"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away."

PABLO PICASSO

2021 – 2022
AMS Board of Directors

Amira Mogaji, Board President
Hilary Green, Vice President and Chair of the Teacher Educators Section
Debbie Senoff-Langford, Treasurer and Chair of the Heads Section
E. McCrae Harrison, Secretary and School Accreditation Commission Representative
Anita Hanks, Member-at-Large
Munir Shivji, AMS Executive Director

Aimee Allen
Janet H. Bagby
Geoffrey E. Bishop
Sharon Damore
Thomas Emery, Family Representative
Luz Casquejo Johnston
Nancy Lindeman
Iana Phillips
Candy Proctor, Chair of the Teachers Section
Mary Beth Ricks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAGE</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>A Letter from the AMS Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Gratitude Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Star-Studded Music City Soiree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Donor Story: Anita Hanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A Teacher Education Journey: Nicole Bettis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Circle of Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1870 Society: The Gift that Keeps on Giving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>2022 Douglas M. Gravel Benefactor Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Living her Legacy: Dr. Juliet King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>2023 Living Legacy Announcement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Letter from the AMS Executive Director

It’s hard to believe another fiscal year is drawing to a close at the American Montessori Society. As our executive leadership team prepares budgets and strategies for the new year ahead, I find myself reminiscing on all that we have accomplished this year. None of this work would be possible without your generous support. Thank you for all you do to move Montessori forward.

Throughout the pages of this donor report, you will see the ways that your American Montessori Society was able to lead and influence, create and challenge, honor and celebrate, and innovate and grow.

On page 12, you will hear from Nicole Bettis, a recipient of an AMS teacher education scholarship. Did you know that since the Living Legacy Scholarship Fund was launched nearly 3 decades ago, over $800,000 has been raised to support aspiring Montessori educators like Nicole? Be sure to also check out page 24 to hear about how Dr. Juliet King, our 2022 Living Legacy recipient supported these efforts and page 28 to meet our 2023 Living Legacy honorees, Susie and David Shelton-Dodge.

I hope you’ll also take a moment to look at the photographs on pages 8 – 9 from the Springtime Fancy. This year we held our 12th annual Springtime Fancy fundraising event—a Music City Soiree at Madame Tussauds Wax Museum in Nashville, TN. While we certainly had fun at last year’s virtual gala, it felt extra special to be together again, in person and in support of new program development at AMS.

Everything you will read in these pages—from our 1870 Society to the Circle of Friends and the Gratitude Gathering to the recognition awards—is made possible by you. Thank you for believing in your American Montessori Society and for supporting our vision of Montessori for all, embraced around the globe.

Warm regards,

Munir

P.S. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you and learn more about what you want to see from AMS. Please send me an email at mshivji@amshq.org at any time and I will get back to you as soon as possible.
An opportunity to say thank you

by Nancy Lindeman & Sabrina Binkley

You’re Invited!

We hope you will join us for our second annual Gratitude Gathering taking place Thursday, June 23, 2022 at 6:00 PM (ET). This event will reflect this question: Where Would Montessori Teachers Be Without You?

This event is all about thanking you, our donors. We truly would not be the organization we are today without you. We hope you will join us for 1 hour of online camaraderie, and that you will stay for the annual meeting and Member Appreciation Day, taking place upon completion of the Gratitude Gathering.

We will hear from AMS staff, board, and members, share community stories, and host breakout rooms where you can share your thoughts on the benefits of Montessori training and teacher education. We welcome your feedback.

Please RSVP to receive the Zoom invitation by emailing mshivji@amshq.org with the subject line “Gratitude Gathering.” We’ll see you there!
Our annual gala at the conference in Nashville was truly “Star Studded” this year when it began at Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum for cocktails and followed with dinner and dancing at The Opryland Hotel. The committee met and looked forward to meeting every Wednesday to plan the event—everything from the format to the food to the auction items.

