle, she founded Pacific Crest School

where she continues as head of school. In 1987 Jacquie joined the NAMTA board and now serves as president. Jacquie attended the Dallas Educateurs san Frontieres assembly and is currently working on the EsF task force, planning future assemblies and its presence at the Montessori Congress.

### **Janet McDonell**

Janet McDonell is the Director of Training at the Primary level at the <u>Washington Montessori Institute</u> at Loyola University, MD. Aside from her Primary diploma, she also holds diplomas from the Association Montessori Internationale at the Elementary level and for Montessori Special Education. She has a B.A. in literature from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee and a M.Ed in Montessori Education from Loyola University Maryland. She has over 20 years teaching and administrative work in Montessori schools throughout the U.S. with children of widely varied backgrounds.

Janet has been training teachers at the Washington Montessori Institute since 1994. She is an examiner for AMI and a school consultant for AMI/USA. She is a member of the Consultation Committee for AMI/USA. She also serves as a board member of AMI/USA. Janet is the former head of the Training Group, a committee that oversees the international Training of Trainers Program for AMI. She continues to serve on that committee.

Janet is also a member of the Special Education Committee of AMI and will oversee a pilot training program for Special Education hosted at the University of San Diego beginning the summer of 2012.

#### Virginia McHugh

Virginia McHugh Goodwin is the executive director of <u>AMI-USA</u>, the primary operational affiliate in the U.S. of the Association Montessori Internationale, a position that she has held since her appointment in 1988. During her tenure, the office staff and operations of the corporation have grown dramatically, as have AMI membership and school recognition in the United States. Currently she is leading an effort to obtain a national voice for Montessori and has been successful in networking with the non-public section of the Department of Education.

Virginia received her AMI primary diploma from the Maria Montessori Training Organization in London following her undergraduate degree in English from the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada. In 2010 she attended the Emotional Literacy Training at Yale University. She is an AMI consultant and speaks and consults nationally. Currently she sits on the Board of Directors of the Council for American Private Education (CAPE), and the Selection Board for the Toy Hall of Fame at the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York.

### John Moncure

John Moncure is the President of Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI). John Moncure serves as Headmaster of the Montessori School of Camden, a position he held previously from 1998 to 2004. He was born in Victoria, Texas, attended The Citadel, and graduated from West Point in 1972. During his military career he served in cavalry regiments in Germany and Texas, and held teaching positions at West Point, Davidson College, the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, and the French Cavalry School in Saumur, France. After his retirement from the Army in 1997 with the rank of lieutenant colonel, John joined the Montessori school in Camden and was an adjunct professor of history at Coker College, South Carolina. He serves as a member of the boards of directors of First Steps of Kershaw County, the Kershaw County Historical Society, was a founding member of the South Carolina Montessori Alliance (SCMA) and was president of the Board of Directors of Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI). In 2004 moved abroad where he was Dean of the Apollo Institute of Health Sciences in Hyderabad, India, Principal of Eton Academy, a bilingual Montessori school in Beijing China, and Director of Operations of the Montessori Foundation and the International Montessori Council. After returning to the U.S. in 2008 he was re-elected to the Board of MEPI, currently serving as its president, and has become an on-site visitor for MACTE. John has authored three books and numerous articles, graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and holds a Ph.D. in European history from Cornell University. He resides in Camden, South Carolina.

# **Rebecca Pelton**

Rebecca is the Executive Director of the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). MACTE serves as the national accreditor for Montessori teacher preparation programs, and is recognized by the US Department of Education. Rebecca has been active in the area of teacher program accreditation for the past 11 years. Prior to her work with MACTE she served as the Vice President for Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). She has presented at many national conferences, and participated in over sixty on-site visits evaluating teacher education programs. Rebecca earned her B.A. in Music Education from Alma College and went on to teach in the public and private schools for 20 years. She earned her M.Ed. from Bowling Green State University in Education with an endorsement in Gifted Education and continued to teach and administrate, as well as develop a number of programs in gifted education and gifted enrichment. She completed her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Delaware. Her dissertation entitled: The Role of Online Surveys in Accreditation: Solving the Problem of "Cherry Picked" On-Site Interviews explores the role of surveys in improving quality assurance in the accreditation process. Her work and survey have been widely used in the field of traditional and Montessori teacher program accreditation. Her tenure at MACTE

is based on a commitment to supporting Montessori teacher preparation and thereby improving the educational experience of Montessori students.

