

# I.N. Touch

July 2021

## EDITOR'S NOTE

**W**hat a crazy, surreal – yet extremely real – year this has been! IAIM has undergone transformations like we never imagined we would. Live stream online classes and trainings were unthinkable. The one thing we feared most – teaching via the internet – has come true in this 2020 / 2021 year! I remember when I started teaching in 1998, I did not even have internet in my home! I wondered what “internet” looked like. And now we live and connect via the internet because we have no other option.

**W**e all thought that by middle 2021 this will all be over. How wrong we were!

**T**his year has also seen some of our very experienced trainers retiring. We decided to ask some of the pioneer trainers to write their stories to share with the IAIM community. How many of you have often wished you had paid more attention when your grandfather or grandmother would tell their stories of the old days? Have we not often wished that we had written down what they told us?

**T**his is why we have decided to record some of the history of IAIM for generations to come...

**W**e hope that this newsletter will make you feel connected still to the rest of the world.

**A**nd lastly we would like to congratulate the Venezuela Chapter who will celebrate their 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 19th August!

**W**e hope every C.I.M.I.® worldwide will stay safe and healthy.

*Ronel Coetzee – on behalf on the newsletter committee.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the International Association of Infant Massage is to promote nurturing touch and communication through training, education and research so that parents, caregivers and children are loved, valued and respected throughout the world community.

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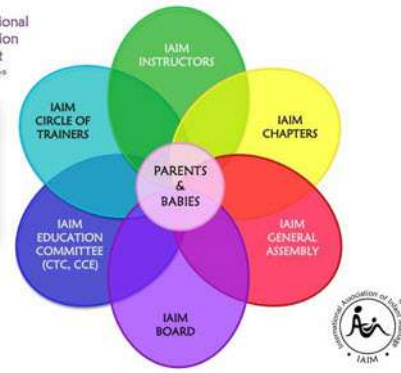
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# From the Board

Dear IAIM Family,

Even as this world moves in and out of lockdowns, time still gets away from us. If someone would have told us more than a year ago that we would still be having this conversation about “Lockdown” we would not have believed them, BUT here we are one and half years down the line.

The International Board Members would like to thank EVERYONE for keeping the “Candle Burning” as far as IAIM is concerned. Due to the amazing technology of ZOOM, we are not only keeping in touch with the parents and babies but also able to train new students so that IAIM can still grow and manage to receive some income from the Trainers teaching the students.

The Pandemic has had devastating effects on most countries in the world and many people are suffering with not only having lost loved ones but struggling to survive. We have discovered that the families need us more than ever now. So please carry on with the great work that you are all doing.

The positive side with being able to contact through ZOOM for some of us, has been that we are able to “attend” different General Assemblies and to communicate and help the different Chapters. This has been amazing for the International Board Members and we now feel much more connected. It is our aim to keep this way of communicating as much as possible.

Most of you have had training on how to use “Basecamp” which is also a great way of communicating. I would like to thank Sofia and Christel for all the hard work that has gone into creating “Basecamp” and for teaching the IAIM community how to work with it. One of the big tasks of the International Board is to be much more connected with all the Chapters and in the past this was more difficult but now we are able to do this via Zoom. So please keep that in mind when you are holding your various meetings, to invite us to join. A big thank you to the UK, Singapore and Germany for inviting us.

As you are all aware, we were asked by the GA to work on creating a new Website. This is also in the last process of completion and will be live hopefully by the end of July 2021. I would like to thank Christel and her team for the VERY hard work that has gone into this. It is a huge task to get all the information together and they have been working against a time line. Not an easy task I can assure you. What came out of our virtual GA was the word “Protection”. Everybody wants everything regarding IAIM protected as much as possible. We have been working to get all the information from the Chapters but unfortunately it is a very slow process. Only 7 chapters have completed the form that was sent together with the Chapter Contract. We need many more Chapters to respond. If you want us to work on this, PLEASE complete the form so that we have something to work with. We also need ALL chapters to sign the contract as that was passed by the GA. We have only received 16 signed contracts to date. Please check to see if you have signed and sent it back via “Adobe Sign”. This program has made the signing a lot easier. Still has been lots of work for Sofia and myself as we have had to keep on sending out reminders.

