

Montessori Life



Pre Primary, Language & Teaching Academy

THE SENSORIAL GARDEN: A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY

CELEBRATING
10
YEARS

2006



2015



Welcome

The journey of Montessori Life over the past 10 years has been underpinned by the conviction that a possibility centred approach will always direct our thinking: It directed the first early steps of implementing the vision to open the School and the overcoming of business set up challenges and it continues to provide the energy that encourages us to believe and trust that much more is possible than might ordinarily be expected from a pre-primary school.

Most significantly with a 10 year pedigree of accrued history the School can now proudly reflect on the fact that it is not simply a structure of bricks and mortar, but rather the sum of all its families, pupils and staff teams, each of whom has passed through and touched the School in their own special way. We're so grateful for this support – it has enabled Montessori Life to truly flourish.

Looking to the future, we are focused on ensuring that the School's offering remains relevant to the needs of its pupils in a constantly changing world. This is our heartfelt quest- it's filled with positive possibilities and whilst we seek to realise these possibilities we're equally excited about continuing to build the School's history together with the community of families in the North Durban area whose support has been exceptional.

This photographic album records the School's 10th Year Anniversary Sensorial Garden Project: Launched in January 2015 and funded through generous donations from current and past families of the School, the School's owners and teachers and by hosting various fund raising initiatives, it culminated in the successful creation of a sensorial garden at Montessori Life in early 2016. Sensorial gardens are important developmental environments for children during their foundational and formative years and the School's new sensorial garden provides a wonderfully instructive facility for our little ones.

We trust you'll enjoy browsing through the photographs and supporting text as much as we enjoyed compiling the album which records this special piece of Montessori Life history.

Ken & Nicky Rodseth



The Sensorial Garden

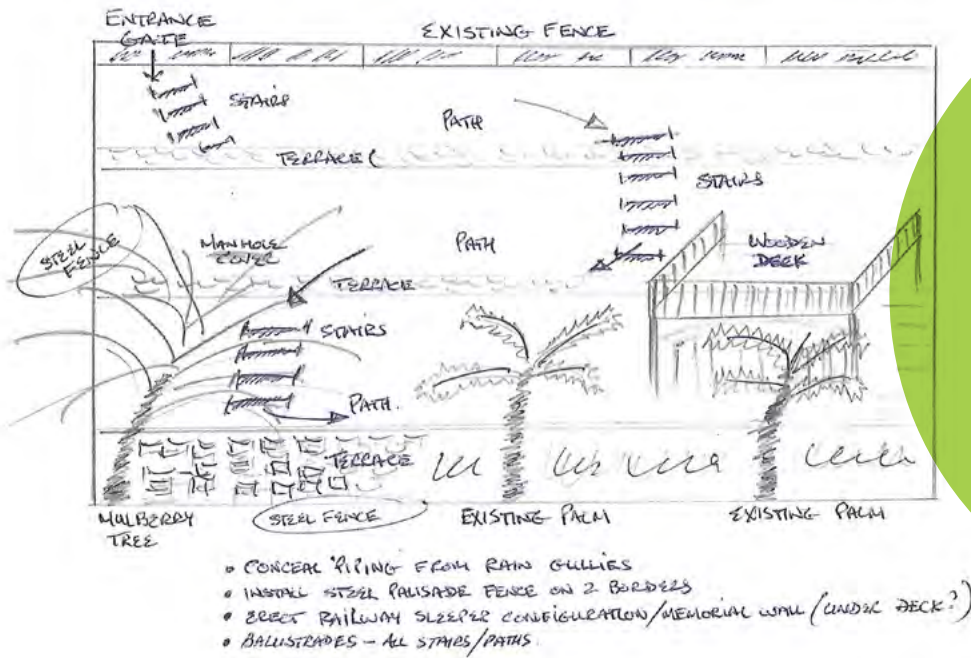


Conceptualizing & Designing the Sensorial Garden

The last remaining piece
of undeveloped ground
on the School property:
22 meters by 6 meters
precariously sloped at
60 degrees plus.....
it was going to be a
challenge transforming it!