#### Sue Pritzker

Sue Pritzker has been Head of School at Childpeace Montessori since 1988, and an AMI Primary level consultant since 1983. She has been President of Oregon Montessori Assoc., and is currently a founding board member for Montessori Administrator's Association. Sue has done presentations for Primary level teachers, parents, and administrators as well community organizations and schools.

#### **Mark Powell**

Mark currently teaches 6-12 year-old students at American International Montessori School in Berkeley CA, where his daughter is about to transition from the Infant Community to Children's House. He has been teaching for 17 years, in Montessori lower and upper elementary classrooms in the Boston area and the East Bay area, and more recently for three years as Technology Coordinator at St. Paul's Episcopal School, a progressive mainstream private K-8 school in Oakland He has been a teacher trainer at the Center for Montessori Teacher Education, New York for the last thirteen years. Mark has a M.Ed. degree from Lesley University in Cambridge MA, and also a MA State teaching credential. He has published 20 articles on Montessori education in Montessori Life and various other non-Montessori journals, and wrote a chapter in a recently published book entitled A Place for Play edited by Elizabeth Goodenough. Mark has designed many classroom materials, several of which are now sold across the United States and internationally by companies such as Hello Wood and Nienhuis Montessori. He has delivered workshops at American Montessori Society national conferences and at private and public Montessori Schools from coast to coast in this country and in Australia and New Zealand, and has consulted for over 50 Montessori schools in his capacity as field consultant for CMTE/NY.

#### **Tim Seldin**

Tim is the President of <u>The Montessori Foundation</u> and Chair of the International Montessori Council. He has 42 years of experience in Montessori education. For 25 years he taught and served as Headmaster at the Barrie School in Silver Spring, Maryland, his own alma mater (age two through high school graduation). He also served as the CoDirector of the Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies in Maryland and as Head of the NewGate School in Sarasota, Florida. Tim Seldin earned a B.A. in History and Philosophy from Georgetown University, an M.Ed. in Educational Administration and Supervision from The American University, and his Montessori certification from the American Montessori Society. He is the author of several books on Montessori Education, including *How to Raise An Amazing Child, The Montessori Way* with Dr. Paul Epstein, *Building a World-class Montessori School* with Jonathan Wolff, *Finding the Perfect Match - Recruit and* 

Retain Your Ideal Enrollment, Master Teachers - Model Programs with Jonathan Wolff, Celebrations of Life with Musya Meyer, and The World in the Palm of Her Hand with Donna Seldin.

# John Snyder

John Snyder is a school administrator at Austin Montessori School, an AMI school serving children from 15 months to 15 years of age in Austin, Texas. He trained with Dr. Kay Baker at WMI. Since 2007, John has written a regular column for the Public School Montessorian tabloid, and many of his articles have been republished in Montessori media around the world. John regularly keynotes at Montessori conferences. In 2010-2011, he served as a consultant to the team writing the Montessori National Curriculum for Australia. John serves on the Board of the AMI Elementary Alumni Association, a professional organization for AMI-trained elementary teachers, and is the founder and administrator of EAA-Talk, the online discussion list for AMI-EAA members since 2005. John is also a member of the AMI/USA Montessori Advocacy Committee, working closely with Virginia McHugh Goodwin on outreach initiatives. He is a member of MAA.

Before starting his Montessori career at age 43, John worked in computer science academia and industry for 15 years. John also worked as a partner in Collaborative Action Associates, a Boston-based management and communications consulting firm whose work was based on the organizational dynamics research of Harvard's Chris Argyris.

### **Ginny Riga**

Dr. Ginny Riga was the Montessori Coordinator in the Office of School Transformation at the South Carolina Department of Education until November 2011. Her role was to sustain and promote the growth of Montessori education in the state's public schools. Prior to assuming this role in 2008, she was a teacher and administrator in Richland School District One in Columbia, SC from 1978-2007. In 1999 she became principal of Brockman Montessori Elementary School, the first total Montessori public school in South Carolina. She earned her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Curriculum and Instruction in 1997 from the University of South Carolina.