One of my personal dreams is to get Australia back into the IAIM fold. Thanks to the wonderful help of Gail Bovenizer this dream will soon be realised. With the help of the Contact Person for Australia, Gabby Jansen, Gail and I are going to hold an online training with students from Australia. Gail and I are going to do these trainings free of charge so that the money can be used to start the Chapter. Gabby is busy contacting as many “previous” members as possible and then we will also hold a stroke review for those members. Obviously only IAIM trained people will be allowed to attend the stroke review. The trainings have to be held in the evenings due to the time change and will be held over a period of three weeks. We are starting on Monday 19th July 2021 and are both very excited about this project.

Respectfully and in Appreciation,  
Margo



# Once a pioneer, now an elder What a journey!



by Helen Moses

I feel honored to tell you my story of the early days of our IAIM. I prefer to make personal connection even with the written word, so I'm imagining we are sitting across from one another, having a coffee or tea. I'm grateful to the Newsletter committee for inviting me to share.

Some of you are peers of the babies in my early classes and trainings! While you were growing and becoming the bright, talented, enthusiastic torch bearers you are now, fulfilling our IAIM mission, I was dancing on the stage of my development as a pioneer for the west to value and practice nurturing touch for babies.

I'll take you back. Step into my home office. It is 1980...and you will see a circular dial land line telephone, a typewriter with carbon paper to make duplicates, and postage stamps to send correspondence. I was teaching kindergarten in a public school. I had just completed my massage therapy training. I was on fire to know more about the first year of life, dreaming of my own family one day and amazed with Time magazine's cover What Do Babies Know.

We say the stars align. Looking back, the events and energies in my life certainly aligned. My high school senior paper was a search to answer the question how much does environment influence a child's emotional and physical health. The most memorable report I ever gave at university was a class presentation on the work of Dr. Abraham Maslow. I surprised my shy self with how exciting it was to highlight the study of people achieving great things in life when their basic needs were met.

And a deeply personal reason moved me towards the same vision Vimala was moving toward. I was gradually becoming aware of the influence of my first eight days of life in a nursery isolette. I was born prematurely and separated from mother and twin brother. From years of self study and healing, I consciously rebuilt the ability to trust, remain open, receive, and reverse my early imprint: no one hears/responds, my influence is nil, my needs are unmet. I also realized the impact on

my mother. She was loving. She was nurturing. Yet, I was not fully available for bonding and attachment. This sensitized me to both babies' and mothers' experience of closeness or distance in their bond.

Many of you are surely aware of life trajectory and one's purpose in life. My brother gave me Dr. Leboyer's book for my 27<sup>th</sup> birthday (Shantala's baby receiving traditional Indian massage). My twin also gave me Vimala's original booklet (pre Bantam!). The spark ignited and I mailed a letter to Vimala, gushing about her work, how close my sharing Shantala with parents was, and what could I do to support her? I had no idea Vimala had decided to form an international association and with Audrey, start training instructors. Letters were mailed back and forth. My pioneering days began.

Vimala trained a total of 34 instructors at 2 trainings which I sponsored for her in Tampa, Florida, in 1983 and 1984. The sweetest thing happened while Vimala was staying with me at my cottage. The neighbor kitty went into labor and there was Vimala assisting mama cat, when it was time to take her to the infant massage lecture.

In those days, I was speaking at local events, teaching parent baby classes, and showing enlarged photographs from Vimala's booklet at my exhibit tables. At my exhibit table for a Mother's Day fair, I met an enthusiastic mother-to-be; in Tampa with her husband, both Italian, he a researcher, she a physical therapist. We connected instantly and she came to the second training with her 7 week old son. Vimala showed colic relief she could provide Luigi. I am so proud to say that I was relay person for IAIM to receive the blessing of Benedetta. She took her fire for Vimala's vision to Italy, and today we can stand in awe of her labors of love starting the Italian chapter and being our Board President for many years.

When preparing a speech for a state convention, I stumbled on a family fact. I am forever grateful for it to appear. My Dad and I were

# Once a pioneer, now an elder

## The story of Helen Moses continues...

talking about my baby days. I knew I had a positional club foot that was corrected easily with a brace. I treasure the memory of my father laughing as he remembered out loud..."Yes, Dr. Rorbeck gave me a job. I was the one who massaged your foot every night when we took the brace off." Can you imagine hearing that? Massaging babies was just not a thing in the 1950's! I was amazed and felt so affirmed :yes, this is my path.

