



# THE *Montessori* OBSERVER

*"This is education, understood as a help to life; an education from birth,  
which feeds a peaceful revolution, and unites all in a common aim."*

—Maria Montessori

## INSIDE

A Special Letter  
2

Administrator Profile:  
Anu Chandra  
3

The Heart of Arbor's  
Community: Volunteering  
4

Teacher Profile: Myesha Green  
5

Teacher Appreciation  
Challenge: 2007 Annual Fund  
5

To Every Season...A Time To Plant  
6 & 7

Walter Reeves Visits  
Our Garden  
8

The AMI Refresher Course:  
A Chance to Reflect and Restore  
9

Celebrating  
Maria Montessori's Birthday  
10

Arbor's Annie Frazer Receives  
Science Teacher Award  
11



# O *Montessori* OBSERVER

**Editor in Chief**  
Leslie Richardson

**Copy Editor**  
Kristen Indermark

**Contributors**  
Julie Gazmararian  
Larry Gramlich  
Alison Sherrill  
Moirra Waldron  
Gaurang Yodh

**Photography**  
Kara Jacobson  
Duane Stork  
Deborah Young

**Distribution**  
Liz Richards

**Design**  
Maloney Design Studio

**Printing**  
Trinity Press



Arbor Montessori School  
2998 LaVista Road  
Decatur, Georgia 30033  
[www.arbormontessori.org](http://www.arbormontessori.org)

*Arbor Montessori admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, family structure or sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, family structure or sexual orientation in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.*



## Letter from Gaurang Yodh to his granddaughter, Rachel (*Lower Elementary, Cindy's Class*)

Dear Rachel,

This is a picture of my mother (in the white sari) with Madame Montessori. It is probably taken between 1938 and 1941. She and the lady on the left of M. Montessori went to Barcelona in 1933 and took the Montessori course on childhood education. Upon their return, they embarked upon starting pre-primary Montessori program – my mother was involved in a school called Bal Mandir (Children's Temple) run for disadvantaged children by a women's social work group. My sister, Medha, and I went through some Montessori classes at New Era School. The Bal Mandir was still running in Mumbai, the last time I looked. They adapted Montessori equipment to Indian conditions.

Madame Montessori had come to India around 1938, before WW II, to spread her teachings in India. She had to stay in India throughout the War because she was Italian and the British were fighting Italians during World War II. If she wanted to travel from one city to another she had to get special permission from the government!

I think in 1939 we spent the summer in a hill station in south India called Ooty and Madame Montessori was also there with her nephew, Mario Montessori. We went on picnics together and went swimming in Mukurti Lake with Mario. I was only 11 years old! I have pleasant memories of Mario playing with Medha and myself when he visited our home in Mumbai.

Madame Montessori loved children and I remember her making us sit in her lap! It was especially comfortable.

Hope you like the picture, Rachel.

Love, Grandpa

*Gaurang Yodh has three grandchildren at Arbor: Rachel, in Cindy's lower elementary class, Bryce, in Kate's upper elementary class, and Josh, in the middle school.*

# Administrator Profile: Anu Chandra

By Moira Waldron

There's something special about people who recommend books. People who freely lend you the book\* they just recommended, however, are exceptional. Anu Chandra, Arbor's new Primary Coordinator, is not only a lender and recommender of books, she's a mother, a teacher, an architect, and a staunch believer that ethics and principles of honesty, integrity, and loyalty not only make a good student, they are fundamental to being a good person.

