

# MONTESSORI MATTERS

MONTESSORI ACADEMY OF LONDON

EXPECT MORE FROM EDUCATION

Issue 17 – October 2017



## Independence Matters

### A message from Tina Sartori

Independence. It is a key element of accredited Montessori education and something — for the greater good of society — we hope that our children foster and develop through their educational journey. Unfortunately, outside of Montessori, the trend is that being independent is not something adolescents are motivated by.

In a recent article in *The Atlantic*, "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" Jean Twenge explains that, "The allure of independence, so powerful to previous generations, holds less sway over today's teens." This could have a great impact in the not-so-distant future, so let's take the opportunity to see how and why independence is at the heart of what we do and how Montessori grads can push beyond this trend.

In *Montessori - Why it Matters for Your Child's Success and Happiness*, Charlotte Cushman defines Independence as "the recognition that you are responsible for yourself and therefore must do your own thinking, make your own judgments, decisions and choices based on this thinking."

Doesn't this sound like something you would want for your child in order for them to be a successful adult?! We do,

and if you take a walk through our school, at any given time of the day, you will see independence flourishing among our students.

In Toddler it can be as basic as them simply walking into the classroom on their own versus being carried, and managing self-help skills like dressing and learning how to use the toilet. At this level, care of the self and the environment, as well as their language development are key components and building blocks for their emerging independence as they start to realize: you are responsible for yourself.

In Casa, students begin to own the flow of their day, making independent choices of what work they would like to do and complete it. Many of the materials at this level are self-correcting, so it is through their own discovery, when an error has been made, that they need to problem solve and try it again...all without an adult intervening. The mantra "help me to do it myself" guides the interactions of the teachers



Casa children using and example of Montessori's self-correcting material—the famous Pink Tower.

with their students. The child starts to realize: you must do your own thinking.

At the Elementary level, independence and responsibility go hand-in-hand. They no longer need their parents to walk them into school. They can enter the



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# Driven and independent

*Swimmer Maggie MacNeil credits Montessori for her success in swimming and school.*

**M**ontessori Academy alumna Maggie MacNeil is making quite a splash. The Grade 12 student at Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School and competitive swimmer just made a verbal commitment to the University of Michigan class of 2022 to swim for the school.

She attended Montessori Academy from Toddler through Junior High, and has been outspoken about how Montessori has influenced her success in school and in the water—by inspiring independence and resilience.

Even though it was an adjustment to start high school, she found her groove. "I first realized the benefits of Montessori once I arrived in high school. Montessori provided me with a safe environment to learn and thrive in, which was very different from the my high school experience. In my very first class at high school I was exposed to things that were completely unknown to me: firstly calling teachers by their last name... strange!" she jokes.

Her independence, she says, was fostered right from Toddler. "I feel like independence is encouraged from a very early age, something that is extremely beneficial. From the one-of-a-kind amazing opportunities, to everyday life. Most of my favourite and most memorable independence stories occurred while I was in Junior High. Out to lunch was always a blast. The teachers trusted you to make good choices and explore the downtown area. The next would be my work on the Veterans field trip. Semi-annually we would go and visit the Veterans at Parkwood Hospital and share stories, music and fellowship. I took great pride in the independence and trust Mandy gave me. Planning bus routes (first time many of us had taken a city bus, also very independent), schedules and activities was exhilarating! There were numerous examples where independence is encouraged, making it difficult just to name a few."

There's little fear of the unknown when your education fosters responsibility and maturity. She concludes, "Going to Montessori prepared me to explore the world and travel, also making me want to learn and achieve my academic and athletic ambitions. Although leaving Montessori was a huge adjustment, going to Montessori made my high school experience an easier and more enjoyable one."

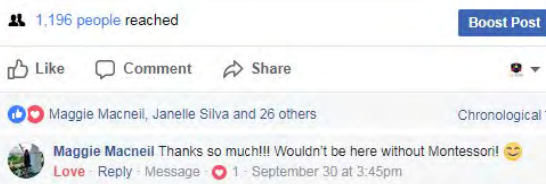
As a school community, we'll be cheering her on long after high school! ■



Michigan Picks Up Verbal Pledge from Canada's Maggie MacNeil

London, Ontario's Maggie MacNeil has verbally committed to swim for the University of Michigan next fall.

SWIMSWAM.COM



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class, start their work day and manage themselves. They dive further into their work to research what interests them. Time management comes into play as they plan out their week of lessons and timelines for work completion. At Junior High independence is paramount. These students lead class meetings and committees, provide community service, organize events and learn how to self-advocate. They start to realize: **you make your own judgments, decisions and choices based on this thinking.**

The role of independence is woven through Montessori seamlessly as we follow the child through their planes of development. Our curriculum supports these growth opportunities and strengthens their independence, not only while they are students here, but will impact them for years beyond in their adult life.

Indeed, how can educators truly prepare our children for life and work in the 21st century *without* fostering independence?

In her book, Cushman goes on to say "As adults when we age, what are we afraid of losing the most? Our independence. Without it, in essence, there is no life. Give life to your child – give them the gift of independence."

