

Dear Parents,

It was with great enthusiasm that we attended the Annual Conference of the American Montessori Society in Washington, D.C. on March 6<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup>. The conference title, "Montessori Leadership for the Next 100 Years; A Capital Idea" brought together educators and leaders from around the world to learn and discuss how children can benefit from the Montessori approach during the Movement's second century.

In addition to a plethora of workshop choices, exhibition hall of Montessori materials, and networking opportunities with colleagues, we were privileged to hear prestigious Keynote speakers.

The Conference opened with the Keynote Address given by this year's "Living Legacy" recipient, **Dr. Elizabeth Coe**, Head of School of the Woods Middle and High School in Houston, Texas as well as Executive Director of the Houston Montessori Teacher Education Center. Betsy spoke of how the Montessori approach already provides what the education reform movement is seeking. She also encouraged Montessorians to speak with a united voice as we advocate for the rights of children worldwide.

**Marian Wright Edelman**, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, has been an advocate for disadvantaged children her entire Professional life. She was the first to coin the phrase "Leave No Child Behind". Her mission was to ensure every child a Healthy start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

**Art Costa**, a Professor of Education and Curriculum Design, spoke of restructuring curriculum. His emphasis on incorporating the more significant and essential lessons that occur over the life span are already a part of the Montessori Curriculum!

**Jane Goodall** is the founder of the Jane Goodall Institute, which helps people make a difference for all living things. She asked for Montessorians to join her organization to recognize the interconnectedness of all: people, animals and the environment.

The closing Keynote, **Gail Blanke**, was an inspirational speaker who urged all teachers to lead the Montessori Movement boldly into the next century.

I am so appreciative that our Board of Directors recognizes the value of continued education for our staff. Our school and our children will ultimately benefit from this experience as we apply what we have learned in our leadership and teaching.

Sincerely,  
Karen