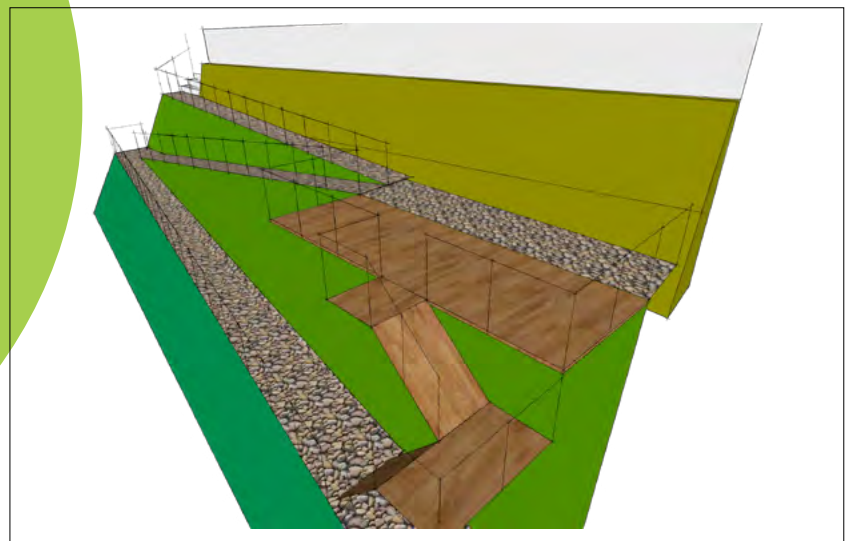
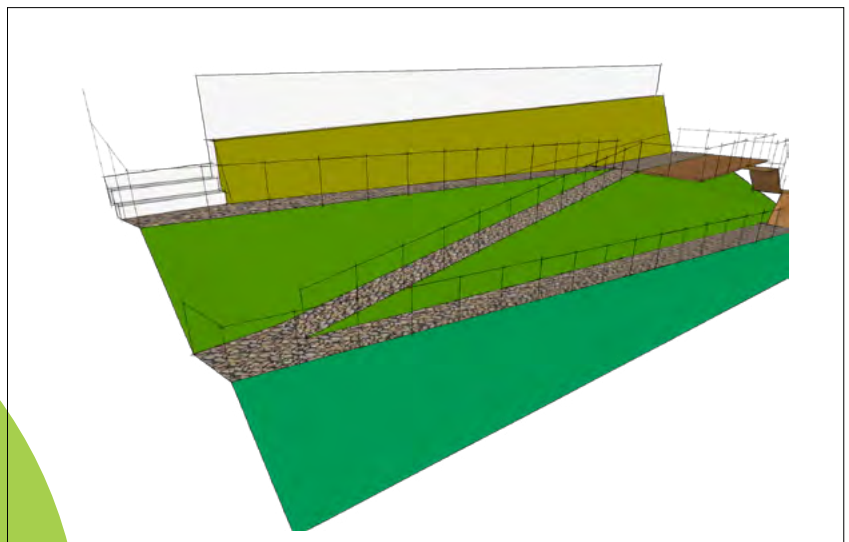


SKETCH - GARDEN DESIGN



A draft sketch illustrates the conceptual idea of terracing the bank to reclaim the steep sloped ground and erect a deck as a communal gathering point for the children within this space.

Consultations with Ross Nevette of EarthLandscapes followed and the erf co-ordinates of the School property were inputted into 3D software which spectacularly translated the draft concept into an accurate garden design. Front and side elevations of the bank using the 3D software can be seen here.





Fund Raising Begins

Contributions received from families for their children's name plaques which were subsequently fitted to the School's Memorial Wall provided an early source of funding. Funds were also successfully raised from "Our Big Walk," "Art Exhibition & Auction," and "A Raffle" for assorted goodie hampers, which included designer sunglasses and the then new to market craze – Minions! Finally a number of "Cake Sales" and "Fruit & Veggie Sales" were well supported and realized a generous return..... Enjoy the pictures:



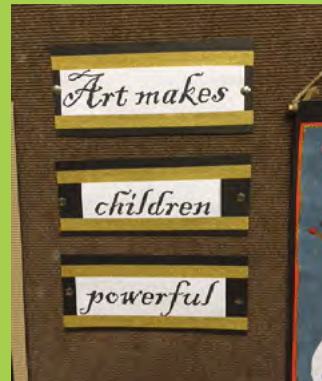
Our Big Walk in Mitchell Park

Hard to believe just how many laps, generously sponsored by their parents, our little ones were happy to tackle... and without too much encouragement either – each of them proudly receiving a certificate recording their lap count. Blessed with beautiful weather the children enjoyed a morning of healthy activity and kept our face painting artists busy too.



