**Montessori Schools of Connecticut**

in cooperation with

**University of Hartford**

Annual Fall Conference

October 24, 2014

*OBSERVATION: The Foundational Science of Montessori Practice*

 **Key Note Speaker**

 **Sandra Girlato, M.Ed.**

**“Now You See It, Now You Don’t: The Importance of Observation in the Montessori Environment"

True scientific observation transforms information into knowledge.  How can we cultivate the power of observation so that we not only look but see; not only hear but listen; not only intuit but understand; and never teach but always guide?  Our ability to observe will come from practice; not in finding the ability to know everything but in our ability to know what is important.**

About our Key Note Speaker, Sandra Girlato M.Ed. ~

Sandra is currently the Primary Director of Training of the Foundation for Montessori Education in Toronto, Canada. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology, English and fine art history from the University of Toronto, a Master’s Degree in Education from Loyola College, as well as an AMI diploma at the Primary level. Sandra has been active in the Montessori community, working with children, parents, educators and administrators for over 30 years. Sandra is a past member of the AMI Scientific Pedagogical, Materials and Translation Committees, an AMI examiner, as well as a consultant, lecturer and parent educator. She has also served as an adjunct professor at Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland. Sandra was trained by Renilde Montessori, Dr. Montessori’s youngest granddaughter.

 **Breakout Sessions: 1:00pm - 2:30pm**

**Adolescent Level- Gengras Student Union Rm 335 -Simsbury Rm. (2nd Floor)**

**Facilitator: Sheila Coad-Bernard**

Sheila has more than twenty years experience working in Montessori middle schools. She was instrumental in creating the middle school program at the Washington Montessori School in New Preston, CT where she currently serves as the Middle School Director. Sheila is Program Director for WMSTEP, a MACTE accredited and AMS affiliated teacher training program for teachers working with adolescents. She is a presenter for CME|NY’s Course for Montessori School Management and Leadership (CMSM).

**O**bservation and authentic assessments.  Observation is an important practice in adolescent programs and should be the basis for assessment...assessment FOR learning, not OF learning.  Adolescent practitioners will appreciate discussing the challenges and options of how to measure understanding, learning and growth.

**Elementary Facilitator: Gengras Student Union – North Café**

**Facilitator: Gerry Leonard**

Gerry has taught for over thirty years in Primary, Lower and Upper Elementary, and Adolescent Montessori classrooms.  He has worked as Program Coordinator and Elementary Division Head at The Cobb School, Montessori, in Simsbury. Gerry is currently working on the elementary training course at MTCNE having spent the past year preparing for this course in Mexico City as part of the AMI Training of Trainers Program. He is a member of the NAMTA board and serves on the advisory board of the MTCNE.

**O**bservation is a cornerstone of Montessori teaching. Maria Montessori wrote that we must learn “the threshold of intervention” for each child and this we can do after much careful observation. We will discuss ways of observing students and of using our observations to refine classroom practice. Opportunities for discussion; the role of the teacher’s self-observation as an integral part of this process and working with parent observers.

**Primary Auerbach Auditorium (Building #20 on the campus map)**

**Facilitator: Sandra Girlato** will continue to expound on Observation with the Primary teachers**.**

**Toddler – Mali l – (Building #4 on the campus map)**

**Facilitator: Kathy Aldridge**

Kathy has worked since 1996 at the Montessori School of Greater Hartford where she is currently a lead Toddler teacher. She holds a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Connecticut, received her AMI Primary training at the Maria Montessori Training Organisation in London, England and the Assistants to Infancy training at The Montessori Institute in Denver, Colorado.

**O**bservation is key in our Assistance to Infancy environments. We will discuss observation techniques and their interpretation for the individual child as well as the A to I Community. The wisdom of the collective will be drawn on to garner practical advice for classroom implementation.

**Administrators – Konover (Building #20 on the campus map)**

**Facilitator: Una Barry**

Una Barry, received her AMI Primary training in Sion Hill, Dublin, Ireland. Una is a State Registered Nurse (SRN Irl.) and has worked on the front lines and in administration with children in various settings for 40 years. Her experience includes working with children with severe illness, mental handicap, severe emotional disturbance and language disorders as well as abandoned children. Una has been with MSGH since 1986 and in 2004, became Head of School. Una serves as an A.M.I. consultant and sits on accreditations teams for the CT. Association of Independent Schools. Una frequently lectures on parenting and Montessori to parent and education groups.

**O**bservation is a core skill we must develop as Montessorians. As Administrators our time is at a premium and so often it is our time observing in the classrooms that we neglect. We will discuss how Administrators can make the best use of their observation time and best practice in guiding teachers, Assistants, and parents in observation techniques and interpretation.