

# The SFMS Chronicle

## October 2009

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Nancy Sager, Founder

Walter Huebscher, Head of School

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Thursday**    **Ice Cream Social—3:30 to 5:00 p.m.**  
**Oct. 15**       **Elementary**

**Friday**        **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**Oct. 16**       **DAY –SCHOOL CLOSED-No Classes**

Oct. 19-23    **PICTURE WEEK**

**Friday**        **MINIMUM DAY**  
**Oct. 23**       **11:30 & 11:45 Dismissals –All Levels**

Thur. & Fri.    **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**  
 Nov. 5 & 6     Day Care is available

**Wednesday**   **VETERAN’S DAY**  
**Nov. 11**        **SCHOOL CLOSED-No Classes**

### Annual Report for 2008—2009

Our Development Director, Karen Berger, is preparing our School’s 2008-2009 Annual Report, which will soon be given to every family and staff member at SFMS. It will have reports from the Board of Directors, the Head of School, The Business Manager, The Development Director and the Parent Association President. It will include information on the revenue and expenses for 08-09.

### New Additions to Our Website

Before the end of October, the SFMS website will have a Parent Login option available so parents can go to their child’s classroom page and read the latest classroom newsletter, read the Parent Handbook and even view photos taken in the classroom. If you have a suggestion for what you would like to see on your child’s classroom page please email [Jennifer@santafemontessori.org](mailto:Jennifer@santafemontessori.org). Also new on our website is the meet the Board Members page.

**Picture Week is just around the corner!**

Check here to see when your child’s class is scheduled for Photo Day.

Classroom Teacher	Day	Date	Time
Ms Estella –Rm 1	Thursday	October 22	10 am
Ms Soraya—Rm 2	Monday	October 19	9 am
Ms Sibylle—Rm 3	Monday	October 19	10 am
Ms Shahin—Rm 4	Tuesday	October 20	9 am
Ms Dawn—Rm 5	Tuesday	October 20	10 am
Ms Fibi—Jr I	Wednesday	October 21	9 am
Ms Cathy—Jr I	Wednesday	October 21	10 am
Ms Christine—JR II	Thursday	October 22	9 am
Ms Maria—Toddler A	Friday	October 23	8:45 am
Ms Alejandra—Toddler B	Friday	October 23	9:45 am

**MORE NEWS ...** Please see page 2 for our Annual Gala information, page 3 for a Positive Discipline announcement, page 4 for the Parents’ Association News and pages 5, 6 & 7 for an article entitled, “Benefits of Early Exposure to Two Languages” by SFMS parent, Alison Wishard Guerra, Ph.D., UCSD professor.

# The SMFS Annual Gala is Coming And You Can Be a Part of it!

On May 15, 2010, our school will once again hold its annual gala fundraiser event, our biggest fundraising and social event of the year!

Last year's gala was a tremendous success for the school, netting over \$50,000 for various projects and improvements. And we want to do it all over again - and even better! So we need volunteers like you to make it happen! There is plenty to do, from decorations and invitations, to soliciting for silent auction items and much, much more!

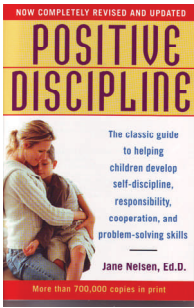
This year's gala committee is starting to build and is having its first meeting on Wednesday, October 14th, at 1:30 pm in the elementary building offices.

This will be a special meeting where you will be able to find out more about the gala and its volunteer opportunities - and where we will introduce you in person to our celebrity auctioneer, Sean Kelly ([www.thecharityauctioneer.com](http://www.thecharityauctioneer.com))!

Please join us and be part of the excitement - get involved in this tremendous and fun filled event that benefits our school and our children!

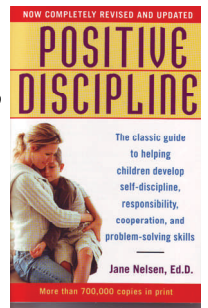
Anna Danes  
Gala Chair

[anna@zrginc.com](mailto:anna@zrginc.com)  
858-967-8090



# Family Education Center Classes

will soon be held at  
Santa Fe Montessori School



Dr. Jane Nelsen author and co-author of the Positive Discipline series has chosen our school to create a Family Education Center (FEC).

The FEC will provide a place for parents and teachers to spend two hours a month learning Positive Discipline concepts, participating in an experiential activity to "get into the child's world" and deepen your skills, and to participate in a Parents Helping Parents Problem-Solving Steps process.

We'll save this process as a surprise, but can promise you'll love it.  
The fee structure is being determined.

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## We would like your help in deciding the best time for the FEC Classes.

\_\_\_\_\_ one evening a month from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Circle best day: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

\_\_\_\_\_ one Saturday a month from 10:00 AM to Noon.

Please check one of the above and return this portion to Conny by Oct. 23rd  
or email your preference to:

**Jennifer@santafemontessori.org .**

## Learn more about Positive Discipline:

Borrow a copy of *POSITIVE DISCIPLINE* from the schools Lending Library and/or visit these websites:

<http://positivediscipline.com>

<http://www.positivediscipline.org/>

<http://positivediscipline.ning.com/>

# SFMS-Parents' Association News

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## October 2009

The Parents' Association was thrilled to see many new faces as well as plenty of familiar ones at our annual Parents' Brunch. Thank you to all who attended. The energy and warmth were palpable and we feel this will be one of SFMS's best years yet.