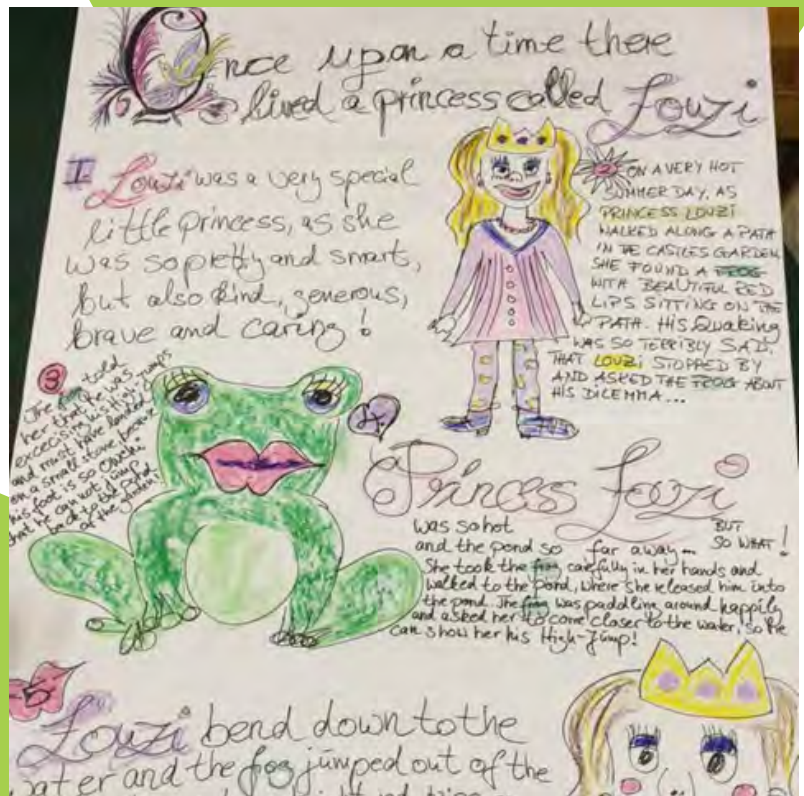
Our Art Exhibition & Auction

Traditionally the children have always priced their art works themselves before their work is displayed on the evening of the exhibition and parents graciously buy it before taking it home. However it's not uncommon to experience prices set by our budding Picassos' and Van Goghs' in the realms of a Christie's or Sotheby's auction. Our favourite price to date has been a cheeky R1000 001. Needless to say the parents of this little Picasso hurriedly renegotiated the price with the principal!





After viewing their children's art parents worked intensively to create a work of art for their little ones to find in their school locker the next morning. Lots of fun was had and some outstanding works emerged, while in many instances we'd probably advise parents not to leave their day job anytime soon!





Our Cake Sales and Fruit & Veggie Sales





Communicating Fund Raising Progress

The project "thermometer" provided a visual record of incoming funds and families were also kept updated on progress via the School's Facebook page and d6 communicator.

Facebook post August 2015

"We're excited to announce that work will begin on clearing and preparing the bank within the next few days and thereafter the landscaping contractors will start building. Funding for the project has also increased since we last reported at R54 050 and we're extremely grateful for the most recent generous donations and wonderful support over the past few weeks for the veggie, fruit & cake sales – not forgetting the raffle ticket sales too. New Total R60 262. Thank you again ... Well done."

R45 000

R64 807

R60 262

R44 000

R52 450

R50 850

R46 900

R45 000

R41 300

R35 000

R25 000

TOTAL CAPITAL RAISED FROM BY THE COMMUNITY



The Sensorial Garden in Various Regional Media Publications



An article on the School's 10th anniversary project which featured in "Get It."





Construction & Landscaping Begins

September 2015

The dense vegetation on the bank had to be cut down and cleared—a tough job given the steepness of the bank.



Whilst cutting and clearing Ken and Sihle unexpectedly came upon a hive of bees nesting under a storm water cover and picked up a few nasty stings! Fortunately our landscaper's brother in law, a professional beekeeper, safely relocated the queen and her hive to Ballito! The African honeybee is an **important pollinator of flowering plants**, pollinating about 50 crop types across South Africa .