In the first group of instructors were DeAnna Elliot, Diana Moore, Maria Mathias, Laurie Evans, Jody Wright and myself. Maria Fagerlund, Inger Hartelius, Denmark and Mia Elmsater, Sweden joined soon after, making us truly international. We worked so well together and accomplished so much with Vimala and Audrey as our mentors and guides. Above all, we chose to remain pure in purpose, mission, and organization. Despite overwhelming health challenges, Vimala worked tirelessly to revise the instructor manual and 1<sup>st</sup> Bantam edition of the parent handbook. We had email by then, yet posting letters was common. In letters January 8, 1995, and April 4, 1996 and September 12, 1996, Vimala updated us on revision progress and asked for our help. To illustrate, Vimala asked us to write or tape record our suggestions to her!

I responded to Vimala: "Over the years, I've developed a way of sharing strokes...I talk to parents about using a slow approach when offering massage. I call attention to the ways their hand can be a "resting hand," a "still hand," or a reassuring one." When your touch is this conscious touch, your baby feels it. It will get his or her attention in a quiet and powerful way. It will prepare him for the moving touch. Also, I remind parents to use the resting hand before the tummy strokes and the chest strokes."

Here it is, I suppose befitting in the journey I was asked to share. Vimala honored me and gave me the greatest gift. She **validated** what I had learned with parents and babies and from being a vulnerable preemie. Since I'm known for my written expression and quite shy about speaking among colleagues, I would be happy to be known as a quiet contributor. Vimala **encouraged** me "I really want your input." She **acknowledged** me "I am making the following changes now to use Helen's terms for touch relaxation and include them in the curriculum." I'm so, so proud to be the relay person again, that Resting Hands came via me and added dimension to our IAIM massage!

As I look forward, at you bringing IAIM through confinement and regulations I salute you, my beloved colleagues. You're articulate, passionate, and oh so fierce when necessary. I admire your chutzpah yet questioned my own. Many times I felt like I was the quietest, with no impact. I hope in your times of doubt, you are buoyed by a wise one. DeAnna, Audrey, Mia, Bene, and Esther have been my wise ones. We are unique and we uniquely contribute. May you feel buoyancy through the waves of your journey.



Board Meeting 1987

From Left: Vimala, DeAnna, Diana, Audrey, Helen, Maria, Jody



Board Meeting 1986

From Left: Vimala, Jody, Laurie, Audrey, Diana, Dr Montague, DeAnna, Maria, Helen



April 1984

From Left: Vimala, Helen and Audrey



# Once a pioneer, now an elder

A picture paints a thousand words...



Benedetta, Helen and Luigi - London 2010



Trainers Meeting Montreal - 1996



NICU Research Assistant  
1995



Bradenton Training - July 2012



June 2006



Teen Parent Class Tampa - June 1988



Tampa Training - November 2012



## Words from *Mercè Simon Mont* Retired Trainer, Trainer Consultant since 1992

"I didn't find Infant Massage, Infant Massage found me". That's what Vimala has often said.

Infant Massage found me too, I let it seduce me, and it brought important values to my life. I have been with IAIM, since I participated in the first IAIM conference in Orlando (1992), and now it is time for me to retire, but I take with me a lot of wealth.

I'm thankful for everything I have learned as a C.I.M.I.®, as a Trainer, encouraging the IAIM Spanish Chapter, as IAIM Chapter Representative and as a Trainer Consultant. My work as a C.I.M.I.® and as a Trainer was a great enrichment for me, both professionally and personally. When this happens in your life, it can be considered as a big gift from the Universe.

From the parents and babies I learned how important it is to listen, and with them I have been able to confirm how significant the first years of life and parents baby relationship are, in order to lead us toward a best society. From the people I have trained, I learned that everybody has something important to show. I will keep with me loving empowered gazes from parents, and deep clean gazes from babies which seem to contain wisdom. I also will keep inside me students' emotions raised during the trainings. I value the opportunity I had to get to know so many people, different countries, and the prized possibility to share and improve knowledge.

During all these years I have seen how much IAIM has grown, and how more and more people and countries have joined it, which confirms how significant its mission is.

I thank Vimala for her vision and to have founded IAIM, I'm glad to have met her. I thank Inger Hartelius, she has trained me as a C.I.M.I.®, and I thank all of you for being there, keeping IAIM alive, supporting parents and babies. I'm proud to have been part of this big project and I encourage especially the new trainers to inspire IAIM purpose. I really believe it is worth it.

I appreciate that the IAIM newsletter committee has given me the chance to share here all the above.

With my best wishes

*Mercè Simon Mont*



# Infant Massage Workshop for Fathers

By Miri Shaked, Israel CIMI and Board Member

Throughout my years facilitating parent workshops for infant massage, I have mostly met with mothers and have reached fathers only through private couples workshop.

The reason for this is first and foremost technical and logistical due to the reality that fathers usually return to work shortly after birth while mothers stay home and are more available for morning workshops.

