

# Montessori School of Lemont

Since 1972

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## “A Home of our Own”

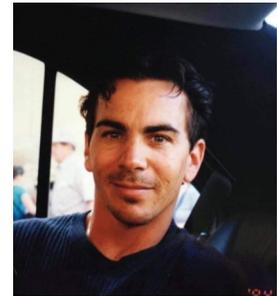
-Therese Colby

This month we are celebrating 20 years on our beautiful campus! In 1999, MSOL parent, Joe Bonfitto donated the 7 acres of tree-lined prairie that now houses three buildings for 150 students, a natural playground with ball fields, Zen garden, zip line, chicken coop, community gardens and outdoor classrooms. Our first two buildings opened for the 2001 school year, ending a 30 year cycle of renting. Since becoming head of school in 1979, my mother, Norine Colby, had a vision that the school would one day have a ‘home of our own,’ a permanent location free from the instability of renting. Joe’s donation enabled us to bring her vision to life and changed the course of our school’s history.

My mom and I met Joe in 1997 when his son Nick was in my primary class. They lived at The Narnia Estate on 55 acres that Joe developed and named for the books that had a profound impact on his young life. He credited his

4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher with changing his life through these books and knew his donation could provide the same opportunity for other children. A huge stone replica of Aslan still guards the old entry gate to Narnia (now Monte Bello Estates) and the massive front doors of the main house are intricately hand carved with a scene from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Joe’s world was the Chicago Board of Trade where he was very successful at a young age, a partner in a clearing company by the time Nick started school. At the first parent meeting he attended we showed a video of another mother-daughter teaching team and their journey to build their own Montessori school. They shared their story and spoke in the flowery way that we Montessorians tend to speak. It was lovely, well produced, aspirational and in retrospect, likely intended for an



Joseph (“Joey”) Bonfitto

entirely different audience. Joe was having none of it. I smile when I picture his expression, practically rolling his eyes as he irreverently said of the refined ladies in the video, “You could do a much better job than those two” as he made his first pledge of \$25,000 in exchange for my promise to never show that video again.

The land donation came a year later. After decades of fundraising, the school had \$100,000 in the building fund, an insignificant amount even in the ‘90s but

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## Curriculum Crawl, September 23

Montessori said, “*The development of language is part of the development of the personality, for words are the natural means of expressing thoughts and establishing understanding between people.*” Our goal at each level of development is to aid the children in self expression and communication, whether speaking, writing or reading.

The absorbent mind of the young child learns vocabulary, noun-verb agreement, and con-

text without formal instruction and perfects it through usage as they learn to talk. Our classroom environments are often compared to bee hives and their constant hum of activity. The hum created by wings in a hive is created by language in a Montessori classroom. To silence language in a classroom is to clip the child’s wings and interfere with the autonomous learning that allowed them to teach themselves to speak (and much more) as a toddler.

Teachers model proper usage, foreign languages refine the ear and precisely sequenced activities isolate concepts before combining them into complex pattern and rules, allowing students to construct their own foundation for creative writing, novel studies, etymology, public speaking and debate. Join your child’s teacher to learn how exciting language can be and what your child will be working on during their three year journey together.

### Save the Date!

- September 1  
Tuition Due
- September 6  
Labor Day, No School
- September 7  
Specials Begin
- September 8  
PA Meeting
- September 9  
WJR Registration Due
- September 14  
Mum Order Due
- September 16  
Picture Day
- September 23  
Picture Make-Up Day  
6:30<sup>pm</sup> Curriculum  
Crawl
- September 25  
Walk, Jog, (Color) Run
- September 29– Oct 1  
Kampsville Trip

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Sheila Lamb-Gabler, MSOL director and alumni parent.

## Board Profile

Meet Sheila Lamb-Gabler!

The board of the Montessori School of Lemont is a professional board, made up of Montessori certified teachers, alumni and alumni parents, public sector educators and financial professionals.

Sheila is a parent of three MSOL alumni and has been a member of our board for several years. Growing up on the South Side of Chicago in a family that owned a funeral business, she has certainly spread her wings throughout

her life, visiting over 60 countries, becoming a citizen of the U.A.E., and receiving several international awards for peace activism. As an artist, entrepreneur and event expert, her global career has allowed her to connect with other cultures on the topic of peace through artistic expression.

Creativity is a core value of the Lamb and Gabler families making MSOL an obvious choice for their children's education. With accessibility to flexible learning methods,

and consistent opportunities to develop their unique opinions and processes, countless benefits have resulted from the integration with MSOL. Art has always played a major role in Sheila's family, and her mission has been to continue to allow the power of art to speak for itself and to discover connections across boundaries.

We are grateful for Sheila's commitment to MSOL over the years and look forward to many more!

[while creating a timeline of Hindu-Arabic numerals from 300BCE to CE.]

**"This classroom is so interesting."**

- D.M., 7<sup>th</sup> grade



Faye has her face painted at the Back to School Picnic

### MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF LEMONT PARENTS' ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES MEETING DATE: 8-11-21



OFFICERS PRESENT:  
JENNA TREANOR, PRESIDENT  
JENNIFER GALKA, VICE-PRESIDENT  
KAREN DAMATO, TREASURER-ABSENT  
DEBBIE MORENO, SECRETARY

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Therese Colby, Ashley Haberkern, Jennifer Maes, Nicole Cirillo and Mariel Carrasco  
CALL TO ORDER: 10:00 AM  
MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:15 AM  
EXECUTIVE REPORT: JENNA TREANOR, PRESIDENT

*School Mission Statement: It is the mission of the M.S.O.L. to provide for the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual education of children ages 3-15 years following the methods and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori*