We were delighted we could save the hive and contribute to the important role bees play in South Africa. Imagine our world without all the fruits and vegetables we rely on for a healthy diet! Interestingly in the Pedi culture, a swarm of bees in the yard is always taken as a symbol of the ancestors bringing luck to the family.



The next phase of the project involved installing rain gullies and drain piping to ensure the efficient run off of storm water. Then constructing the terraces began and an eco-friendly approach was adopted by terracing with used tyres. Importantly tyres provide a bigger internal area of soil in which to plant than traditional construction methods using concrete blocks permit, which potentially results in healthier plants. Tyres are also softer than concrete and provide a “friendlier” environment.





At this point the new steel palisade perimeter fence was partly erected to contain the building site and keep the area tidy in the interests of the neighborhood. With the terracing finally completed balustrades were fitted along the outer perimeter of the pathway which zig zags across the bank.



With the terracing and balustrading completed work began on installing the deck—an important gathering and communal area for our little ones when they visit the garden. Circle times, birthday rings and other lessons are held on the deck.



A beautiful bench donated by Vasie Makanjee in memory of her late husband Dr. Ajay Makanjee has been sited adjacent to the deck and now provides a perfect resting place to sit, relax and view the garden.

**Donated by Vasie Makanjee
in memory of her husband
Dr. Ajay Makanjee
loving dad to Amar, Deeya & Arjun
February 2015**



Finally the remainder of the steel palisade fence was ready to be erected. But before that could be done, railway sleepers, which took quite some time to source, were carried into the garden by the Earth Landscapes team. These sleepers are the “bricks” of our Memorial Wall which you will read about in the next section. With the sleepers inside the garden the remainder of the palisade fence was erected and painted and our new garden was safely secured and ready to be planted up.





The Memorial Wall

In keeping with the sensorial focus of the garden, the Memorial Wall was constructed using vertically placed railway sleepers with beautifully textured wood - and many of the sleepers still have sections of the original steel from the railway track attached to them.

The Memorial Wall carries our favourite quotation by Dr. Maria Montessori: *"The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination. Our aim therefore is not merely to make the child understand and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core."*