Participants enjoyed two signature cocktails at the Museum, the Bowman Breeze and the McTama-tini sponsored by the Bowman School and Christopher Academy while walking about and posing with the musical artist wax figures. We then returned to the hotel’s airy ballroom where the band Charlie’s Bad Habit was enlivening the space with country music. The night continued with dancing, food, drinks, and of course our live auction.

The live auction this year was nothing short of a #1 country hit! With vacation packages to Alaska, the Adirondacks, Wisconsin, and more, and packages built around professional development and reading, our generous attendees helped us raise $44,500 by bidding high and often against one another.

Highlights included Whitney Falcon who won a trip to Italy and Marge Ellison who will join us in Boston at next year’s conference. The crowd loved the auctioneer, Mr. Philip Traylor who kept us all on our cowboy toes as he kept the auction going at a barrel racer’s pace!

Another highlight was the silent auction which ran parallel to the live event in a virtual platform. The silent auction was filled with beautiful items donated from community members and generous exhibitors and sponsors. A special shout out to our regional and state organizations who curated show-stopping baskets and items reflective of their region to share with all of you. With your support, we raised $6,795 through the silent auction.

A big thank you also goes out to the whole committee for their support of this wonderful event: Amelia McTamaney; Sabrina Binkley; Mary Beth Ricks; Geoffrey Bishop; Sharon Damore; and Jaime Yeager.

And, be sure to save the date for our next Springtime Fancy in Boston on Friday, March 17, 2023!
A lifelong Montessorian, Anita Hanks can vividly recall the day her mother proudly announced to the family that she had completed her Montessori training. Little did she know, it would be that moment that sparked her lifelong journey into the world of Montessori. Anita’s exposure to Montessori began at the age of two in a toddler program where she first garnered her love of the Montessori classroom, and continued many years later when she served as a guide practicing her craft and exploring this love of philosophy. She would later become head of school and go on to found a number of schools in the Dallas area including Starwood Montessori School, where she currently works. Anita prides herself on the school’s connection and membership with AMS where she has found innumerable resources to support the growing needs of her community.

In particular, she recognized a need for high quality teacher education in Texas. With a solution-based mindset, she founded a training center for the Texas community. Keeping in mind her mother’s love and pride in her journey in Montessori training, Anita knew she needed a center focused on the teacher’s journey. Anita relied on the support of the AMS community and her connections made through being a member to form her training center. In addition to the many Montessori hats Anita wears, she has enrolled her own children and is a proud Montessori parent.

Through her years of championing Montessori education, Anita has relied on AMS as the “Gold Standard” signifying high fidelity to our shared Montessori principles. As a donor, Anita chooses to support teacher education though the Living Legacy Scholarship Fund, a cause she holds dear. In targeting her gifts, she is able to support teachers from their beginning days in Montessori, truly seeing a long term impact on our global Montessori community. AMS’s transparency and willingness to share with donors their impact drives Anita to keep giving.

Now, as a member of the AMS Board, Anita has recommitted to our organization through the gift of her time. She serves on the Executive Committee helping to ensure the effectiveness of the board and serving as close counsel for our leadership.

Her continued commitment to helping AMS affirm its organizational identity and champion AMS not just in the United States but globally further demonstrates her longstanding commitment to its success. She sees the dedication of the staff from a new perspective, renewing her deep affection for AMS.

Thank you, Anita!
Nicole Bettis is a natural leader, an artist at heart, and a strong believer in the teachings of Maria Montessori. She is currently the Montessori directress and Early Childhood specialist at Acton at Serenbe in Fulton County, GA. She was awarded an AMS teacher education scholarship and credits AMS with the support and opportunity to transition from her previous career as a therapist, into an Early Childhood guide and mentor to others.

