



Giving Birth to Our School:

A Brief History of the Montessori School of Maui

The story of our school is the story of a heart-held vision for our children and the growth of a community. It is Dr. Maria Montessori's story. It is our founding staff's story and our founding parents' story. It is also your story. We are at a nexus in time, a transition between two centuries and two millennia. More than ever, people are awakening to an understanding of how children can learn from birth and how the brain develops.

In 1978, the Montessori Children's Home was established to offer the unique educational method of Dr. Maria Montessori to the children of Maui. There were eight students, ages three to six, when the school opened in a Quonset hut beside St. Rita's Church in Haiku. The first Board of Directors was formed in 1983 and Montessori of Maui, Inc. was born as a nonprofit school.

The early 1980's the board worked tirelessly to lay a foundation for the future of the school. Everyone learned in the process of this grassroots effort. By 1985, parent demand led to the opening of an elementary program that quickly grew from its initial 15 members. In 1991, with a burgeoning waitlist, a third primary classroom was opened in a house in Makawao. Faced with renting three separate facilities, the board began looking for a permanent campus for the Montessori School of Maui. In June 1991, we signed a contract with Maui Land and Pineapple Company to lease, with an option to buy, four and a half acres on Baldwin Avenue in Makawao. Construction began in early 1994 and was completed in the fall of the same year, enabling the school to move all of its classes to the new campus and bring the entire program together for the first time. In 1994 we added our Toddler Program. Through the years, staff, parents and other volunteers and friends from the community have successfully worked together to develop the school's permanent campus facility. A second phase of construction, to add four additional classrooms, was completed in December 1996. In August of 2001, MOMI grew once again. Responding to requests from within our community, we expanded to include a Middle School.

In January 2002 we purchased the 4½ acres our school resides on as well as the 4½ acres above our property. Our school now has a permanent home. In April 2004, we unveiled a beautiful donor arbor as a tribute to the families, foundations, corporations and friends who contributed to the establishment of our current school campus in 1994. The 2004-2005 school year marked the beginning of a new Capital Campaign effort to build classrooms and facilities on property above the campus. Our new campus expansion will be defined largely by sustainable building guidelines that will support our schools' Mission and Curriculum. We are planning to create a model campus in terms of sustainable design, materials and practices.

The school has achieved 25 years of steady growth as it has worked to meet Maui's educational needs for young children and adolescents. Dedicated board members, volunteers, and staff have continued to work to accomplish our goals. The leadership of the school comes from a combination of parents, staff, and volunteers. Many former board members continue to serve in an advisory capacity. This blending of past and current members has helped guide the school's evolution.

The Montessori School of Maui has a commitment to creating a positive relationship with the land and to offering students a personal experience that connects academics with the natural world. We are proud to provide a model of education not only as a Montessori school, but also as an example of what exceptional education can be.

The Montessori School of Maui, formerly known as the Montessori Children's Home, is a non-denominational, non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation licensed by the Hawaii Council of Private Schools and the State of Hawaii Department of Human Services. The school is also accredited by the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children.)