



Join the **AMI Elementary Alumni Association** for our annual summer gathering. Come to be refreshed, gain inspiration, and connect with our vibrant community!

2019 U.S. Summer Conference

Nourishing the Peaceful Revolution

June 30 - July 5, 2019

Kettunen Center ~ Tustin, Michigan

This summer's U.S. conference will be held at the **Kettunen Center**, located on 153 acres of rolling hills and forests along a beautiful lakefront in Tustin, Michigan. Surrounded by beauty and tranquility in a natural setting, there are many opportunities to unwind and explore while enjoying the company of fellow EAA members.



Lodging is available in either hotel-style or bunk-style rooms, with topnotch food service and many communal meeting spaces for relaxation, recreation, and learning.



Registration is available through the links below!

www.ami-eaa.org

https://ami-eaa.formstack.com/forms/eam_sc_registration_us

Questions? Please contact:

**Rachel Eberhard ~ events@ami-eaa.org
Conference Coordinator, AMI-EAA
Jenn Porter ~ jennporter09@gmail.com
On-site Coordinator**

Montessori Pathway to Peace through Social and Environmental Justice with Judith Cunningham

This presentation will describe the Montessori Path to Peace through videos, case studies and lecture. Montessori principles and practices in the elementary and adolescent curriculum reveal the underpinnings for peace during this critical period for the development of social justice. Cosmic Education for the elementary student implicitly promotes the concept of peace through common ancestry, unity in diversity, interdependence, and cosmic task. The Montessori adolescent community continues and expands the work of the elementary; adolescents refine core values and their unique contribution to the world. Adolescents are in search of a mission that will help them understand their vocation and make a difference in the world. Together these steps create the new humanity committed to civic responsibility and capable of peace.

Making It up as We Go Along! : Exploring and Exploding the Brain Through Improvisational Theatre with Lisa Thauvette

Improvisational theatre is not just for laughs as an audience member, but is also an inspiring and mind-bending experience as a participant. Montessori and improv share the tenet of bringing the brain to our highest level of functioning by fostering empathy, connection, and appreciation for another's contribution. This interactive workshop will introduce the basic principles of improvisation and how this can be linked to extending student learning in the Elementary classroom as well as professional development for staff. Through large and small group activities the participants will play, experiment, and push their own comfort level, while feeling supported and appreciated along the way.

Developing Reason: Principles for Guiding Our Only Tool for the Discovery of Truth with Justin Chapan

In this talk we will take a deep look into the reasoning mind of the elementary child by clarifying what reason is, how it develops, and suggestions for daily practice in the classroom to promote the development of reason. We will begin by defining reason, what is it and what it is not, and clarifying what we mean when we say the reasoning mind. We will answer the question, "What is truth and how do we know it?" by looking at different ways humans validate knowledge and how the children in our own classrooms experience this. This talk requires no specialized knowledge and is only meant to deepen our understanding of what reason is, why it is important, and how we can help its development.

What Would I Teach if I were not Afraid?

with Sheri Bishop

This workshop is designed to compare the views of Maria Montessori with those of James Baldwin, African American author, playwright, educator, and civil rights activist, regarding how we teachers can prepare ourselves for implementing social justice curricula in our classrooms. As a Montessori teacher that believes in an anti-bias, anti-racial approach to education, my aspiration to implement this type of curriculum was at times greater than what I did in reality. Some of us may not know where to start. Using the article "A Talk to Teachers", Baldwin 1963, as the work, the group will come to know more about the activist, scholar, and writer named James Baldwin and why his thoughts on education for children of color are still relevant in today's turbulent times and how they parallel to those of Maria Montessori. Participants will gain a greater understanding of why honest self-reflection and participation in courageous conversations must happen if our children, all children, are to move past the painful legacy of our American history. Regarding implementation of Anti-bias/Anti-racist curricula, asking ourselves, "*What Would I Do If I Were Not Afraid*" can lead to self-reflection and self-awareness, and growth beyond the implicit biases and stereotypes we all possess. Owning our true racial feelings and beliefs, and working to make changes as needed, can help us claim/reclaim our Montessori classrooms for universal liberation.