Born and raised in India, Anu's first career was as an architect. While she was living in Dubai, her son was born and, though she continued to work many long, grueling hours in architecture, she began to consider a career change. Four years later, her family moved to Rhode Island and then to Atlanta. When Anu wanted to return to work, architecture was no longer her first choice. She sought a career that was interesting, less stressful, and one that provided her with more time for her family. Having many educators in her immediate and extended family, she considered teaching. Though she did not attend a Montessori school, Anu was familiar with the Montessori method due to Montessori's influence on education in India (interestingly, Anu's mother met Madame Montessori at a lecture she gave in Madras some time ago). She investigated and found that she could begin teaching in as early as one year after starting her training at the Montessori Institute

of Atlanta (MIA). Since receiving her Montessori diploma from the Institute, she has served as a primary directress and the director of a Montessori school. And, not only did she train at MIA, she also created architectural sketches for a future MIA training school. In the future, Anu would like to merge her two careers further by combining all she's experienced in Montessori teaching with her architectural skills. Someday, she'd like

parents, "Your child is not cleaning tables all day, every day—even if she tells you she is." When asked what the most remarkable thing about the Montessori method is, she responds immediately, "It works. Everything you read about Montessori can happen with your child, but we must all be patient. They cannot learn everything overnight." She points out that in her years working in Montessori schools, parents—astounded at



*"It works. Everything you read about Montessori can happen with your child, but we must all be patient."*

to teach in a Montessori school of her own design.

At Arbor, Anu's focus is on both the children and their parents. As she says, "Parents' goals and our goals are the same. We want what is best for the child." She works with all of the primary teachers at Arbor and gets to know all of their students as well. In addition, she offers opportunities for parents to discuss the classroom, the prepared environment, ways to speak to children about what they're doing in school, and even when to dismiss a little of what they tell their parents. As she said in the last coffee with the primary

what their children have learned—often thanked her. She repeatedly responded, "But I didn't teach them anything!" "This," she says, "is why we need to be patient. They will learn by themselves."

\*The book Anu recommended and lent, incidentally, was Richard Louv's *The Last Child in the Woods*. If you haven't read it yet, you must get it. Or, maybe someone nice will lend it to you. It was Arbor's Book Club selection for October. 📖

*Moira Waldron is the parent of Finnian, a first year in Myesha's all day primary class.*

# The Heart of Arbor's Community:



# Volunteering

*By Julie Gazmararian*

Many people ask me what is so great about Arbor and I usually respond by describing the Montessori approach to education. However, the warmth, commitment, and appreciation I feel towards Arbor clearly go beyond what happens in the classroom and extend to the Arbor community. The service foundation of the Arbor community is exemplified in so many actions of parents-- from serving on the various standing board committees, to inspecting for head lice, to transporting children to various off campus activities, to starting and coaching a running club and debate team for our children. As with any true community, this nurturing spirit reaches far beyond the Arbor campus walls, into our individual homes and lives, continuing a legacy of involvement and friendship.

Not only is our high degree of

volunteerism reflective of our community, but it is also stimulated by the parent involvement coordinator (PIC) in each of the classrooms. The primary purpose of the PIC is to organize and oversee the recruitment, training, and recognition of volunteers at Arbor. The PICs are charged with creating and sustaining a sense of community through volunteer involvement.

Since 2004, another responsibility of the PICs is to serve on the Arbor Community Council (ACC). This council was established to provide a forum to discuss and share information about issues that affect the Arbor community. The ACC is another unique aspect of Arbor because it provides a safe and appropriate environment for parents and staff to raise questions and discuss issues and topics of concern. Arbor parents are encouraged to bring concerns or questions to one

of their classroom PICs or directly to the AMI Team, which consists of the Arbor faculty, the Education and Business Administrators, the Primary and Elementary Coordinators, and the Auxiliary Director. The questions and concerns are discussed and answered either personally, placed on the ACC meeting agenda, or responded to by written addendum attachment to the ACC minutes. The ACC meets three times during the school year and is open to all Arbor families; minutes from these meetings are distributed to all families.

