

# MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S HOUSE

---

Montessori Children's House of Franktown is now an arm of Franktown United Methodist Church. As a member of FUMC and MCHF I can say that this is a very exciting union for all. Both the school and the church are now very significant partners in the lives of the children who will walk through the doors of the Children's House in the fall.

I have spent the past year training to be with children and to guide them. I have learned more about their essential nature and how Montessori Method is so conducive to that nature. Also, during my undergraduate years at UVA I had the opportunity to research various aspects of early childhood psychology and development and Montessori. What happened, a result I could not have anticipated, was a transformation in me. I have developed a much greater respect for children and the amazing work of self-construction that they experience in their first six years of life. I have also learned much about myself and how my own childhood shaped me as a woman.

Montessori says that this transformation is an important step in becoming a teacher/guide. Throughout the long hours of practicing and learning Montessori Method something else begins to happen. We change. We cultivate humility, patience, love and respect. I tell you this because I think it is important to know where I am coming from and why I am here. I chose to return to the Shore for this school and for these children.

When Franktown decided to make this leap of faith, supporting our efforts in so many ways, I knew it was the best of all possible places for the children and an immeasurable blessing. Our church will be a warm, loving, and nurturing environment in which the children can grow. At the same time, I know that the children and the Children's House will be a blessing for the church and all of its members, including me, and the community at large.

I would like to tell you a little bit about Maria Montessori and the Montessori Method, although it is very difficult to summarize the genius of the woman and the complexity of her work. Throughout the coming months look for in depth articles on various aspects of the Montessori approach and how it relates to the children.

Montessori offers a broad vision of education as an "aid to life". It is designed to help children with their task of inner construction as they grow from childhood to maturity. The environment responds to the needs of the "whole" child (intellectual, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual). The rich curriculum promotes knowledge of the world, the academic skills needed to grow intellectually, and the respect for self and others necessary to inherit their rightful, peaceful and productive place in it. The children's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult. Through their work, the children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline.

Maria Montessori began her work officially in 1907 (100 years ago this year), in Italy. As a scientist she began her work by observing the children and experimenting with various materials. She developed her whole method by following the child and by responding to the inherent needs that were so evident in them. I stress this because it is one of my favorite aspects of her work. The method works because it is based on observation and research. It is one of the very few educational approaches where the practice is tied directly to the pedagogy. Everything we do in the classroom, including every presentation and every material, is backed up by the philosophy. Another wonderful thing about Montessori is that it is for ALL of God's children. You may think this impossible but it is true. The method is universal, which means it is the same for children here as it is in Ghana or The Netherlands or the outback of Australia. It is based on the true nature of all children and therefore they are each able to find their place in this environment.

Please feel free to stop by the old fellowship wing when we are setting up and preparing the classroom. If you have questions, do not hesitate to call me. If you feel moved to help there are various things you can do: sewing, lifting, cleaning, painting, cutting etc... Please see me. And, also, please continue to pray for the Children's House, and spread the word to the community. In July we will be advertising for an assistant. We are looking for someone with a high school diploma and a great love of children. She will be working at the school from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 pm., Monday through Friday. She will also have the unique opportunity of aiding these precious children in their great work of self construction. This job involves intense "on the job training"; therefore we are seeking someone who is willing to learn and to be guided. Here's to a great year! Gillian Molera (710-4538, [montessorifranktown@gmail.com](mailto:montessorifranktown@gmail.com))