

# AMI/USA Report



AMI/USA, AMI's branch office in the United States, is pleased to provide this report to AMI for the 2000-2001 year. This summary includes only some of the highlights of the past year.

## **Membership/recognised schools**

As of the date of this report, there were 144 recognised schools and 25 affiliated schools. We are still processing two additional applications. Altogether, 16,429 children are enrolled in these schools, a slight increase over last year. The number of AMI memberships processed through AMI/USA so far this year is 1,960—about a 3% increase over last year.

## **Board membership and activities; administration**

As a result of AMI/USA's Board rotation policy, Carla Caudill-Waechter left the AMI/USA Board effective at the conclusion of its February, 2001 meeting. She will remain active in the AMI community, since she continues to serve as a consultant and has expressed a willingness to provide her time on various projects in the future. Carla's situation reflects part of the policy underlying the Board rotation mechanism: to get people who are experienced and knowledgeable about AMI/USA's affairs into the community with their peers. We will miss her counsel and hard work on the Board. After customary consultation with AMI, AMI/USA has replaced Carla with Melinda Nielsen, from Texas. In accordance with our practice, we invited Melinda to attend our February Board meeting as a guest. She did so and immediately began making contributions with her observations and questions.

Six-year veteran Silvia Dubovoy will be leaving the Board after its next meeting in

July. Like Carla, Silvia has made immeasurable contributions to AMI/USA's welfare during her years on the Board. She, too, will return to the AMI community with a fuller understanding of AMI/USA's affairs, where she will, undoubtedly, continue to support AMI, in addition to her activities as a trainer. We're very glad that Silvia let us borrow her for the last six years; despite her intense schedule year-round, she never begrudged us her time and judgment when we needed it.

Silvia's position on the Board is the slot in general dedicated to a trainer. After consultation with AMI, AMI/USA selected Allyn Travis, Director of Training at the Montessori Institute of Milwaukee, to join the Board. Allyn, too, was a guest at the February meeting. We are confident that she will equal Silvia's contribution to AMI and AMI/USA.

The Board conducted open meetings in Atlanta and Tampa in conjunction with regular Board meetings. At these open meetings, we invite interested people to meet us, ask us questions and listen to our observations on items that we think will be of interest to them. We were particularly delighted at the exchange of suggestions and experience that occurred among the attendees at the Tampa meeting, for we continue to believe that our community can do much for itself by joining hands, far more than it might imagine.

As always, the AMI and AMI/USA offices maintained close and regular contact. In addition, as has been customary, there were direct meetings between delegates of the AMI and AMI/USA Boards in Amsterdam in April and October.

## **Programmes**

The 2001 annual Joint Refresher Course presented by AMI/USA and AMI-EAA was successful pedagogically, professionally and financially. Covering nearly four days in Tampa, Florida, its subject was "Theory Into Practice". Featured speakers included Dr. Kay Baker and Greg MacDonald at the Elementary level, Molly O'Shaughnessy at the Primary, and Maria Teresa Vidales at the Assistants to Infancy. For the first time, the Refresher Course included speakers and programmes for administrators of schools. The latter, whose topic was "Wisdom, Collaboration and Commitment", was designed to assist heads of schools in better understanding and communicating to their communities how Montessori principles underlie the education their schools deliver. The Refresher Course was attended by 328 teachers and 91 administrators.

This past summer, our biennial national conference was held near Boston, Massachusetts. Its theme was "Freedom and Responsibility". Speakers included such people as Renilde Montessori, Margaret Stephenson, Professor Luciano Mazzetti, Marsilia Palocci, Dr. Silvana Montanaro, Dr. Marcelo M. Suarez of Harvard University, Dr. Thomas Armstrong and John Rosemond, M.S. The latter two produced much thought and some (healthy) controversy. There were programmes at the Assistants to Infancy, Primary, Elementary and Adolescent levels. In addition, we had special programmes for school administrators. As always, the national conference was open to the public.

A central event at the national conference was the announcement of the MES Endowment Fund. AMI/USA established the Fund, named in honour of United States' AMI pioneer Margaret E. Stephenson, to provide scholarship money for those seeking training at AMI training courses in the United States.

Miss Stephenson, a native of the United Kingdom, spent a good part of her adult life carrying out Mario Montessori's request that she try to re-establish AMI Montessori education in the United States. She did so with dignity, passion, steadfastness in the face of disappointment and with boundless humour. Among the subjects most important to her was the training of Montessori teachers in the United States. Endlessly, she looked for ways to help students attend AMI training courses. Knowing so well her immeasurable contributions to AMI Montessori education in the United States (and worldwide) and the personal sacrifices she made in furtherance of her work, and itself sensitive to the need for more AMI teachers in the United States, AMI/USA created the Fund. To date, the total pledged by donors is \$195,614. There are 305 individual donors, and 280 Charter Donors. We will be awarding our first partial scholarships soon for the next academic year.

## **Other matters**

### *Consultation Training*

AMI/USA, under the guidance of AMI, conducted a consultation training course in March in San Antonio, Texas. There were 20 participants. Additionally, AMI/USA added a pilot training programme to create advisors to help AMI schools that are struggling with Board and administrative matters. Of those who participated in last year's first Assistants to Infancy consultation training programme, five were recent AMI graduates.

### *Professional Contacts*

AMI/USA's Executive Director, Virginia McHugh, attended CAPE's March Board meeting as an observer. CAPE is a sophisticated non-profit organisation promoting the interests of private education in the United States.

AMI/USA Board