



April 2017

ISMS Alumni Newsletter

kosmikos

Welcome to kosmikos, your biannual dose of ISMS Alumni news and views from the graduates, 2017 Grads, staff and families of the ISMS school community

This is the first Newsletter of the ISMS Alumni. We are very grateful to those people within the school community who have contributed something to its production. We hope this will be the first of many Alumni publications and that through this publication and those that follow, we will open up a vigorous enthusiastic network of connected Montessorians across our city.



Montessori has taught us many things that will help us in the future. This system has taught us how to manage our time well, how to work hard and how to put all of our effort into everything we do. The graduates before us have passed on the knowledge that they have learned down to us, helping us every step of the way.

Montessori has helped us learn many things during our time here, including how to be independent and how to share. We have learned how to be kind to everyone around us and respect others. Mixed age classrooms have assisted us in leadership and showed us how to work with new people. Researching and organising outings are some other examples of things we have done.

Montessori education has allowed us to find our passion and focus on the subject no matter what it is. In the future, we hope to be kind and helpful people that have worked hard for what we have and understand the world as a whole.

Elsa and Jada - Stage 3 Graduates

"The child who has felt a strong love for his surroundings and for all living creatures, who has discovered joy and enthusiasm in work, gives us reason to hope that humanity can develop in a new direction."

Maria Montessori

Pam Staton

April 1992- to present day

At kindergarten college in SA Pam was drawn to Montessori after a 20 min talk on the topic.

Ten years later Pam's first child was one of the first signed up for the inaugural 3-6 class at Southside Montessori. After an observation in the class Pam decided it was the job for her and tried to attend an Assistance to Infancy course in Denver. Unfortunately, the course was cancelled so she ended up studying the 3-6 course in Sydney.

1992 Pam started her career at what was then Inner City Montessori School working three years in Cooina and nine in Kinta. She was also one of a group of Montessori teaching staff in 1995-7 to complete her Bachelor of Early Childhood Education through the support of the school, MAF and Western Sydney University.

Finally, though after waiting for 20yrs, the AMI 0-3 Assistance to Infancy course became available in 2000-1.

Some of her greatest achievements during this time have included:

- Turning retention around at Kinta from just one student to almost all students moving on to Stage 2
- The ability to have achieved all she has while managing her dyslexia
- Having the courage to start the Infant Community from scratch
- The influence she has had throughout the Montessori community as a member of the MAF Board, helping run Montessori Refreshers and the Sydney Congress, setting up many environments in Thailand and supporting the growth of Montessori there, supporting all the different students that pass not just through her class but also her home.
- Being a passionate mentor to all in the Montessori community

Ultimately, though it is the effect she has had on the hundreds of families that have passed through her classes over the last twenty-five years. This has been especially significant working with the very young having the knowledge that she does. Pam is an inspiration at serving the spirit.

"We must help the child to act for himself, will for himself, think for himself; this is the art of those who aspire to serve the spirit." (Education for a New World, p. 69)



Nirmala Santhiran

Nirmala trained as a 3-6 Directress in Sri Lanka after being inspired by seeing her son in Montessori education and also having a love of working with children. She arrived in Sydney in 1979 where she and her family settled in Strathfield.

Her first job was at a Montessori in Vacluse, which entailed her getting two trains and a bus to work every day. Then in 1981, she was approached to start a 3-6 Montessori class at Hunter Baille church hall in Annandale. This she did, starting with the first ten children of the founding families.

She moved with the class to Drummoyne then Jane St before finally working in Cooina at Smith St retiring after working at the school for 26 years. She had three children and her daughter also had three children, all of whom attended ISMS and graduated.

Nirmala speaks of how she gained such satisfaction from seeing the children grow into confident adults the Montessori way and that every day was a special event for her with the young ones walking in with apprehension and trepidation before blooming into friendly and trusting little angels. This is uppermost in her memory.

One of the greatest achievements for her was the fact that the school grew from such small beginnings to a flourishing alternate educational system surmounting some very hard times financially and premises wise. In the early days classroom materials were made by hand and shelves were put together with bricks and planks.

What an amazing journey Nirmala had touching so many lives and being such an important part of the school's history.



Margot Miller

When did you decide to send Lisa to ISMS?

