



*A Very Happy New Year to you all*

## St. Nicholas Montessori School

Moya Healy who has been a teacher in the school for over 20 years and Principal for the past 11 years, has retired. I wish Moya many years of health and happiness and thank her for her support and friendship over many years working together.

contributes to a wonderful Montessori ethos in St. Nicholas.

During the summer a second classroom for 3-6 year old pupils was furnished and beautifully equipped. Laura and Mary both work in our 3-6 year old classrooms and Kate is with the



The new 3-6 Classroom, St. Nicholas Montessori School

Good wishes also go to Jo Culhane, Sylvia Sloane and Niamh Roe who have moved on to other positions. They are all missed greatly by the staff, parents and pupils of St. Nicholas Montessori School.

I wish to welcome our new *Many changes have taken place in St. Nicholas Montessori School.*

teachers, Laura Dempsey, Mary Farrelly and Kate Gray. We are delighted to have teachers of such high calibre and enthusiasm on the teaching staff which

6-9 year olds. Since the beginning of term pupils in the 6-9 year old and 9-12 year old classes are enjoying outdoor activities of Hockey, Football and Rounders. Hopefully the weather will continue to facilitate these activities.

A very successful and enjoyable first term was brought to a fitting close on Thursday 11th December 2008 with the children's wonderful performance of the Christmas play and carols.

*Ms Noreen Tierney*  
Principal

## Montessori Preschools Advisory Service and Certification Process

Montessori Education Mentors visit Montessori Preschools offering support and advise and mentoring on the Montessori programme in association St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland under the National Childcare Investment Programme. The Montessori Education Mentor's role is to visit Montessori preschool and assist in any way you wish, in setting up and maintaining a high quality Montessori programme in your Montessori preschool. The Montessori Education Mentors are available to advise and support you on matters of concern to you in relation to providing a quality Montessori Preschool programme.

A certification process is also provided to guide you in evaluating your Montessori programme. This certificate provides an independent quality assurance for Montessori Preschools and more especially for parents who can establish the quality the Montessori Preschool programme.

*To receive an advisory/mentoring visit and engage in the Certification process please telephone St. Nicholas Montessori Society, 01-2805705 or log on to website [www.montessorireland.ie](http://www.montessorireland.ie) for application form for visit or write to the Administrator St. Nicholas Montessori Society, 64 Patrick St., Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.*

### St. Nicholas Montessori Conference

23rd & 24th January 2009 - Dublin

*Who Is Talking To Our Children?  
Human Voice or Voice of Technology*



#### Sue Palmer

Writer, broadcaster and consultant on the education of young children.

#### Philomena Donnelly

Lecturer in Early Childhood Education. Director of the Graduate Diploma in Education

#### Sinead Finn

School of Linguistic (Trinity College) Speech & Communication

Liz Weir is a professional storyteller who works with all age groups

## We have moved !

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### National Council for Curriculum and Assessment - NCCA

The NCCA have developed a Framework for Early Learning which they hope will be published in 2009. The Framework for Early Learning, as its title suggests, will support children's early learning and development. It will do this by providing advice, information and tools to help adults develop their practice particularly in the areas of curriculum, partnership with parents and families, interactions, and play.

### Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE)

The Department of Education and Science have decided to end the sanction for the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education with effect from the end of November. The intention to continue some aspects of the Centre's work within the Department of Education and Science is welcome. The closure of the CECDE will mean a significant loss of expertise and capacity to this important area of policy development and implementation. St Nicholas Montessori Society wishes to thank Bernadette Burns and Mina Walsh for their contribution on the consultative committee.

### The National Childcare Training Strategy-NCTS

A commitment under the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) to put in place a national training strategy to ensure that those employed in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) would be appropriately qualified and professionally prepared to support the optimal development, well-being and learning of children in their care. A group chaired by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland are working to establish the qualifications profile of existing ECCE employees and the range and nature of education and training provision that is available. It is hoped to publish a consultative document on the findings in the near future.

### Private Funding Applications - National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP)

If you are considering applying for funding under the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) then now is the time to begin the process. Contact the Development Officer in your County or City Childcare Committee who will let you know the submission date. There is only one submission date and this may vary for each county. This allows you to plan your submission and to get the support of the Development Officer in submitting a high quality application and therefore ensuring you are successful. Funding must be taken within a year of being granted.

### Dates for your Diary

- *Conference - Dublin Fri & Sat, 23rd/24th Jan. 2009*
- *Bilingualism in the Montessori Classroom - Cork Tuesday, February 3rd 2009*
- *Practical Life - Dublin - Saturday, 7th March 2009*

## Peggy McClatchie - Remembered

In Ireland she was appointed the first teacher in the newly formed St. Nicholas Montessori School in August 1980 and appointed Principal of the school in June 1989, a position she held until her retirement in June 1997. During that time Peggy was an outstanding teacher and an accomplished lecturer at the various courses at St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland and at the Outreach Courses in Cork, Limerick and Galway as well as Summer courses in London, UK, Sweden and Kenya.

True to form of Montessori educators, Peggy continued her lecturing programme at the College and at the Talaght Institute of Technology outreach course, where she shared her expertise in the History area of the cur-

riculum.

On the October 1, 2005, Peggy was an inspiring keynote speaker at the 2nd Annual Conference of the Montessori Teachers Association, London, UK.

On January 6, 2007, Peggy joined colleagues from Dublin for the Centenary Celebrations of the First Montessori school in San Lorenza, Rome, an occasion she enjoyed to the full.

On behalf of all 'Montessorians' we extend our belated deepest sympathy to her beloved family and colleagues on this sad occasion.

