

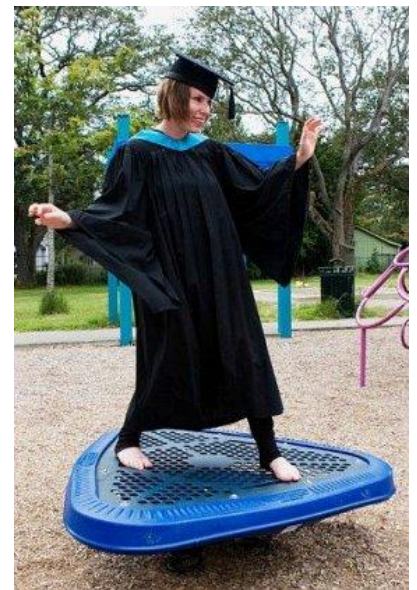
ALUMNI UPDATE – CHRISSEY FARWELL



My name is Chrissey Farwell, though most folks will remember me as Christa (and my mum will insist that's all I should ever be called!). I “graduated” from Selkirk Montessori School in 1999, after being a student all the way from half-day preschool (at age 3) to the senior elementary class (age 13). In those ten years, I learned to speak three languages, play four musical instruments, and remember all my times tables! I had the opportunity to attend countless multi-cultural potlucks, complete two grades of math in one year, feed a turtle (and two rats, and a goldfish), and sing, among other things, Octopus' Garden in choir (before I even knew who the Beatles were!). My creativity was always welcomed and encouraged, and I can't

remember anyone ever imposing limits on what I wanted to do with my learning (I have a 25 page short story I wrote when I was twelve to prove it!).

Since leaving, I completed my high school diploma at Reynolds Secondary School (in the Flex program), achieved my degree in Child and Youth Care (CYC) at UVic, worked in three different countries (Ireland, UK, and Canada) as a support worker to at risk groups. I cannot tell you how proud I was when we covered concepts of pedagogy in university, and I could speak to the class of my first hand experience using classic Montessori tools for learning (Pink blocks? Moveable phonetic alphabet? So that's where those came from!). Maria Montessori's theories were held in high regard in the academic world of child development, and I was thrilled to be able to connect my own experiences to her brilliant ideas and teachings.



I mentioned earlier that I was a student at Selkirk Montessori School. That word, student, hardly describes what my role truly was. I was and am a member of a family, a community of support that will always be there for me. So many times in my professional capacity have I met people who ended up in bad situations simply because they lacked crucial support in a time of crisis. Not only have I always had that sense of community to back me up and make me feel safe, but I have learned what it is to contribute to that feeling and help others to find it as well. I consider myself extremely lucky to have been able to plug into this concept at such an early age, and carry it with me through all I have experienced and will experience. To those of you dipping

your toes into this pool, I say: jump in! The water's warm, and so is the welcome.