I enrolled Lisa into ISMS's first Montessori class – Cooinda – in 1981. We had been attending a playgroup at the Hunter Baille Church hall in Annandale when the Montessori group took over.

Why did you send Lisa to ISMS?

I had visited a number of kindergartens in the area and found they lacked structure and were very passive environments. When I realised what the Montessori classroom was offering I jumped at the opportunity to enrol Lisa.

Did you find what you expected with Lisa's education at ISMS?

I found the Montessori system offered much more than I had ever expected. A few years after Lisa started I got the opportunity to work as a helper when the Lilyfield class – Kinta – opened and I was delighted to find there was so much more depth to the Montessori method and sensitivity to the children's mental and physical development.



Have you remained involved with ISMS since Lisa's children began here?

Yes, I enjoyed attending PTP when our grandchildren were small and I now pick them up (Isadora from Kinta and Felix from Sintonia) twice a week. Malcolm and I both attend Grandparents Day and I recently talked to some of the children in Sintonia about Industrial Design, the development of products and efficient use of materials.

Lisa Miller

What is your current involvement with ISMS?

I am a parent to Isadora in Kinta and Felix in Sintonia - both Stage 1 classes at the Lilyfield campus. I am also currently the Vice President of the School Council.

Why did you decide to send your children to ISMS?

I loved my time as a child at this school and I wanted the same for my kids. I have a huge love of learning and I wanted to give them the chance to develop their own enthusiasm and curiosity for our world. I only had the chance to attend Stage 1 as that was all ISMS comprised of in the early 1980s, but I am excited that they will get to progress into Stages 2 and 3 as well.

Do you recall your days fondly at ISMS?

Yes, I was in Cooinda and I loved it. I can vividly remember doing the thousand chain, working with the maps and learning to write. I also remember how excited I was when I became an extended day child and could stay for lunch and do further work. The whole experience was definitely an amazing introduction to school.

Do you remember any people from your ISMS days?

I remember my teachers Nirmala and Fiona who I have been lucky enough to meet later in life as well. They were an amazing presence in the classroom and I really missed them when I left. I also had a few friends from my class who I saw throughout High School and beyond.

What are you hoping to gain for your children from their schooling at ISMS?

I hope they will have the opportunity to take the foundations that Montessori education gives them and apply them to whatever interests they have in life. I also want them to grow up as well-rounded individuals who respect themselves as well as those around them, and contribute to our society.



ISMS Visits Nursing Home by Edgar and Elias (Cooroowal)

Hello readers I am Edgar and I was one of the lucky people that got to visit the Uniting Aldersgate Nursing Home in Lilyfield. The school made a very wise decision for the children to go to this Nursing Home. This was good because all the children got to meet new people and do something good for the community, and tell stories and play fun board games with the older people.

The people that attended this excursion were a few people from two classrooms, Cooroowal and Orana. When we arrived at the retirement home, we did not know what to expect but once we met some of the people there, we were astounded about some of the things that we learnt and we were glad that these great people had a good peaceful place they could spend their days. Although the place was great, these people did not get to meet many new people or learn new things. When we went there for the second time, I could tell that all the people around my mate Elias and I were having a great time, telling stories and learning about other people's pasts. We had a great time and hope that when we leave ISMS other children have a chance to interact with the older people.

There are five people in this photo who are still involved with the school.
Can you identify them?

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Staff 2005



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ISMS Offers:

Montessori from Birth: Pregnancy to 4 mths

Nido: 4mths to 15mths

Nido Transition: 15mths to 18mths

PTP: 15mths to 3yrs

PTP Transition to Stage 1

Stage 1: 3yrs to 6 yrs

Stage 2: 6yrs to 9yrs

Stage 3: 9yrs to 12yrs

Elouera Aftercare: 3yrs to 6yrs

Nangkita Aftercare: 6yrs to 12yrs

Upcoming Events

Silent Auction – Fundraising Event
Friday 5th May – School hall 6:00pm to 10:00pm

Thursday 17th August
Keep this date free
Staff and School Council invite you to an evening event to commemorate all staff over 10 years' service culminating in Pam's 25yrs, more info to follow

Green Day Out
Saturday 2nd Sept. - 10:00am - 4:00pm