May her dear soul rest in peace as she joins her former colleagues, Connie Fahey, Anne Lawlor and Kathleen Turley whose memories will be forever.

*Peggy McClatchie will always be remembered by the Montessori community in many countries throughout the world.*





## Montessori Conference - London Whitsun 1951

*At the threshold of a new year at St. Nicholas, we give thanks for all that has been achieved and remember all the wonderful people who have been associated with this achievement. The primary goal of Montessori's work at the beginning of the twentieth century was to create a better world for the future of humanity and this goal should be foremost in the mind of those who are entrusted with the continuation of this work today*

At this time of year it is good to reflect on the beginnings of Montessori's work and to find her philosophy and methodology of education is as relevant today as at the outset. One of her greatest discoveries was that the preparation of the environment was the key to the normalization of the child.

Montessori connected what she had discovered in her observation of the child to that of Einstein's discovery that there were two kinds of phenomena in nature namely, entropic phenomenon determined from without where cause produces effect and syntropic phenomenon which is determined from within like a seed that follows a fixed structural plan and results in the formation of a plant. She related the syntropic phenomenon to the development of a child when placed in a prepared environment and given the right conditions in order to blossom and grow as the seed develops into a healthy plant.

During a Montessori Conference held in London in 1951 Margaret Homfray and Phoebe Child, who were to become the Co-Principals of the St. Nicholas Montessori Centre, London, were given permission by Dr. Montessori to make a synopsis of the lectures given by her for those who could not be present at the conference. I was given a copy of the synopsis by Margaret Homfray and I would like to share it with all the members of St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland to renew your commitment to your vocation as a Montessori Educator.

### *Montessori Conference London Whitsun 1951 - Lecture No 1*

My work originated round a group of children in Rome, who showed manifestations quite unexpected by me and which amazed me. At that time people found it almost impossible to believe that children could behave in this way except through the direct influence of an adult. Even today, with our greater psychological knowledge, the maintaining of discipline and the standard of attainment are too often thought to be the direct result of the teachers work rather than having anything to do with the children themselves. Education is still based in its entirety on the adult. When I began, people saw the results in my children and kept asking for my philosophical conclusions for my ideas on freedom, discipline, liberty etc. They could not understand when I said that what happened with the children did not come from any preconceived educational ideas, but from the children themselves. Lately, science has shown that in the psychology of man's actions, there are actions that are not connected with the will of another person.

They are syntropic. Syntropic phenomena are connected with an end to be reached. These phenomena are not provoked by man and when noticed for the first time, have always caused wonder and

surprise. If we can discover the laws relating to the hidden energy in the soul of man, the result may be very far reaching. It can be likened to the discovery of electricity, a hidden energy whose discovery has had so great an effect. It is important to realise that there is energy in the children themselves, a spiritual energy, a little knowledge of which has already spread all over the world.

I noticed these syntropic phenomena in the children. I did not provoke them but after I had noticed them I looked for the conditions in order to fix them. I studied the conditions under which they arose, reproduced the conditions and watched what happened. I tried to give the best conditions possible. In the end what did I prove to be so efficacious? Certain exact objects. Certain exact material, much of it coming from the psychological laboratories, was what helped. These enabled the syntropic phenomena to appear. The children attached themselves to these exact things and there followed delicate work with the hands and concentration. The children developed a capacity to remain doing this work with great attention. The children concentrated, no teachers could have made them do this. The general belief at that time was that children could not fix their attention on anything. So, when my children showed this great power of concentration it was a new phenomenon. It was not my idea. I could not have made a child concentrate. It was a new phenomenon which can only occur under certain circumstances. I came to the conclusion that the basic preparation is an exact mathematical and orderly materials. Once order is established the imagination of the child can construct. I concluded that the syntropic phenomena are always there but external factors can repress or produce them.

The same conditions are necessary for children of every country and race. The syntropic phenomena established in the human species are the same for all people. If children are educated where these syntropic phenomena can be manifested they spontaneously develop their personality, will, consciousness and ability to choose. A man comes without our help; for we cannot create life, we can only help it. In order to help it we must understand the syntropic phenomena.

The child of 3 to 6 years does not learn through cause and effect but by the co-operation of these syntropic phenomena. He is able to take learning, he can have geography, history, mathematics; the faculties of his mind can be satisfied with these things. He can have culture. The child is the basis, not a preconceived method. Freedom is necessary, but freedom of the syntropic phenomena not freedom for disorder or idiocy. The teacher must respect the syntropic activity of the child; but she must not respect disorder or wrong activity which lessens the power of man".

*Sighe P Fitzgerald September 2008*

## St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland

St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland now offers a Level 7 HETAC Bachelor of Arts in Montessori Education and Level 8 HETAC BA(Honours) in Montessori Education and Higher Diploma in Arts in Early Childhood Montessori Education. These programmes continue to be popular for school leavers, mature students and students wishing to pursue a career change.

The College since last September has had the benefit from a second campus located close to St Nicholas House in Dunlaoghaire. These facilities have been structured to enhance the learning space available to all students and this has proved to be very successful. The College continues in discussion with both the Department of Education and Science and the Teaching Council for the recognition of graduates with the Level 8 BA(Honours) in Montessori Education for recognition as Montessori Teachers in the primary sector.

Contact St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland at (01) 2806 064 [www.snmci.ie](http://www.snmci.ie)



# Events throughout the year

*Music Workshop, Portlaoise*



*Practical Life Workshop, Cork*



*Art & Craft Workshop, Dublin*



*Drama Workshop, Limerick*



*Children from St. Anne's Montessori Pre-School Balbriggan busy planting.*