The second reason stems from the value I saw in mothers-only groups. Such a meeting allows them, I feel, to be much more open and participate more actively in the conversation than they would if men were also attending the meeting and so proactively my meetings are only for women. I think there is a lot of value and great importance to mixed groups, but I feel that what suits me right now are the separate sessions. In these sessions the women share about the difficulties in transitioning to parenthood, in the postpartum period and their struggles. The dialogue between them makes it possible to share their feelings freely and normalizes what they are going through. Additionally, this space allows for the women to offer assistance and support to each other from their own experiences.

For a long time I felt that a meeting of this kind for fathers would be very valuable!

Men feel less legitimacy to tell how they feel, what their struggles are, how they cope with the role of being a spouse/father/breadwinner in such an exciting and busy time. In addition, they are often afraid to give a massage to their baby, afraid that they do not know how firmly to touch their baby.

Returning to work so soon after birth makes it difficult for the father to find his place in the day-to-day care of the baby and often interferes with the father-infant bond since the time he has left to be with the baby is reduced mainly to evenings and weekends. The mother becomes the primary caregiver and the father sometimes feels insecure in caring for the baby because often, the baby calms down faster with the mother. Precisely for this reason I see the importance of a workshop for fathers.

I talked about it with a close friend whose wife was pregnant and he got excited about the idea. After the birth of his daughter, we organized an infant massage workshop and father's circle on Friday mornings, a day here in Israel that most people do not work and are available for family and social events.

The meeting was attended by 3 fathers. A father to 3, a father to 2 and a first-time father.

The structure of the session was the same as that of the mother's groups; in the first part of the session we learned the strokes and in the second part we discussed topics related to this period of their lives.

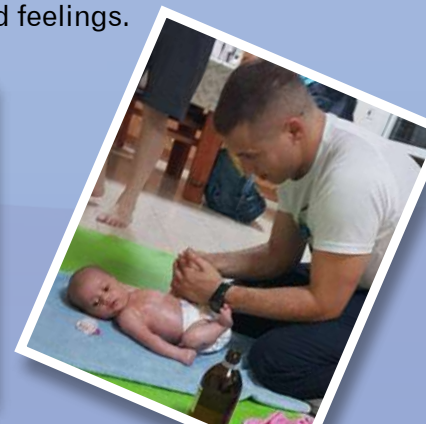
The fathers' connection to the massage was wonderful and the dialogue was fascinating!!

The massage allowed them to connect more with the baby, gave them confidence in their touch with the baby, they learned to get to know their babies and read their signals, the eye contact with the baby was wonderful, their ability to calm the babies by touch and movement strengthened their confidence and the quality time between father and baby was extremely important and meaningful.

In the second part of the sessions we talked about their feelings. They shared their feelings, we talked about the roles of the father in the past versus today, and about the benefits and challenges of cultural change. They also shared how they feel about having to go to work and spend many hours away from home and how it affects their relationship with the babies.

Additionally, the fathers had to deal with a situation they were not always familiar with. To take care of their babies alone, without a mother who is nearby to soothe, feed, diaper, etc. They did the job heroically and I am sure it contributed greatly to their sense of parental ability.

I left the workshop with significant validation for my intuition. Men also need the safe, non-judgmental, normalizing place that allows them to strengthen their bond with their baby and empower their abilities and feelings.



# From the CCE: An update

## Here is an update from the Committee for Continuing Education for CIMIs (CCE):

The committee has three members: Cherry Bond, Jannicke Christensen and Mariel Madrigal. They are all experienced CIMIs, and two of them are Trainers.

Unfortunately, Mia has now left the CCE, after being an amazing member for several years. The CCE wants to send Mia a special thanks through this newsletter, and we know she is, and will continue to do, a lot of work for IAIM in other circulos and committees in the future.

We have approved 6 workshops so far in 2021. All together we now have 23 exciting IAIM approved workshops. They should all be listed in our website:

<https://www.iaim.net/mbr/continuing-education-workshops/>

To apply for approval of a workshop, you need to fill in an application form, with all information about you, your background, name of workshop and content/schedule. You can run an IAIM approved workshop (once it has been approved) deepening CIMIS knowledge on any of the 15 core curriculum points.

The CCE have guidelines and application forms, which are available on the international website (www.iaim.net under resources: <http://www.iaim.net/cimi-resources-page/>) or from [cce@iaim.net](mailto:cce@iaim.net). Make sure you are using the latest updated version of the form.

