

Oregon Montessori Association

Keynote Address

Presented by: Jonathan Wolff

**The Four Relationships Montessori Teachers Must Cultivate . . .
Beyond the Child**

- * *“Spiritual Preparation”* of Self
- * Teaching Partner and Fellow Staff
 - * Parents
 - * Administrators

Montessori teachers demonstrate extraordinary respect, empathy, sensitivity, and adaptability in their work with the children in their prepared environments. They seek to understand and respond to children’s needs and tendencies through scientific observation, gentle inquiry, and careful experimentation. Dr. Montessori advised, “The teacher must study how to purify her heart and render it burning with charity towards the child. She must put on humility and above all learn how to serve. She must learn how to appreciate and gather in all those tiny and delicate manifestations of the opening life in the child’s soul.”

How carefully, how artfully, we engage in the process of building trust and rapport with children. How much more difficult is this process with the adults we interact with in our school communities. How often do we observe teachers exhibiting stress and distress over challenges they are facing in their work with parents, fellow staff, and school administrators. How to cultivate healthy and harmonious adult relationships is not a topic Montessori teacher training courses generally address in any depth. Yet most of us would agree that being a good relationship-builder and effective communicator with adults is certainly a major part of a teacher’s professional responsibilities.

In this keynote address, Jonathan Wolff will explore the process and practices of cultivating trustworthy adult relationships in a Montessori school community.