After many years working in the classroom, Nicole found Montessori because it aligned with her humanistic background, and AMS, because she wanted to belong to a like-minded organization where she would be able to set the child up for as much success as possible in today’s world. So she did everything she could to become an AMS guide. With the full support of Ashley Darcy, the director of her training program, Nicole put all her energy into what the scholarship opportunity offered.

What struck her the most, was Practical Life for Early Childhood. The work was absolutely riveting! Moving beyond the albums and the preliminary work, Practical Life is grounded in love and substance. “We can go outside. We’re going to come together and figure out how to do this, to think critically and be independent. Here’s your functional fixedness and now we can break it. The moment somewhere puts a bouquet of fun doesn’t say fixed in the assumed function. The true work is to start.”

Nicole is excited to be a part of the AMS community, and is looking forward to becoming more involved in the organization.

Thank you to Nicole for sharing her journey!
Our 21–22 Goals

1. INCLUSION/EQUITY

AMS will enhance our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by taking affirmative steps to advance takeaways from previous professional development, data, and conversations to assure that our processes—for hiring, publications, scholarships, resources, awards, programs, services, and more—are equitable.

2. MEMBERSHIP

AMS will continue to expand membership, build engagement with community members, and form deliberate connections with teacher education program directors and instructors, adult learners, school administrators, teachers, and other educators. We will give additional focus to those who have been traditionally marginalized and those in our global membership.

3. COMMUNICATION

AMS will reinforce the Montessori collective voice by fostering community engagement and creating marketing and communication plans that center all members by crafting a more equitable user experience. We will also continue to be a leading voice for Montessori through strengthened and expanded brand recognition.

4. QUALITY

AMS will define quality in Montessori education, while strengthening current practices and focus on initiatives that further align Montessori practices within AMS. This includes a focus on the needs of families, our international membership, and traditionally marginalized communities.

5. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

AMS will evaluate existing programs and services, focus on retaining members through engagement, build a healthy reserve through expanded development efforts, and cultivate partnerships with diverse organizations and advertisers to ensure inclusion, sustainability, and growth as an organization.
The work of AMS is funded, in part, by membership dues and registrations fees. But this is not enough.

It takes a village to raise a child. And a circle of friends to help underwrite a movement that brings the benefits of Montessori to millions of children and their families across the globe.
Consider joining our Circle of Friends

by Mary Beth Ricks

The AMS Circle of Friends is a community of donors, each of whom has given a minimum of $1,000 to any combination of AMS funds in a single fiscal year (June – July).

The Circle of Friends is made up of teachers, heads of schools, program directors, civic leaders, families, Montessori alumni and advocates, and anyone else with a passion for making the world a better place through Montessori.

Every friend has deep-seated appreciation for the inroads AMS is making in advancing quality Montessori education, and an understanding that our work cannot happen without financial support above income earned from dues.

They also appreciate that gifts can happen throughout the AMS fiscal year, and that they get to choose the AMS fund(s) to which their money will go.

The biggest benefit of giving $1,000 and joining the Circle of Friends is knowing you are part of a giving community that is helping to advance quality Montessori education in ways that would not be possible without your support.

As a way of expressing our gratitude, we will recognize your generosity with:

- A collectible Circle of Friends lapel pin
- Acknowledgement in the AMS Annual Report and in this Donor Impact Report
- Recognition on the AMS website

Circle of Friends is the easiest way to get your friends or colleagues involved in supporting AMS. Consider joining today!

Want to learn more? Email Munir Shivji at mshivji@amshq.org.
The 1870 Society is a giving community that supports AMS’s long-term growth and stability through gifts of estate planning and direct donations. The group was named to commemorate the year of Maria Montessori’s birth.

1870 Society members make a non-binding bequest to the American Montessori Society for a percentage of their estate once the estate is settled. Members only need to provide written confirmation of the agreement and are at liberty to dissolve or amend it at any time.

