

NOT A TYPICAL WEST SIDE MONTESSORI SUMMER ...

...though maybe there is no such thing as a “typical summer”!

This year we had seven weeks of summer camp, did multiple maintenance projects (see “Behind the Scenes”) and renovated space to expand the Twos Program (see “Twos Twos Twos ... Wonderful Twos!”).

Summer is typically the busiest academic time for WSMS-TEP, our teacher education program, because that is when most teachers are free to take supplementary training. That was certainly true this summer. However, traditional Montessori credential training was far from the only activity keeping Lisanne Pinciotti, Director of Teacher Education, and her dedicated crew busy.

For one thing, TEP officially relocated to 302 West 91st Street, with office and classroom space rented from the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church. Starting in the fall, Infant Toddler (IT) and Early Childhood (EC) classes will be held there. At the same time, all TEP documents and other materials were moved from the fifth floor of the main school building to a dedicated office in the church basement.

This past summer eighteen enthusiastic new students started their Early Childhood courses in the beautiful Demas Hall on the main level of the church. Students on the fall EC track joined them for the last three weeks.

Elementary (EL) classes were held at Metropolitan Montessori School on West 85th Street, which allowed us to use their age-appropriate classroom settings. Twenty-one students attended these classes. Rosemary Quaranta, Head of the Montessori Lab School of Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH, shared her 40 years of Montessori experience during a two-week segment of the program. This year the program included classes for the Elementary I (ages 6-9) credential. Next year we will expand to include Elementary II (ages 9-12).

Among our students this summer were nine (one EC and eight EL) from the Miiftaahul Uloom Academy in Union City, NJ, and seven (four EC and three EL) from WeGrow, a new school created by WeWork, initially for their employees’ children, which incorporates the educational pedagogies of Montessori, Reggio Emilia and Bank Street.

Because most people seeking the Infant Toddler credential work on a year-round basis, there were no IT classes held at WSMS this summer (students typically meet two Saturdays/month during the academic year). Instead Karen Deinzer, Tara Greaney and Maria Rosado headed to China to provide six weeks of training for iHommy International Daycare in Beijing. They had twelve lively and enthusiastic students enrolled in the academic phase, who are now in practicums to receive their IT credentials next June. Karen and Maria will be in regular contact with them via Zoom and will likely visit two-three times over the year.

The summer Administrator (Admin) classes were held in the Parents Room/Library for two-and-a-half weeks. There were three new students, and seven continuing students. Admin is a bit different from the regular credential, in that admission is rolling and the students therefore overlap. The credential requires an online course during the fall and two summer sessions. Melissa Freeman, former Associate Head of WSMS, oversees the management of the program (she also oversees practicums for both EC and Admin), and Bev Smith, former Assistant Head of WSMS, serves as a mentor and coach.

Lisanne met regularly with her team throughout the summer: Uniit Carruyo is the IT Coordinator; Sheba Kapur is the Elementary Level Coordinator and oversees visa procurement for international students; in addition to her Admin role, Melissa Freedman coordinates practicums for EC students. They are now working on creating an online professional development curriculum, and a “Montessori Inclusion Endorsement”



(MIE) which would offer an additional qualification in special education for TEP students next summer. Giuls DeGrazia will be running the professional development process and Kathryn Fordney will be leading the MIE team.

Another summer focus was the request of Starwood Montessori School in Frisco, TX, to provide training for their faculty. Lisanne and her crew are developing a curriculum that would be available in two-week segments and seminar weekends taught by TEP faculty, and in online courses.

As Lisanne says, the Montessori philosophy is a foundation that ensures consistency in the academic approach, but—at the same time—there has to be growth to ensure vibrancy. This is as true for the adult programs as it is for the children’s. Lisanne credits and is grateful to the WSMS Board for their faith in, and support of, the TEP goals; to Head of School Mimi Basso for her ceaseless encouragement and support; to Amy Stoney, Shawn Cumberbatch and their team for cheerfully and effectively addressing TEP facilities requirements; and to her team and faculty for ensuring the highest quality education for the adult students enrolled in TEP.

Summer may be over, but the busy world of TEP keeps on going.

HATS OFF TO WSMS-TEP GRADS

On June 20, 2018, WSMS-TEP celebrated its largest graduating class ever, with a special ceremony held in the Trinity School auditorium. Sixty-six students completed the program and will receive their Montessori credentials from AMS in the Infant Toddler, Early Childhood, and—for the first time—Elementary levels. The graduates from the Infant Toddler additional location in Beijing, China, joined via Zoom and were

greeted warmly by all in attendance. The invited speaker was Gina Lofquist, Senior Director of Teacher Education for the American Montessori Society. We were also delighted to welcome Melina Papadimitriou, the new AMS Director of Teacher Education Affiliation and Services as a special guest. Gina lauded the group for their efforts throughout training and encouraged the graduates to use all they have learned to inspire children in

their environments, work collaboratively with fellow teachers, and maintain their focus on the essential elements of Montessori's philosophy.

The enthusiastic applause of a theater full of friends and family was a joyous ending to WSMS-TEP training and a great beginning to the careers of our newest alumni group!



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Find out more at wsmsnyc.org/teachereducation or email Lianne Pinciotti at lpinciotti@wsmsnyc.org

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Founded in 1967 by Roslyn D. Williams as Project CHAMP, WSMS-TEP has been continuously AMS-affiliated and MACTE-accredited.