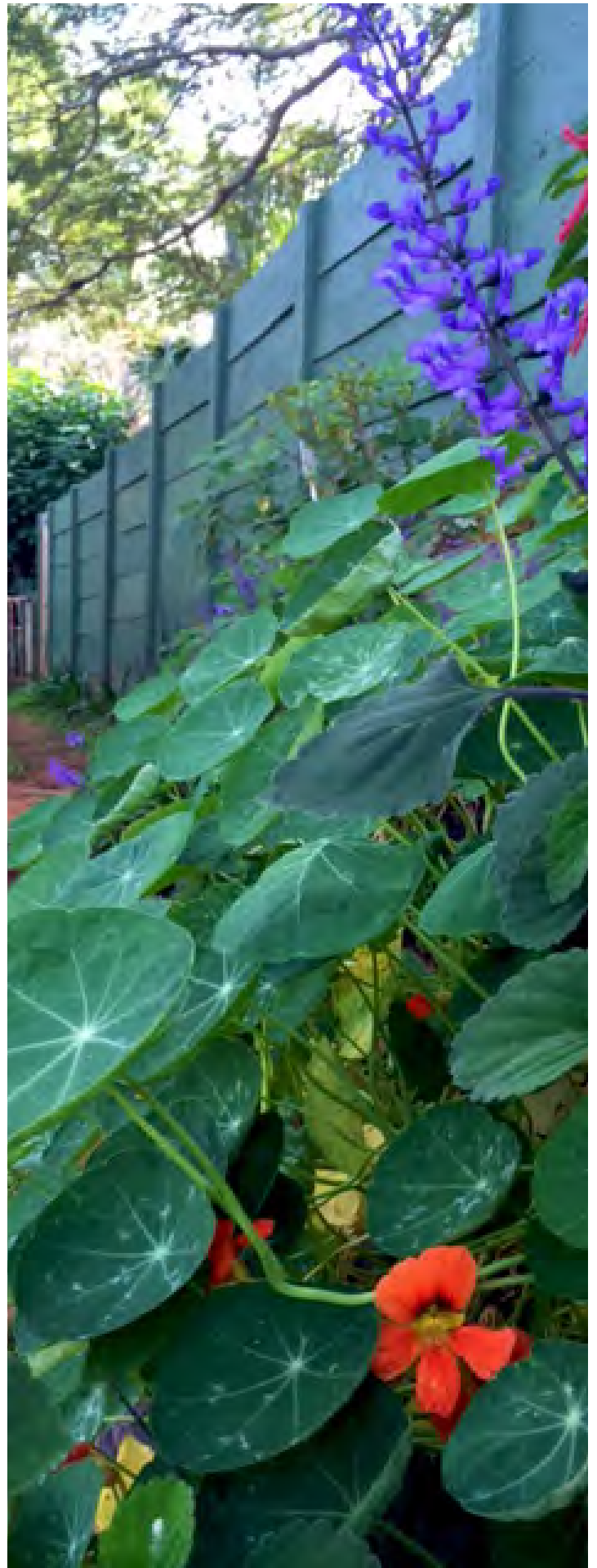
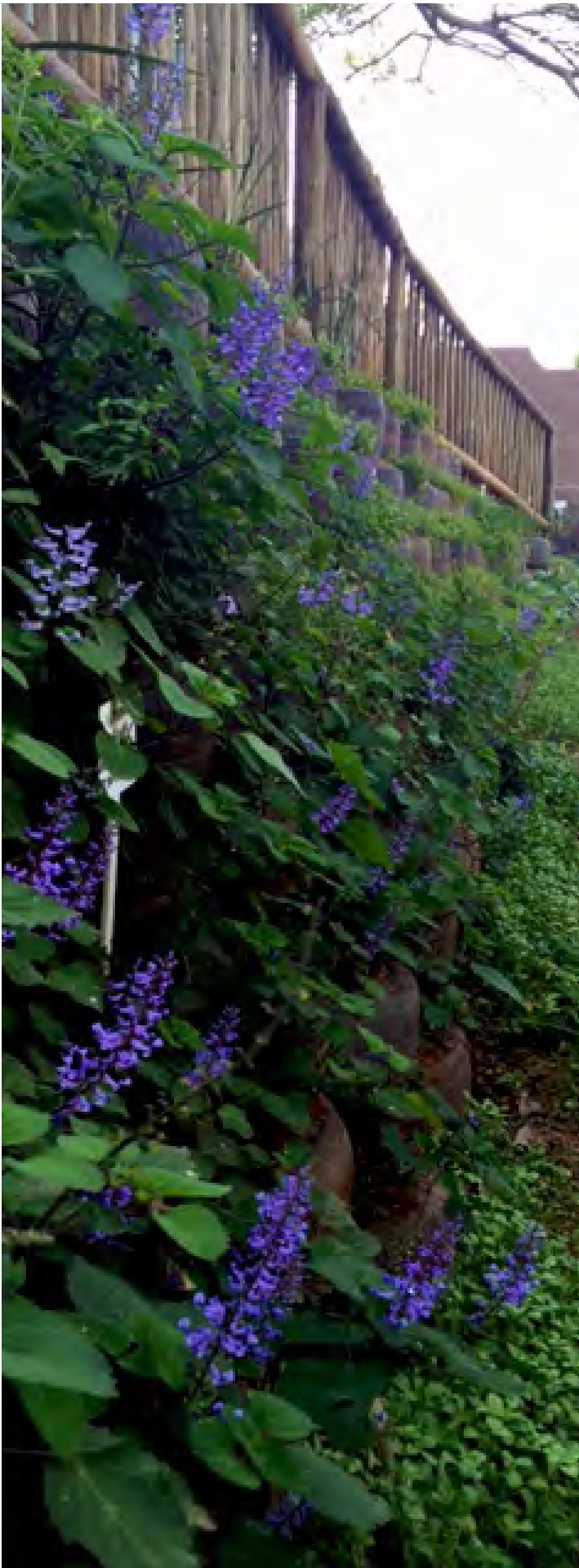
We believe that the wisdom expounded in this quotation is especially appropriate to the learning environment to be found and experienced in the sensorial garden by our little ones ; and the quotation underpins the teaching approach followed at Montessori Life.




Planting Starts December 2015

Notwithstanding the very dry summer months of December 2015 and January 2016 the new plants have established themselves well over the past few months. Plants have been chosen specifically for their sensorial qualities of colour, smell and texture and of course a number of herbs have been planted too – basil, mint, fennel, rosemary and lemon grass.









In in the mulberry tree - which has always borne a generous crop of seasonal fruit - there are several wind chimes providing beautifully gentle sounds when the wind blows.