Thank you to the generous members of our community who make up this group.*

- Amy D. Henderson
- Anne Binder
- Betsy Coe
- Carolyn and Tony Kambich
- Cecelia Zachar
- Joyce and Bob Pickering
- Judith McCartin-Scheide
- Kathy Roemer
- Kristen Graham
- Marie M. Dugan
- MaryEllen Kordas
- Munir Shivji
- Nancy Rose
- Pamela Zell Rigg
- Sharon and Michael Damore
- Whitney Lee Falcon

*AS OF MAY, 2022
Amy Henderson has been deeply involved in Montessori during her entire career. She first fell in love with Montessori in the 1980s as a parent when she sent her children to Montessori Children’s School in Fort Worth, TX. Starting as a substitute teacher, she soon became a credentialed teacher, eventually led the Elementary program, and now has served as the head of school for the last 18 years. From 1996 – 2004, Amy was a member of the AMS Board of Directors, including serving as the President of AMS.

In a recent interview, Amy shared with us, “Montessori is really about caring for each other. The women who came before me were so inspirational to me. AMS is the vehicle that drives all teacher education programs and school accreditation. It helps us ensure the future. I started as a teacher and I have always been a teacher at heart. AMS leads us into the future with the focus on professional development and adult learning. It keeps us connected even when we may live far apart. I have been inspired by people who have made meaningful contributions to AMS.”

Amy found that it was particularly meaningful to be able to make a planned gift to AMS through the 1870 Society. She shared with us, “I had a family when I was active in AMS, kids in college, and there were a lot of expenses for me at that time. I contributed what I could, and always knew that I could do more at some point in my life through an estate gift through my will. I’ve made a significant provision in my will for AMS because I know it will enable AMS to continue to be a strong organization. I continue to believe that the teacher training programs and professional development supported by AMS are essential in ensuring the quality of Montessori schools. Without AMS, we would not have this standard of quality. I made a planned gift to AMS to continue to support teachers’ training and ways for teachers from around the country to come together, learn from each other, and develop friendships that last a lifetime.”
“For me personally, I have found it to be very rewarding and fulfilling to make a gift to AMS through my will.”

Joyce Pickering is executive director emerita at Shelton School in Dallas, TX. After spending ten years engaged in Montessori work in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Joyce returned to the United States and served as the executive director of Shelton Academy for 33 years, including 20 years as the executive director of the Shelton Teacher Training Program. Joyce served as the AMS Board President from 2010 – 2014. Her husband, Bob, served as the AMS Board President from 1972 – 1977. They are the only married couple who have both served in the role of AMS Board President.

In a recent interview, Joyce explained, “My passion for Montessori and AMS is a desire to help children as young as possible who have differences in the way they learn. If we don’t help children in the earliest ages, they can become very discouraged in schools, and this can lead to anxiety and depression. What I discovered from my early work in Montessori is that it allows us to develop the perceptual skills of a child in ways that are not often found in traditional schools. Montessori allows us to meet the needs of gifted children, children who learn differently, and all learners. That’s what led me to become active in AMS.”

“AMS is the glue that holds all of us together. It unites us. AMS provides wonderful publications, unparalleled conferences, and invaluable opportunities to connect with each other. I am so appreciative of the support of AMS, and that’s why Bob and I have been so generous to AMS over the years.”

A few years ago, Joyce and Bob helped to start the 1870 Society, so she is particularly passionate about promoting this giving community to others. Joyce explains, “AMS does not have much endowment. Just as we all know that a strong endowment is essential to the health and sustainability of our individual schools, the same is true about AMS as an organization. Bob and I decided it was important to remember AMS in our will. Anyone can plan what they leave to loved ones and loved organizations. For me personally, I have found it to be very rewarding and fulfilling to make a gift to AMS through my will, so that our gift will continue to support what Bob and I love!”
2022 Douglas M. Gravel Benefactor Award

The Douglas M. Gravel Award is given to someone whose generosity has contributed to the sustainability and growth of the American Montessori Society.

