

Hong Kong's Infinity Children's World Transforms into Montessori Parent Education Center

Infinity Children's World has become the [Montessori Center for Children and Parents](#), a place for Montessori education for adults, including teachers and parents. This change is the direct result of item 2 of the joint communiqué ("Extend the prepared environment to the children's homes") issued at the end of the "Montessori IN and FOR Asia" conference, which took place August 2009 in Taipei, Taiwan. The center aims to expand Montessori education to the home and community—and has been promoting parent education for 3 years in Hong Kong. During this time, over 3,000 parents have attended courses and completed at least 12 hours of observation in child-parent classes. Daisy Lau, who cofounded the center with Ralph Yau, explains, "Soon after we opened a Montessori center, in mid-2006, we discovered that parents have the internal need and cosmic task of knowing about their children. Parents are in a sensitive period to understand young humans. However, there was no Montessori parent education in Hong Kong. Most educators focus on children; parents were being ignored. We need to fulfill parents' internal needs and help them to be normalized."

Chair of Asian World Montessori Conference Looks Back

By Jimmy Po, director and senior vice chair of the Chinese Montessori Foundation for Early Childhood Educational Research, and chair of the Ad-Hoc Committee for Montessori Asia

Editor's note: In our September newsletter, we reported on the first annual Asian World International Montessori Conference, "Montessori IN and FOR Asia." Recently, Jimmy Po shared with us his perspective on the successes born of that event.

The first-ever joint conference of the Chinese Montessori Foundation for Early Childhood Educational Research (CMF) and the American Montessori Society was presented last August in Taipei, Taiwan, with 15 Asian countries and political regions participating. AMS president Marilyn E. Stewart served as the conference's honorary chair and as a keynote speaker. The principal guest speaker was no other than Her Excellency, Ambassador Preciosa Soliven of UNESCO, whose Montessori school in the Philippines has stood for 45 years and serves children from preschool-age to college. Doris Sommer, AMS senior director of teacher education; Peter Larrow, AMS Board member; and Rosann Larrow were there. Also in attendance were Dr. JoAnn Deak, AMS 2009 Fall Conference keynote speaker; Dottie Feldman, AMS 2007 Living Legacy; and Bob Feldman. Dr. Marlene Barron—who also presented a keynote address—traveled from Tokyo, Japan, where she had participated in a Montessori conference sponsored by Japan Montessori Research Institute.

The conference saw the sharing of much information on the state of Montessori in Asian countries and how Montessori could better serve the children of Asia. More than 25 papers were collected and are now in the process of being compiled, to be jointly published for free circulation for academic purposes.

At the close of the conference, a joint communiqué with three major points was presented by Marilyn and myself: 1. Try to bring Montessori to all children; 2. Extend the prepared environment to children's homes; and 3. Organize an umbrella organization of Asian Montessorians to help Montessori better serve the children of Asia.

In order to implement the first item of the communiqué, an organization called FUIS (after an aboriginal word for "twinkling stars") was formed by CMF. Addressing the second item, Hong Kong Montessorian, headed by Daisy Lau and Ralph Yau, is implementing a parent education program. And to address the third item a committee was formed, chaired by myself, with Dr. Jun and Vivian Wong as cochairs. Many thanks to AMS leadership for the continued collaboration.

To read an article on the second annual "Montessori IN and FOR Asia" conference, which will take place August 2010, [click here](#).