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**MARY ELLEN KORDAS, HEAD OF SCHOOL AT  
VALLEY MONTESSORI SCHOOL WINS WOMEN'S INITIATIVE  
WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARD**

*Bay Area nonprofit for women entrepreneurs announces winners of 2010 competition*

**Livermore, CA**

Mary Ellen Kordas, Head of School at Valley Montessori School, has been named Entrepreneur of the Year in Livermore. The award is given by Bay Area nonprofit Women's Initiative for Self-Employment and recognizes successful women for their leadership and contributions to their community and the social economy. This award recognizes those who serve as examples and mentors to aspiring female entrepreneurs by having a positive impact on the local community, and advance their business through innovation.

Mary Ellen has served the families of the East Bay for over thirty years at Valley Montessori School. In an effort to continue to serve younger students moving into elementary and middle school and meet the growing demand for enrollment in VMS programs, Mary Ellen has led Valley Montessori School on a 2.5 million dollar Campus Expansion Project in 2010.

To fund the expansion, Mary Ellen worked with community leaders to secure financing for Valley Montessori utilizing tax free bond funding, capitalizing on the low interest rates currently available in the market. This allowed the school to reduce expenses while expanding the campus, and inject money into the local economy.

The VMS Campus Expansion includes a new 9,000 square foot building with six additional classrooms and a half-court gym. For more information on Valley Montessori School visit [www.valleymontessorischool.com](http://www.valleymontessorischool.com). At VMS, Mary Ellen says, "Providing a respectful environment able to serve each child's unique needs is the most important thing."

VMS is proud to honor Mary Ellen as the Women's Initiative celebrates the power of small business leaders in transforming communities. A total of 587 women were nominated for the award throughout the Bay Area and nearly 50 women were honored with the award. For more information about the awards and a complete list of winners, go to [www.womensinitiative.org](http://www.womensinitiative.org). The Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Ceremony will be held on October 4<sup>th</sup> at the Claremont Hotel & Spa in Oakland from 5:30 to 8:30 PM.