Feel free to write to us for any questions, with your application or with any feedback. Our email is: [cce@iaim.net](mailto:cce@iaim.net)

Keep in Touch:-) Cherry, Mariel and Jannicke





# A parents' questionnaire on our permission asking routine

## A study by the German Chapter

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**How is the concept of the International Association of Infant Massage supporting parents in reading their baby's cues!**

**Background:** Can IAIM infant massage classes and especially the asking permission routine before each massage support parents in their competencies?

As one of the unique selling points and main intention in IAIM infant massage classes there is the permission asking routine before each massage. This survey was intended to clarify, to what extent the participation of an IAIM class and in particular the instruction of permission asking routine have a positive effect on the ability or assessment of parent's ability to perceive their baby's cues and needs and to react appropriately to them.

**Methods:** From September 2017 until December 2018 there has been a survey amongst parents with the support of 11 IAIM instructors in the German chapter of IAIM regarding the asking permission routine and the IAIM infant massage classes. A combination of qualitative and quantitative questions have been used. For the evaluation 78 records from participants have been used, who have answered both questionnaires completely, before and after an IAIM infant massage class.

**Results:** The data show, that regardless of age there is an improved feeling of security within the parents reading their baby's cues through an IAIM infant massage class. The children aged 4 month or older at the beginning of a class, could serve as comparison group, in order to exclude the gain in security in reading baby's cues purely by the time factor.

There is an increased willingness after an IAIM infant massage class to pay attention on the baby's cues and to use the permission asking routine at home. The results also show an increased feeling of attachment, an increased feeling of security in understanding baby's needs and dealing with crying. The majority of participants in the survey said, that the core elements of IAIM infant massage classes – parents parenting, possibility to ask questions, role model of the instructors with the doll and the acknowledgement of baby's competencies- have been supportive.

**Limitations:** Answers on questions about appropriate reading and reacting on baby's cues was done by the parents' subjective point of view. In order to be able to say with absolute certainty that parents are able to react appropriately, an observational study would have to be carried out. However we have the opinion, that the parent's secure feeling contributes to a stronger bond and thus represents a component of prevention against unfavourable growing up conditions.

**Conclusion:** The results show that the standards of IAIM classes are seen supportive by the parents. The awareness for baby's cues and the feeling of bonding increases through an IAIM class and also through the permission asking routine.

The detailed evaluation is to be found here [www.babymassage-ausbildung.de/studien](http://www.babymassage-ausbildung.de/studien) and on the homepage of the German chapter of the IAIM [www.dgbm.de](http://www.dgbm.de).

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Patricia



Clara Ute



Esther



# MAGIC MOMENTS Part 2

## With a very special student, Diana

BY THORDIS AND ISOLDE

It is our desire to let IAIM community know, that Diana has finished her process to become an instructor. In the I.N. Touch 2020 in August we wrote an article about Diana, a student instructor, 21 years old, wanted to become an infant massage instructor.

Diana has Trisomie 21.

Now we can announce, that Ana Laura, the Mexican IAIM International Trainer, has certified Diana, as IAIM infant massage instructor.

Although the situation with COVID 19 was not easy for instructors and parents to teach infant massage, Diana managed with help of her family to teach parents for her certification process.

### *Diana's dream became true!*

She has the certificate of IAIM / REMI and she is qualified to teach IAIM infant massage classes for parents. Her idea is, as we described in the last article, to teach parents with special need babies, like Trisomie 21.

Her focus is very special. She wants to teach and empower parents who live with their babies with additional special needs. Diana's resources in emotional competencies and support are excellent.

What changes may happen when special need families are guided and will experience Diana's infant massage class? Her attitude and sensitivity towards parents, babies and other participants will be a wonderful opportunity to see and feel different, about possibilities with special need life. A role-model like Diana can imprint more than words what will be able to express.

The power of love and touch is part of the mission of IAIM.

Diana is a wonderful role-model who lives our vision. She is an example for a lot of benefits,

when parents trust in their children's abilities and nurture them with love and touch.

Parents in infant massage classes will be motivated and they will try to imitate the way Diana and her family did.

We are aware, that each family has to develop their own path. And sometimes a magic moment during infant massage class happens, like that of Diana may become an idea or desire for something very special ...

This can be a start to develop resilience for a whole family.

We do not know, if Diana is the first certified infant massage instructor with Trisomie 21, but we hope there will be more students who will take the instructor training with IAIM.

Hopefully we will receive feedback from Diana's experiences with her infant massage classes.

We will continue sharing with IAIM community.