Reclaiming True American History in the Montessori Classroom

with Sheri Bishop

"Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul"--- Maria Montessori. Though laws have been changed in America, history bears out that this sense of value and appreciation and love that Maria Montessori speaks of has not been extended to all Americans. The idea below expressed by James Baldwin in 1963 is, unfortunately, still relevant in 2018. *"What is upsetting the country is a sense of its own identity. If, for example, one managed to change the curriculum in all the schools so that Negroes learned more about themselves and their real contributions to this culture, you would be liberating not only Negroes, you'd be liberating white people who know nothing about their own history."* This thought can surely be expanded to include Indigenous people. At the heart of cosmic education is the idea that understanding the whole allows us to discover the value of its parts. By illuminating the stories of diverse groups and individuals, we can tell a more meaningful story - about the tapestry of time, even when these stories are personal and painful.

Presenter Bios

Sheri Bishop, M.Ed. is a Montessori Elementary Guide that is committed to the idea that *the way to address the racial, religious and cultural turmoil that our nation continues to face today, is by acknowledging the truth of American history, openly declaring that the building of our democratic republic was successful because of the contributions made by Indigenous people and those of African descent, and that these truth must be offered as a part of the education of all children in America.*

As the mother of two boys, 13 and 20 years old, that are of African and European descent, she had to guide them to understand their racial and cultural intersections and teach them to not allow others to define their identities. Both her children had long Montessori careers. She believes that their education in Montessori settings freed them, in many ways, to explore their individuality. She came to believe in the Montessori philosophy and approach so much that after a very long career as a healthcare provider, she pursued and completed her Association of Montessori International (AMI) elementary certification at the Montessori Institute of Atlanta in 2014 and earned her Masters of Education degree in Montessori Elementary Education at Loyola University in Baltimore, MD in 2015.

After emerging herself in the philosophy and pedagogy and observing instructional content in various settings, it seemed very little was offered to help children in Montessori environments learn about, and celebrate, the historical and racial positions of people of color in America. Sheri is committed to the social justice work that continues to happen in the Montessori world. This social justice work is moving in various directions and is extending well beyond the concepts of peace and grace and courtesies. She enjoys being a part of that and was elected as one of the 2017 founding members of the Montessori for Social Justice Board.



Sheri currently teaches at Hampton Roads International Montessori School in Newport News, VA. Prior to this, she held Teacher's Assistant and Lower Elementary Guide positions at Ghent Montessori School in Norfolk, VA. She has been professionally affiliated with AMI, AMS, and Montessori for Social Justice (MSJ).

Justin Chapien is an Elementary Guide at Omni Montessori School in Charlotte, NC and has worked with schools in both the private and public sector. Justin completed his Undergraduate Degree in Mathematics from Ohio University, and he is a graduate of the Montessori Training Center Northeast (MTCNE) Elementary program with Carla Foster and Gerry Leonard. Justin enjoys exploring the world and discovering truths with the children. For Justin, working with children is a humbling experience, and he considers it a joy and honor to serve and guide their development. When he is not in the classroom, you will find Justin rock climbing, playing his guitar, cycling, or searching for the best restaurants.



Judith Cunningham is the Founder and Chief Strategy Officer of Montessori Model UN. Judith founded MMUN to help students find their voices, take action and build peace. MMUN is named after Dr. Maria Montessori who said to the United Nations, "If the world would listen to the children, they would hear new, innovative solutions to the world's problems". As a Montessori educator and former head of school, Judith's experience enabled her to design MMUN to align with the developmental interests of students from 9-18 years of age moving from awareness of the global-local nature of problems to a sense of responsibility to take action to the implementation of student action project.



Judith holds a M.Ed. and post graduate work in Conflict Management and has worked with students and teachers from 30+ countries since founding MMUN in 2006.

Lisa Thauvette is an educational consultant and improviser, who brings playfulness and spontaneity to Montessori educators through improvisational theatre skills and techniques. She has been the Head of School for the past 11 years at International Montessori in Brussels, Belgium, and holds an AMI diploma for elementary, and a Masters of Education in Montessori from Loyola College. She is the founder of Tilt Think, working with educators on tilting scenarios and perspectives through classroom consulting and customized professional development.



Registration Information

Online Registration

https://ami-eaa.formstack.com/forms/ea_sc_registration_us

Conference Fees

EAA Membership: \$50

Tuition: \$300

Housing and Meals: options from \$450 - \$550 depending on room type

Going-Out Bus Fee: \$25

Discounts

Early Bird (submitted by May 1, 2019): -\$25

US Refresher Course: -\$25

First Time EAA Summer Conference Attendees (first 5): -\$25

Alumni 25th Anniversary Discount: -\$25

Current Trainer or ETOT: -\$150