I encourage you to experience the warmth and the sense of community here at Arbor – engage, and volunteer! 🌱

*Julie Gazmararian is the parent of Alex, in Kate's upper elementary class, and Issac, who is in Cindy's lower elementary class.*

# Teacher Profile: Myesha Green

By Moira Waldron

What does immunology research have to do with Arbor's LaVista 2 primary class? It's not a new project that tracks who gets the flu and colds in the classroom and why (though, wouldn't that be nice?) It's Arbor's newest primary lead teacher, Myesha Green. Though Myesha always wanted to be a Montessori teacher, her interest in and passion for science took her down a different path where she spent years researching, studying, and grant-writing. This all culminated in a Ph.D. However, when defending her thesis, her response to the final question "what are you going to do next?" was not what research she was planning next, but, "I'm going to teach pre-schoolers!" A few weeks after defending, she and her sister began their Montessori teacher training together at the Montessori Institute of Atlanta.

Myesha brings not only her expertise as a recent AMI graduate to the classroom, she brings her experience as a Montessori student. She attended a Montessori school until the fifth grade and because of this experience and her love of mentoring children, Myesha always planned on being a Montessori teacher. She is still in contact with the headmistress of the school she attended and considers her primary and elementary days as some of the happiest of her life. She hopes to bring this same happiness to her students' lives, but admits that simply being with her students and watching their wonder and progress also makes her happy. "To see the look on their faces when they've accomplished something on their own, it's..." She can't quite find the word to describe the sensation of watching her students' joy and wonder at their



*"We live in a hurried world and are often in a rush ourselves. But slow down for a few moments from time to time; try to go at your child's pace."*

own achievements. But, the look on her face shows how she feels about them. She goes on to marvel about her class: "Just in the two months we've had together, they have mastered many lessons and have completely acclimated to how the classroom works and how to work with each other. They truly do teach each other things and help each other out in the classroom. They learn and see everything."

She points out that this aptitude to learn and see everything is also a

reason for parents to be patient and to try to live a little more slowly. "We live in a hurried world and are often in a rush ourselves. But, slow down for a few moments from time to time; try to go at your child's pace. See the world through their eyes. You'll be amazed at what you see and what you learn about your child." 🌱

*Moira Waldron is the parent of Finnian, a first year in Myesha's all day primary class.*

## Teacher Appreciation Challenge: 2007 Annual Fund

by Larry Gramlich

Two years ago, the Phoenix Society was created to thank those who contribute \$1,000 or more to Arbor's Annual Fund. The Arbor community responded with generosity, and we were pleased to have a total of 52 Phoenix Society members last year. This year's Annual Fund presents an exciting new opportunity. To honor Arbor's teachers for the extraordinary work they do with our children, an Arbor family has issued a challenge: If we are able to increase membership in the Phoenix Society by 50% (to 78 members), this family will contribute \$26,000 to Arbor! Please consider joining the Phoenix Society so we can meet this challenge and show the teachers that their tireless efforts are truly appreciated.

*Larry Gramlich is the parent of three children at Arbor: Colleen, in Becca's lower elementary class, Sean, in Kate's upper elementary class, and Eric, in the middle school.*

To Every Season...  
*A Time To Plant*







## Walter Reeves Visits our Garden

Garden Manager Emma Taylor and Assistant Manager Vivian McCann found themselves in front of TV cameras the first week of October with well-known Georgia gardener and TV/radio host Walter Reeves and crew. The crew was filming for a future production of Reeves' TV show, *The Georgia Gardener*, and the girls spent the afternoon planting new asparagus plants in our garden with the host. He gave them tips on how to plant and harvest the plants and how to use our compost material. By the end of the day, Emma and Vivian were on a first-name basis with the entire crew and got their t-shirts autographed by Mr. Reeves, who, they report, was nice and "funny." 🌱



# The AMI Refresher Course: A Chance to Reflect and Restore

By Alison Sherrill

The Atlanta Montessori community is proud to host the 2008 Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) Refresher Course this year. Montessori teachers, administrators, and assistant teachers from around the country will converge on the Hilton Atlanta starting on February 15 and staying until February 18. The theme for this year is “*Following Montessori’s Lead.*” Intense and inspiring workshops are offered for each teaching level (infants through elementary) as well as courses designed for administrators and assistants. Each workshop delves into keeping our Montessori values, beliefs, and philosophy in the forefront of our work with children and parents.