Many thanks to all of you who offered sponsorship and signed up to volunteer for PA activities. Members of the PA board will be contacting volunteers as events approach.

**The Ice Cream Social** is coming up on October 15.

It will be held after school from 3:30 to 5:00.

There will be jump houses, face painting, and of course ice cream.

**Please join us--it will be fun for kids and parents alike.**

SFMS founder, **Nancy Sager**, will be addressing the parent body on October 28 from 6:30 to 8:00. She will be presenting a talk entitled, "The Next Best Place." Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about the Montessori education your children are enjoying from a woman with a long history of experience in and dedication to the Montessori Method.

Don't forget our theme for the year:

## STAY CONNECTED

You can always email the Parents' Association at [sfmspa@santafemontessori.org](mailto:sfmspa@santafemontessori.org) with any questions, comments, or ideas.

## PA EVENTS CALENDAR

Welcome Back To School Ice Cream Social

Thursday, October 15, 2009

From 3:30pm-5pm.

"The Next Best Place" presented by Nancy Sager

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

From 6:30pm-8pm

# Benefits of Early Exposure to Two Languages

Prepared by Alison Wishard Guerra, Ph.D.  
University of California, San Diego: Education Studies  
August, 2009

Many children grow up hearing and speaking more than one language. In fact, some estimate that the vast majority of the world's population is exposed to multiple languages from an early age, with many becoming fluently multilingual. Many parents, educators, and policy makers are interested in the benefits, primarily cognitive, of being exposed to multiple languages from an early age. The following is a summary of current research on early bilingual language development, with a focus on the cognitive benefits.

## Key points from leading research on early bilingual language development

*Bilingual children demonstrate the following cognitive benefits that are related to academic success:*

- Increased problem solving ability (cognitive flexibility)
- Increased ability to control behaviors and learn new habits (executive function)
- Greater flexibility in learning new words
- Increased activity in the area of the brain related to language development
- Ability to transfer knowledge across content areas and languages
- Increased meta-linguistic awareness
- Socio-emotional and cultural benefits

## *How will exposure to a second language affect my child's cognitive development?*

Current research from a variety of fields suggests that early bilingualism may have positive effects on children's development. The following include the potential cognitive benefits:

- **Enhanced Cognitive flexibility:** Cognitive flexibility, the ability to use available information in the environment to broaden knowledge or understanding, is related to executive function, word learning, knowledge transfer, and meta-linguistic awareness.
- **Executive function:** Executive function, the child's ability to control their behaviors and learn new habits, is related to planning, organizational skills, and selective attention. Children learning two or more languages learn how to switch back and forth between different sets of language rules, 'inhibiting' or 'ignoring' certain information when functioning in one language or the other. These children demonstrate higher levels of executive function overall than monolingual children.
- **Word Learning:** Bilingual children show greater flexibility in learning novel words, or additional labels for previously known objects or actions. Monolingual children often have difficulty learning a new label for an object that already has a name. However, research among bilingual children suggests that they demonstrate greater flexibility in novel word learning, having little trouble learning a new label for an object that already has a name.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Bilingual children learn to transfer what they know in and about one language to the other. Knowledge of two languages appears to increase children's understanding of early literacy skills (including phonemic awareness, decoding, and use words with similar roots or background) as well as early mathematical skills (including one-to-one correspondence).

- **Meta-linguistic awareness:** Meta-linguistic awareness, the general awareness of the meaning and structure of language, is heightened when the young brain learns to process information in two languages. Being exposed to two different language inputs requires a greater amount of language analysis by children, partly explaining the connection to greater cognitive flexibility, word learning, and knowledge transfer.

***Are there other advantages of speaking two languages?***

- Communication advantages may include wider communication networks, literacy in two languages, enhanced linguistic awareness
- Cultural advantages may include broader enculturation, a deeper level of multiculturalism, world perspectives in two languages, greater tolerance and sensitivity to issues of language, culture and race.
- Socioeconomic advantages may include increased levels of achievement, greater employment opportunities as adults and higher income potential.
- Socio-emotional advantages may include increased self-esteem and sense of identity.

***What does brain research tell us about early bilingualism and language development?***

- Bilingual children develop a separate set of neural pathways for each language while monolingual children develop only one set of neural pathways for language. The activation of additional neural pathways in the brain has the potential to influence the way children learn and represent information.

***Can exposure to a second language hinder my child’s development of the first language?***

The development of a second language does not interfere with the development of the native language and does not cause confusion for children. Children exposed to two languages early on show similar levels of language development in their first language as monolingual children. Children in the early stages of bilingual language acquisition learn how to use each language differently and appropriately.

***What is the best way to expose young children to a second language?***

Language develops through everyday social interactions for meaningful purposes. The most natural way for young children to learn a second language is through everyday routine social interaction, such as those that happen everyday in the classroom. By having one adult in the classroom that will always speak in Spanish, the children will have consistent and routine opportunities to engage in meaningful social interactions through Spanish.

***How is second language exposure related to the Montessori Philosophy?***

Many of the core principles of the Montessori approach are specifically aimed at helping children develop an enhanced sense of ‘*executive function*’. Positive effects on executive function is evident both through exposure to Montessori education and bilingualism. Moreover, an assumption in the Montessori approach to learning is that learning is optimal in meaningful situations. Including a second language into the everyday routine activities is the most effective way to introduce young children to a second language. Attending segmented second language classes or workshops removes language learning from meaningful and authentic social interactions.

***Select references appear on page 7.***

### *Select references*

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