Ginny has been a board member of the American Montessori Society since 2009. She works on the AMS research committee and in the arena of Montessori in public schools. In 2001 she was a founding board member of the SC Montessori Alliance, a partnership between Montessori private and public schools that has thrived for ten years. She is a frequent presenter/keynote at educational conferences and recently co-authored a chapter on Montessori in the soon to be published book: "Yes We Can! Transforming Public Education in Urban and Rural Schools."

#### André Roberfroid

André Roberfroid, a Belgian national, is the Chair of the <u>Association Montessori Internationale</u>. He was the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director for Programme and Strategic Planning until his retirement in 2003 and was responsible for the formulation and implementation of the UNICEF strategic objectives and programmes. From 1974 to 1996 he served as a UNICEF field officer and representative in a variety of countries including Congo, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Iran and Mali.

He was particularly involved in the development and implementation of programs for children in extremely difficult circumstances like the civil war in Lebanon, the unrest in the West Bank and Gaza, the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda. From 1996 to 1999 as director of the UNICEF office in Geneva, he was in charge of the coordination with the main humanitarian agencies.

## **Richard Ungerer**

Richard A. Ungerer is executive director of the <u>American Montessori Society</u> (AMS). AMS, since its formation in 1960, has grown to be the largest Montessori organization in the world serving Montessori schools, teacher education programs, and teachers.

Prior to joining AMS in 2005, Mr. Ungerer led a number of not-for-profit organizations committed to enhancing education policy, leadership, and service-learning programs for children and youth. He served as president of the National Institute for Work and Learning, president of the "I Have A Dream Foundation," and executive director of the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education. He currently is a board member of the Council for American Private Education (CAPE).

Mr. Ungerer has a BA from Colgate University with a major in Political Science, graduating Cum Laude and as a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society. He also has a Master of Social Planning from the Boston College School of Social Work and a Master of Theology from the Boston University School of Theology with a concentration in Social Ethics.

#### **Conveners**

#### Marianna McCall

Marianna McCall is a Trustee of the McCall Kulak Family Foundation (<a href="www.mccallkulak.org">www.mccallkulak.org</a>), and a founding partner in the Education Leadership Forum. She is active in statewide and national education advocacy and she currently serves on a number of boards in Connecticut. She previously worked as a consultant for International Programs at Save the Children, and as a Regional Director and member of the executive committee at Financial Services Volunteer

Corp., a New York based non-profit focused on improving financial and technical infrastructure in developing nations. Prior to this Marianna lived in Moscow, Russia, where she represented several American companies.

Marianna earned her bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and her MBA from the University of Connecticut. Marianna's three children have attended Montessori schools for the past ten years, and while she has seen many models and methods of education, she is convinced that Montessori is one of the most effective ways of educating children. She and Laurie McTeague initiated this convening of Montessori Leaders early in 2011. She is hopeful that significantly more children will be given a chance to reap its benefits.

## Laurie McTeague

Laurie McTeague is Trustee at the McTeague Catalyst Fund – she is a foundation grantmaker and attorney who is also a founding partner of the Education Leadership Forum and active in state and national education advocacy. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Laurie worked as a corporate lawyer and as associate general counsel for The Community Builders focused on affordable housing, urban revitalization and community development. In 2008, she worked extensively as a regional volunteer field organizer and fundraiser for Obama for America and later for Organizing for America. Laurie was also a member of the education and youth development committee of the Fairfield County Community Foundation. She and Marianna McCall initiated this convening of the Montessori Leaders Collaborative in 2011. Laurie lives in Boston and sees Montessori as a key to giving children the skills they need for successful lives and for unleashing their potential to contribute effectively to our society and economy.

## Stephanie Miller

Stephanie Miller has been working in the field of strategic philanthropy for 14 years, with a particular interest in family foundations. Raised in Montreal, Stephanie received a graduate degree from McGill University and has spent over 25 years working both as a grant seeker, grantmaker and on the ground as a local and national community worker in Canada, the U.S. and overseas. Stephanie founded a national network of community literacy organizations that served marginalized communities across the country. She spent many years at the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Canada's largest private family foundation and focused primarily on building national, multi-year, pro-active initiatives in a range of areas. Stephanie has consulted with numerous foundations and not-for-profit organizations – helping them find ways of making their giving and community service more effective. She has been working for the McCall Kulak Family Foundation and the McTeague Catalyst Fund since October 2010. Stephanie lives with her two Montessori-educated children in Weston, Connecticut. www.philanthropycraft.org