"Caring for the garden's plants" is one of many new skills the children learn when they visit the garden and a water station with mini-sized watering cans has been set up for their use.





Further sensorial features include the use of a soft yet hardy ground cover on the pathway, while various sections of the pathway are also covered in wooden logs, small pebbles and smooth river rocks - all of these surfaces providing different sensations of touch and feel.



Funding the Project

To our project donors, including many others who contributed their time and effort towards ensuring the successful outcome of this project, our heartfelt thanks to all of you. Without your commitment this project would not have succeeded.



Donors / Fundraising Event	Rand
Max & Jane Oliva	1000
Jerome & Lenora Samuel	500
Wendy Jackson	1000
Dr Krishna & Reyna Patel	1500
Dr Richard & Kumarie Nandagopalan	1500
Michael & Sherry Romburgh	800
Shane & Upuli Bassett	800
Dr Ritesh & Marishka Singh	800
Takesuke & Ryoko Ikeuchi	500
Roland & Venessa Singh	500
Antony & Natasha Hittler	500
Karl & Bernidene Fischer	500
Leon & Cynthia Sent	500
Matthew & Lisa Wilson	200
Vishay & Kaserie Haricharan	1000
Carlo & Kate Siebert	500
Adheesh & Bhaviksha Maharaj	500
Vasie Makanjee	4000
Adrian & Marie Norquay	500
Annestasia Sahadeo-Govender	1300
Arya Reddy	100
Terence & Kemeshnie Mudaly	1000

Donors / Fundraising Event	Rand
Swantish & Leerisha Maharaj & Granny	500
Kuban & Deshnie Viraragavan	1000
Dr Shaun & Dr Syndrini Naicker	500
Ajay & Jyoti Pal	200
Roland & Fatisya Canal	1000
Jamane & Benita Singh	998
Tiffany Francois	400
Clyde & Lana Challenor	500
Dr Rajeev & Varsha Bangalee	500
Niraj & Shantaal Sewpersad	750
Martin & Louisa Rogers	800
Adushan & Yuvati Harisapersad	500
Cedric & Anne Lemettier	800
Russell & Genevieve Fish	500
Stephen & Leela Jiran	1100
Neo Nomvete	500
Eugene & Wendy Duvenage; Andre & Sheila Duvenage; Dick & Lyn Hardie	700
Nemuel & Stacey Vermeulen	100
Kevan & Neervani Govender	1000
Ketan & Divya Parshotam	1000
Zara Mayat	200
Tim & Emma Morris	800
Dr Prenolin & Dr Yogandree Kistnasami	500
Avinash & Lkhasuren Sukdeo	800
Veggie Sales	1390
Fruit Sales	880
Cake Sales	1067
Raffle Tickets	5120
Big Walk Sponsorships & Face Painting	3650
Art Exhibition & Auction	3400
Montessori Life	97 351
Total Project Cost	148 006



Officially Opening the Sensorial Garden

Saturday the 7th May 2016

Our opening day tours of the garden for each of our children groups & their families included visiting the Memorial Wall and viewing the range of herbs & flowers in the garden. Each child planted their own small flag in the garden and a zany and entertaining show by the YO Puppet Company, which focused on taking care of our planet earth & new sensorial garden, set the tone for the start of the tour.



The Sensorial Garden



The Yo
Puppet team
in action...