Suzanne Jennett Gusemano is head of school at First Steps Montessori School, a Ministry of St. John the Divine located in the heart of River Oaks in Houston, TX. In the 1980s, Suzanne was an instructor at the Houston Montessori Center and in the 1990s spent time in field consulting.

She has also spent time in Bolivia training other adults in Montessori education, supervising and mentoring new Montessori educators, and consulting for other Montessori schools.

Suzanne has presented numerous workshops specializing in Gross and Perceptual Motor Development, Classroom Designs and Space Utilization, and Fun in the Classroom. She is a former board member of the Harris School, former member of the Montessori Administrator’s Network, and current board member of the Houston Montessori Center.

Suzanne has worked in Montessori education for over 4 decades and been an adamant supporter of AMS throughout that time.
Dr. Juliet King, with her respectful and soft-spoken demeanor, reflects and models what it means to be a Montessori educator. Juliet is fiercely passionate about Montessori, social justice, and using the former as a vehicle to promote the latter. She is the co-founder and co-director of Coral Reef Montessori Academy (CRMA), an AMS-accredited school in Miami, FL, and a civil rights activist, community advocate, and lifelong educator.

Events in honor of Dr. Juliet King are kicking off in Florida this June, with the Nestor Torres Salutes AMS Living Legacy Concert—a night of songs and celebrations with Grammy Award winning artist Nestor Torres, featuring a choral finale by Coral Reef Montessori Academy students. Dr. King will be honored with speeches by several prominent community members, and Dr. King’s legacy and work at CRMA will be highlighted with a short video presentation. After the children’s performance, Dr. King will make closing remarks. The event will take place in the Seminole Theater, with 415 seats total. Premium seats will be $100, general seats $70, with discounts for teachers and CRMA alumni. This event will be held on June 18, 2022. Through event sponsorships, ticket sales, and a raffle, organizers are already well on their way to achieving their $20,000 fundraising goal.

Dr. King has finalized dates for a tour through California, July 23 – 24. Event hosts are planning a large gathering, and hoping to attract Californians from beyond the Montessori community to come and learn from Dr. King and be inspired by her social justice work. A separate event is also being planned for VIP donors. The fundraising goal for the California tour is $15,000.

In addition, Dr. King is planning a similar visit to Texas in early September, as well as virtual speaking engagements.

Please consider joining to support your Living Legacy. For more information, please email Munir Shivji at mshivji@amshq.org.
This Year, with Your Generosity, AMS was Able to:

- Inspire community with trailblazing professional development
- Launch a Montessori Life blog, the first official AMS blog, with dozens of articles and new content published weekly
- Expand member services in China
- Launch new initiatives for AMS families
- Collaborate with AMI/USA and MPPI to plan and produce the live online event, “Critical Race Theory: Talking through the Confusion”
- Create a new Certificate Program (Elementary Reading)
- Register 2,200+ new adult learners
- Continue to support teachers during the pandemic
- Release AMS’s first cobranded video lesson guides produced in collaboration with Schleich
- Integrate health and wellness into community initiatives through AMS Cares
- Publish Wise Teacher, New Spirit.
- Organize Championing Montessori in Public Schools Initiative program free for public school leaders
- Expand Affinity Group spaces
- Conduct surveys and focus groups to move Montessori forward
- Provide 3 free cohorts of Instructor Academy for current AMS instructors

Your donations play a vital role in advancing the advocacy, standards, research, teacher education, public policy, and accessibility that support our mission of empowering humanity to build a better world through Montessori.
The 2023 Living Legacy award recipients are Susie and David Shelton-Dodge. Susie and David Shelton-Dodge have been on the forefront of the Montessori Movement since the 1970s, supporting countless students, teacher educators, and other community members with generosity, grace, and determination to continue the provision of equitable, authentic Montessori practice.