Here at MA, we couldn't agree more! ■



# Back to school

*This summer, alumnus Ben Connors returned to his Montessori roots for a summer job placement*

I was a Montessori student for most of my childhood, having attended the school from Toddler to Grade 8. Montessori shaped me as a person by teaching me many important skills and, more importantly, fostering a love of learning that has helped me throughout high school and in university so far. I am presently enrolled at Western University in a dual-degree program combining Software Engineering and Pure Mathematics.

Earlier this summer I was hired for a 7-week summer job through the Canada Summer Jobs program at the Montessori Academy of London. As the Development Assistant, my job was to help out with whatever was necessary to prepare for and ensure the success of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations next June.

Though I was tasked with doing a bit of everything during my time here (such as assisting with family mailings, organizing photo collections, updating student records, and helping with event planning) my main job was to work with the school's databases in order to ensure information was up-to-date, enter the remaining paper records, and clean up messy parts. Though not strictly related to my current fields of study, this gave me the opportunity to investigate and gain insight into the structure and workings of major corporate databases, as well as a chance to apply my skills to automate portions of data entry and database cleanup.

Aside from the actual "work," it was nice to be back in the place that had been like a second home for so much of my life.



Though I still return to Jr. High (somewhat) regularly, I had not been through the elementary classrooms in a long time and a lot had changed—mainly the addition of a new building and the continuing renovations of the Lower Elementary classrooms (aside from how the school had seemingly been replaced by a miniature version of itself). It was an amazing opportunity to see not only what had changed but also what had stayed the same, such as my old classroom—currently Jr. 1, formerly Jr. 3—which remains much like how I remember it.

I enjoyed returning to the school over the summer and being able to see it from an entirely different perspective. Most importantly, I enjoyed the opportunity to give back to the school that had done so much for me and to help make the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary a success. ■

## Join us on June 1 & 2 for our 50th Anniversary Weekend!

Friday evening, drop by our **ARTexpo Reception** and anniversary kickoff in The Mercato Room at Brescia College.



Saturday afternoon, we open the school's doors for an **Open House** at 711 Waterloo St., and will host a **Family Fun Day** in Piccadilly Park.

Saturday evening, parents and alumni are invited to our **Golden Anniversary Gala Celebration** in The Mercato Room at Brescia.

Tickets for the Gala will go on sale in January. In the meantime, check out our Anniversary website for information: <https://sites.google.com/montessori.on.ca/mhcma50>

## Take the Pledge – Join the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Club

In celebration of Montessori Academy of London's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we have launched two new giving programs – the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Club and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Leadership Circle. As a member of the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Club** and/or the **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Leadership Circle** you are joining a special group of supporters who believe strongly in our method and are investing in world-class Montessori education.

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Leadership Circle

Take the leadership circle challenge in honour of Montessori Academy of London's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.

Register for monthly payments, set up instalments or partner with grandparents, other MA families, alumni and friends to donate or raise \$5,000 as a team by June 30, 2018.

**The team that raises the most funds by March 1, 2018 (minimum of \$5,000) will win a complimentary table of 8 at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala on Saturday June 2, 2018.**

All teams will be listed at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala, and acknowledged on our website.

**Individual tickets for the Gala will go on sale in January.**

**Learn More...** For more information on our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary giving programs, visit the **Take The Pledge** page of our website:

[www.montessori.on.ca/get-involved/take-the-pledge/](http://www.montessori.on.ca/get-involved/take-the-pledge/)

Every donation counts. To make a one-time donation visit <http://montessori.on.ca/get-involved/ways-to-give> and use the "Donate Now" button.

For more information contact: Tonya Dendrinis, Development Director, at 519-433-9121 ext. 233 or [tdendrinis@montessori.on.ca](mailto:tdendrinis@montessori.on.ca)

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Club - Monthly giving

To join, **pledge a gift to an area of need that is important to you** and spread payments out over the school year. If you don't have a preference, donations to our unrestricted fund will go to the area of greatest need. Monthly giving is an easy, affordable way to make an incredible difference throughout the school year.

**Join the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Club Today and watch your monthly donation grow over the school year.** These are just some of the ways your **monthly donation** makes a difference...



Program Materials  
\$25/Month



Faculty Development  
\$50/Month



Special Projects  
\$75/Month



Tuition Support  
\$100/Month



Capital Improvements  
\$200/Month



Leadership Circle  
\$500/Month

To find out about the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations happening Friday & Saturday, June 1 & 2, 2018, sign up to receive email updates on our Google site:

<https://sites.google.com/montessori.on.ca/mhcma50>

711 Waterloo St. London, Ontario, N6A 3W1 ■ Tel: 519-433-9121 ■ Fax: 519-433-8941  
[info@montessori.on.ca](mailto:info@montessori.on.ca) ■ [montessori.on.ca](http://montessori.on.ca)

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Twitter: [@MAofLondon](https://twitter.com/MAofLondon)

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary site: [sites.google.com/montessori.on.ca/mhcma50](https://sites.google.com/montessori.on.ca/mhcma50)



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