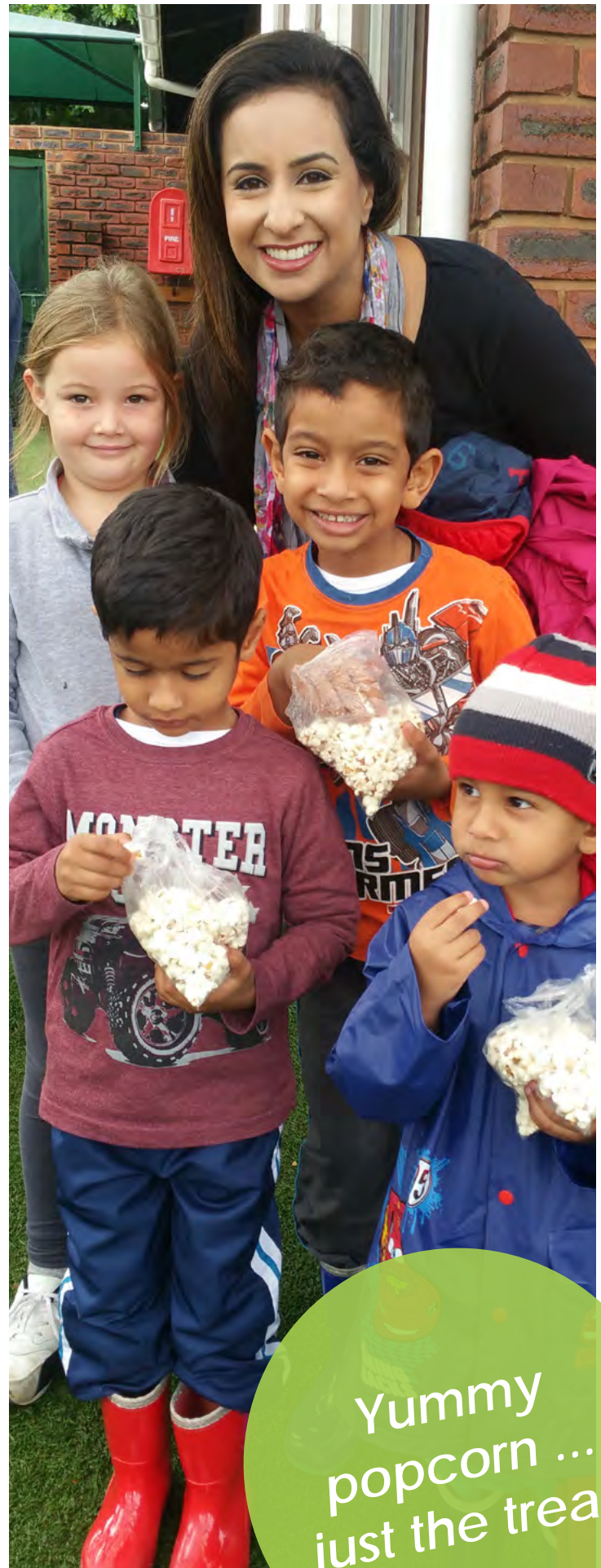
Flag
planting
time!



Our garden opening featured in local media



The Montessori Life Pre-Primary School recently opened its Anniversary Sensorial Garden. This occasion was attended by parents and pupils who watched a puppet show on the importance of gardens before they enjoyed a garden tour of all the sensory plants. The pupils also had an opportunity to stake their claim to the garden by planting flags they made. "Sensory gardens are such important learning spaces for children as they learn by using all their senses. They can see, feel, touch and hear the elements of the garden," said principal, Nicky Rodseth. Seen on the day was Emily Ungerer looking for a good spot to plant her flag.



Yummy popcorn ... just the treat!







Four of the School's alumni, Grace Rogers (2007), Joy Rogers (2009), Matthias Samuel (2011) and Clayton Duvenage (2013) visited the Memorial Wall which carries their respective name plaques.





Friends of the Garden

We're confident the sensorial garden adds great value to the learning experience of children attending Montessori Life and will provide them with fond memories of their time at the School.

The Memorial Wall in particular adds to the significance of this unique and special place filled with the names of pupils both past and present. We're hopeful that the names of many more pupils will grace the Wall into the future.

Most importantly though we're delighted that this 10th year Anniversary Project represents a noteworthy contribution to the developing history and traditions of the School - made possible through the generous efforts of our Montessori Life community of families, our staff team and friends of the School. We extend a warm welcome to all our families who may wish to wander through the garden when they visit the School, or simply relax in it for a while to enjoy the special space. Our teaching team will be happy to open it for you.

And now as we close the chapter on this 10th Anniversary Project we're delighted to announce the start of "Friends of the Garden"- a name to identify and profile all future initiatives and activities involving the sensorial garden and its up keep. After all as a living and evolving space it will need love and caring for and is sure to give back ten - fold to those who visit it -- whether as pupils, families or friends.

Note: *If you're a parent or grandparent and interested in learning more about how to include your little ones' name plaque on the Memorial Wall, please speak to Nicky. "Filling" the Wall with name plaques supports "Friends of the Garden" and consequently the ongoing maintenance and development of the sensorial garden as a learning environment and its historical significance within the life of the School.*

*Thank you for joining us
on this journey*



From the Montessori Life Team

*This publication was designed in collaboration with
Jasbert Designs (jasbertgeyer@gmail.com)*