Currently, Susie is the director emeriti and Early Childhood practicum coordinator, and David is the Infant/Toddler practicum director and conference coordinator at Hope Montessori Educational Institute in St. Louis, MO.

When you give in honor of the Living Legacy, you support a cherished AMS practice: the awarding of scholarships to aspiring Montessori educators at AMS-affiliated teacher education programs.
Donations to our Peace & Social Justice Fund provide grants that help AMS members advance principles of freedom, equity, and dignity in their communities; for example, by bringing anti-bias, antiracist training to their schools, expanding their libraries to include books on social activism, and undergoing audits to address equity gaps.

The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Fund supports our commitment to ensuring that the learning opportunities we create are inclusive in serving all people, especially marginalized or under-resourced populations.

The Living Legacy Scholarship Fund is an annual tribute to an individual who has made a lasting impact on the AMS community through their dedication and leadership. When you give in honor of the Living Legacy, you support a cherished AMS practice: the awarding of scholarships to aspiring Montessori educators at AMS-affiliated teacher education programs.

When you donate to the AMS Annual Fund you support our mission of empowering humanity to build a better world through Montessori. Your donation helps AMS to set standards for Montessori schools and teacher education programs to uphold the integrity of the Montessori Method; provide ongoing teacher education and professional development for all Montessori educators, including virtual and in-person gatherings; support research about child development and education; advance quality Montessori education by informing and influencing policymakers on issues related to education and the well-being of children and families; award scholarships and grants to support the advancement of Montessori education and research; promote Montessori in the public sector, making Montessori’s teaching more accessible to students; and so much more.

The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Fund supports our commitment to ensuring that the learning opportunities we create are inclusive in serving all people, especially marginalized or under-resourced populations.

learn more at amshq.org/donate
On behalf of everyone at the American Montessori Society, we thank you, our donors, for your generous contributions to our organization this fiscal year. Your gifts play a vital role in the momentum of the Montessori Movement.
Congratulations!

AMS recognition awards honor individuals who have made exceptional contributions to our organization and the Montessori Movement. We offer our congratulations to the 2022 recipients, and profound thanks for all that they have so selflessly accomplished in pursuit of our shared mission to build a better world through Montessori.

Juliet King  
AMS Living Legacy Award

Wynton Marsalis  
Dr. Maria Montessori Ambassador Award

Raife Cebeci  
Dr. Nancy McCormick Rambusch Trailblazer Award

Nancy Rose  
Dr. Nancy McCormick Rambusch Trailblazer Award

Suzanne Gusemano  
Douglas M. Gravel Benefactor Award

Jane Nelsen  
Montessori Innovator Award

Iris Lee  
AMS Service Award

Josh Vogt  
AMS Service Award

Rye Josloff  
AMS Service Award
We are proud to serve on the AMS Board of Directors, where, among other things, we help ensure the long-term financial stability of the organization. We especially enjoy our roles as co–chairs of the Development Committee, tasked with achieving our campaign goals, and in so doing, getting to know you and all of the other generous members of our community.

Excitedly, we look forward to this next fiscal year with a promise for stability, a hope for growth, and a vision for the future. The Montessori Movement is grounded and growing because of your donations, connections, and love for AMS. We are thrilled to be planning development events and activities and cannot wait to see what is in store for our community in Boston at The Montessori Event, March 16 – 19, 2023!

Thank you for your gifts and continued friendship. We appreciate your support and are honored to work alongside you.

With gratitude,
Mary Beth Ricks
Geoffrey E. Bishop
AMS Development Committee Co–chairs
AMS Development Committee

Geoffrey Bishop (co-chair)

Mary Beth Ricks (co-chair)

Sabrina Binkley

Ben Blair

Joe Campbell

Marie Dugan

Tommy Emery

Vyju Kadambi

Nancy Lindeman

Jay Scheurle

Liz Buechele

Maria Pagani

Munir Shivji
“I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.”

MAYA ANGELOU