

## To Our Readers



Mary Hayes

As a year comes to an end, we have the tendency to look back and reflect on events which took place in that twelve-month period. The usual annual AMI events came and went—and have of course been reported and commented on in various places and publications. The highlight of the year was the 24th International Congress held in Paris in July, an event which also has been widely covered in various ways. I attended the Congress as the guest of the Organising Committee and would like to express my thanks here to Mme Marie-Louise Pasquier, Victoria Barres and Patricia Spinelli-Delivré for their invitation.

The first of two overriding impressions I took away with me from Paris was the great number of young people present, which seemed to surprise some of the participants. Perhaps we appear as a movement of the middle-aged or elderly, but the contrary was

demonstrated in Paris. My second impression was equally rewarding and it was the message that from our presence, our presentations and our attitude we show that we have great respect and reverence for the universal child. As one of the representatives of UNESCO pointed out to us, this is not true of all groups of people who may have a mandate to concern themselves with the conditions of the lives of children throughout the world. Maybe I'm naïve, but I found this most reassuring for our future work.

Of course, then we had to deal with the enormity of the events of September the 11<sup>th</sup>. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Renilde Montessori for her message to the world on our behalf, posted on AMI's website. I kept some candles burning on the night of the tragedy in memory of those who died that day—an ancient Irish tradition. No doubt it has many meanings, but for us I think the light of hope is present. The light can lead us out of the darkness. The light of the sun dawns on us each day and working at the AMI office one is constantly aware of this continuous process across the face of our globe. The sun is presently on its journey to the southern hemisphere in our manner of speaking, but will in a very short time start making its return journey to us in the north. The cycle is continuous. Our work is continuous: new students arrive for training, new children come to our schools, new hope for the future.

My wish for all of you who read this short message is a new enlightenment and understanding of the philosophy and pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori.

Mary Hayes  
General Secretary