The opening keynote address features Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-brainers will rule the World*. He will present evidence from around the world to explain how the economy is being guided towards a phase defined not by traditional “knowledge workers” but by creators and empathizers. Through his presentation of six key right brained abilities, he will reveal why a Montessori education is the ideal preparation for the new world.

The primary teachers will attend lectures from Joen Bettmann, the Director of Training at the Montessori Institute of Atlanta. Joen’s focus will be “*Passion and Pedagogy: Falling in Love Again,*” a perfect topic to inspire and rekindle our devotion to the primary curriculum and child.

The elementary teachers have the great honor of attending workshops with Ann Dunne, Director of Training in Dublin, Ireland and London, England. Ann will present “*Cosmic Education and the Acquisition of Culture.*”

One of the greatest aspects of attending the annual Refresher Course is the chance to connect and reconnect with fellow Montessorians. The formal roundtable discussions and informal gatherings give opportunities for all attendees to brainstorm ideas, receive peer feedback and provide positive support for fellow colleagues. Arbor is at a great advantage because of our multiple classrooms at the primary and elementary levels. When I was a young teacher at a school in Virginia – and the only elementary teacher in the school – I found the Refresher Course to be my connection to an incredibly supportive network of peers.

Arbor is most excited to host a series of school tours during the Refresher Course weekend. We take great pride in our commitment to Montessori pedagogy and that is greatly reflected in the beautiful prepared environments created and maintained by our teaching staff. The chance to show off our entire school is an opportunity to concretely show other Montessorians what is possible when parents, teachers, staff and children come together. 🌱

*Alison Sherrill is the Elementary Coordinator at Arbor and the parent of Reagan Sherrill-Mestre, in Cindy’s lower elementary class and Joe Crow, in the Middle School.*

Celebrating  
Maria Montessori's  
**Birthday!**



# Arbor's Annie Frazer Receives Science Teacher Award

Annie Frazer, Arbor Middle School English teacher, was one of ten teachers selected to receive the Siemens Science Teacher Award for her work in the Urban Watch Program. She was the only private school teacher to be given this distinction. This award was presented by the Siemens Foundation and Fernbank Museum of Natural History at a special evening awards ceremony on Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2007, at Fernbank Museum of Natural History.

This is the inaugural year for

the award program in the metro Atlanta region; it recognizes teachers who are engaged in robust improvement of science learning at the middle and high school levels.

Arbor middle school student, Alishan Gezgin, attended the ceremony, which was held in the specially-reserved atrium of the museum. He said it was "extraordinarily fancy" and was quite impressed when he noticed the servers served from the left and removed from the right.

He enjoyed meeting the other



attendees and networking with other people who are interested in science. He especially liked hearing Annie's accomplishments enumerated when it was her turn to be recognized and to watch her receive her trophy. Stop by Arbor to take a look! 🏆

## *What her award says:*

### **Subjects taught:**

7th and 8th grade language, science, and social studies

### **Years teaching:**

7 years

### **Education:**

B.A. in English and Theater from Oberlin College and a M.Ed from Stanford University with a focus on teaching English.

### **Inspiration to become a teacher:**

Annie's inspiration comes from showing students how the science they need to know connects with work done in the real world that benefits themselves and the community.

### **Accomplishments:**

Together with her school, Annie created an organic garden. Her students help restore native plant species to the school's campus and neighboring properties. Annie's students have also conducted an energy audit of their campus in order to make energy saving recommendations to the school's Buildings and Grounds Committee.





Arbor Montessori School  
2998 LaVista Road  
Decatur, Georgia 30033  
[www.arbormontessori.org](http://www.arbormontessori.org)

Non-profit Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Decatur, GA 30033  
Permit No. 207