

STAFF

Sandra Smith, owner and Directress/Administrator, is the Head Teacher in the Rose Room for the Morning Program and Head Teacher in the Arbor Room for the Afternoon Program. She has a State of Pennsylvania teaching certificate, a State of Pennsylvania Directors Certificate, an Early Childhood (3-6) certificate from the American Montessori Society and a Bachelors degree in Psychology. Sandra received a scholarship to attend the Pennsylvania Governor's Institute for School Leadership at Shippensburg University in 2003 and was published in the Institute's Annual Anthology. She is a member of the American Montessori Society, Greater Pittsburgh Montessori Society, Association Montessori International, International Montessori Council and Stand for Children and NAMTA

Kim Kuchtjak is returning to the Garden as morning Classroom Assistant in the Rose Room. She is working on her Associates degree in Child and Family Studies from Community College of Allegheny County. She has completed the Montessori Assistants Training and Advanced Assistant Training from Mt. Lebanon Montessori School. Kim has also completed the Montessori Philosophy Training through Duquesne University. She has worked as a Classroom Assistant and Material Making for the last seven years. Kim is the mother of two Montessori children who have been enrolled in Toddler, 3-6, and elementary programs, assisting in the classroom as a parent and substitute teacher for the last ten years.

Leslie Faish is the Head Teacher for the Arbor Room. Leslie has completed the 3-6 Primary Montessori Training through the CMTE in Altoona. She has an Associates degree in Child Development from Allegheny Community College. She worked as a Program Director at St. Richards's Church and developed the religious education program for preschool through eighth grade. Leslie also taught Preschool at St. Catherine's Church. She has extensive background in volunteer mission work, CCD instruction and conducted Odyssey of the Mind Program at Pine-Richland Middle School. Leslie has also completed course work for Emergency Medical Technician and has provided assistance for geriatric and spinal cord injury patients.

Sara Dziabiak is the Assistant Teacher for the AM Arbor Room and Extended Day. Sara has a Bachelor of Science (Summa Cum Laude) in Mathematics from Wheeling Jesuit University with a minor in Computer Science. She also holds a Master of Science in Mathematics from the University of Kentucky. Sara has experience as a teaching assistant and peer tutoring, earning many achievement awards, scholarships and honors for her work. She observed and substituted at the Garden last year after attending the GPMS meeting and found the Montessori philosophy an especially intriguing way of teaching. She will be taking the regular and advanced Assistant's training at Mt. Lebanon this summer. Sara intends to enroll in the CMTE Early Childhood Montessori Training to be held in Pittsburgh next year. Miss Sara will also assist in various duties with the Extended Day which will include special project planning and field trips

Kathy Zang joins the Garden this year as an Assistant in the Extended Day Program. Kathy holds a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Ohio State University. While at Ohio State, Kathy was selected to participate in an innovative program. Her student teaching was for a full year with the Education Program for Informal Education. The philosophy is very similar to Montessori in that it is child-directed with the teacher acting as facilitator. The program emphasized the use of children's literature in all aspects of the curriculum. Kathy taught third grade at a private school in Lexington, Kentucky. She was an assistant in the eighteen month through three year olds class at the Montessori Centre Academy in Glenshaw, PA. For ten years Kathy taught at St. Catherine's Preschool in Wildwood, PA. She spent five years teaching the four year old program and five years teaching the pre-kindergarten program. Kathy also developed an enrichment program for the older four year olds. Kathy is the mother of four children. Her youngest child attended North Pittsburgh Children's House Montessori School in Gibsonia, PA. Three of her children also enjoyed spending summers at the school. Kathy will be working with Miss Leslie in Extended Day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Priya Srinivas is the Assistant teacher in the Afternoon Program. Priya has a B.A. in Finance and Accounting and received High Honors in Industrial Psychology and Commerce. Priya has worked tutoring private students for the last eight years and as a Teacher's Aide. Priya worked as an Assistant at the Garden for the last year and a half and has completed the Assistant and Advanced Assistant Montessori training at Mt. Lebanon Montessori School. She intends to enroll in the CMTE Early Childhood Montessori Training to be held in Pittsburgh next year.

Linda Fung is an all around Assistant on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Linda has worked for the Hampton Presbyterian Church teaching CCD for eighteen years and teaching the children's liturgy. She also has been employed as a personal caregiver to a spinal cord injury patient for 2 years. Linda will be taking the Montessori Assistants training at Mt. Lebanon. She will assist with all of the "extra" help we need including carline, lunch duties, material preparation and some administrative work.

Lucrecia Serra is joining the Garden this year as our new Spanish teacher. Lucrecia (Lucky) is a native Spanish speaker. Lucky holds a Bachelor's degree in International Studies. She has been a cultural ambassador for her home country, Nicaragua as well as Cultural and Administrative Director Assistant (1991 - 1997) to Nicaragua's Embassy in Venezuela. Lucky was also Director of the Internal Ministries Newsletter Information and Media Bureau - Presidential Office Nicaragua. She has taught Spanish language both privately and also in after school programs in several North Allegheny schools for five years and in the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC). You can find her web site at www.pasitosinspanish.com for information on extra classes that she teaches. Miss Lucky will also take the Montessori Assistants training at Mt. Lebanon as well.

Miss Lucky will teach the same 4 year progressive curriculum that Miss Diane taught, including all of the materials, special events and Children's Day. She will also be giving the children objects each week which will highlight a specific subject she has taught. Consequently, for those of you familiar with making a "Spanish box" you can make

another one or get your old one back out! For those of you new to the program, you and your child will need to make a decorated special Spanish box (shoe box size) so that you can keep your objects in one place at home. Each object that will come home every Friday will have the Spanish pronunciation and phonetic pronunciation so that you may participate with your child in practicing the words.