*PA Mission Statement: The Parent's Association of the Montessori School of Lemont exists to support the school's philosophy, programs and activities for the benefit of all students, staff and families*

- **NEW BUSINESS:**  
Jenna presented an overview of events the PA oversees during the school year with new PA members. She will have an updated sheet showing events that have a lead volunteer.
- Items purchased for Movie Night will be utilized at the Back to School Picnic, looking for a child volunteer to do face paint/temporary stickers.
- Debbie will ask room parents to send an email inviting primary families to attend the picnic
- Jennifer provided an update on the Mentor Program. She might be looking for volunteers in the Green and Orange Rooms. She will let Debbie know by the end of the week if the room parents need to fill in
- PA set to sell mums for Fall and Poinsettias for Winter.
- Jenna reviewed WJR. Jeanine Galetti will be the lead on this and will be looking for volunteers
- Arlene Gonzalez will be the lead for staff birthdays.
- Karen Damato will be lead for flower sales.
- Chrissy Hauke will be lead for Grandparents' Day.
- Jennifer Galka is lead for Book Fair, she provided an update on considering Barnes and Noble in

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**Minutes**

*(Continued from page 2)*

Bolingbrook for this event. This would be an online and in person event. We discussed opening sales online from November 1<sup>st</sup> thru 7<sup>th</sup> and in the store on November 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> only. Jennifer will provide an update with that possibility later.

- Jenna opened up the discussion for the Annual Fundraiser. Therese provided input from Red Apple Auctions. We will look into this as an option.
- Discussion about fundraising opportunities included; candy sales novelty items from local businesses (Wooden Paddle, Microgreens).
- Discussed possibility of more online activities for children, requested feedback from new families. PA will take a parent survey at a later date.
- Therese is looking for a school photographer. Debbie will ask room parents to email for a volunteer, any interested party should contact Therese.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> @ 8:45 AM



Thank you to Orange & Silver Room dad, Ram Rivera for fixing the slide!

*(Continued from page 1)*

with the land as collateral, it was enough for the earnest money on our first construction loan. More donations followed, his daughter, Mila, started in the primary program, and Joe repeatedly declined to be publicly acknowledged for his generosity, he wanted to be 'just' another dad.

I assumed that Joey's generosity was borne out of a sense of gratitude for his early financial success but at his wake in 2017, the largest I

have ever attended, I learned that he had always been generous. His success simply allowed him to help more people. The hours of eulogies were not enough for everyone to share the impact he made on so many lives.

I am grateful to Nick's mom, Paula, for choosing our school and giving us this once in a lifetime opportunity. I later had the pleasure of working with her in the classroom and think of her every time I do my happy dance because she was the first

person to tell me that I had one! I still have the little gifts she let Nick pick out for me like "Nick's lilies," that have spread in my garden over the years. I speak for all teachers when I say that these tokens and the happy dances that you and your children inspire are not forgotten.

Thank you to everyone who has chosen MSOL and supported our vision over the decades. We are looking forward to celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year with all of you.

***"I would rather pick weeds here every day than sit in a classroom at the public school."***

- J.B., 7<sup>th</sup> grade

**Sock Drive for Hurricane Relief -The Adolescent Class**

Last month Hurricane Ida devastated Southern Louisiana... Montessori Schools around the region sustained water damage. As part of the nationwide Montessori community, it is our job to help schools around the country in their time of need. Now, these three schools need your help.

Messiah Montessori School\*  
Crescent City Montessori  
Montessori School of Baton Rouge



We need new socks for the students of these schools now! Please donate new socks to the designated boxes in each classroom, by Friday September 10, 2021, to be donated to the students of the above schools, many of whom have lost everything in this storm. It will bring these children great comfort to have something warm and dry to wear while they recover from the hurricane.

\*most devastated



Thank you to the PA for our new Gaga Ball Pit!

## ...for all the little reasons

The Montessori School of Lemont is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that has been educating children ages 3 through 9th grade for almost 50 years based on the methods and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. The school was established in 1972 by teachers dedicated to offering families an individualized educational approach for their children. The school relocated to Lemont in 1990. In 2001, the school moved to its permanent location after the construction of a new campus on 7.5 acres of donated land. In 2010, a third building was completed to accommodate the growing enrollment and in 2011, a “natural” playground and an organic community garden were created. Funds are currently being raised to improve and grow our campus.

*Montessori School of Lemont does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, age, socio-economic level, physical ability, genetic information, and learning style in the administration of its educational policies, admissions, hiring, scholarships or other school programs.*

16427 W. 135th Street  
Lemont, IL 60439

Phone: 815-834-0607  
Fax: 815-834-0681

info@lemontmontessori.com  
FB: montessorischooloflemont  
IG: @montessorischooloflemont

lemontmontessori.com

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**MONTESSORI**  
School of Lemont



## MSOL Fresh Market

### Coffee, Anyone?

Are you interested in learning more about Montessori? Join us for our next monthly “Coffee.” Prospective parents will tour the campus, observe classes, and speak with current parents, students, and staff. Please call or email if you would like to attend.

[info@lemontmontessori.com](mailto:info@lemontmontessori.com).

- \* Philosophy & Curriculum
- \* Classroom Observation
- \* Parent Mentors
- \* Student Ambassadors
- \* Admissions Process



**Join us for coffee and  
stay for a few years!**



Starting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, and continuing each Thursday school is in session, the adolescent Fresh Market will be open!

Adolescents will be selling organic eggs, organic dill pickles, and organic Concord grape jelly fresh from the MSOL garden.

Stop by and support our adolescents micro-economy project.

*The MSOL Fresh Market logo was designed and created by 9<sup>th</sup> grader, Marty Zenkevicius.*