
FOREIGN LANGUAGES: YOUR PASSPORT TO THE WORLD

Bennett Park Montessori Center #32

Buffalo, New York

Italian Night Parent Workshops shared the benefits of foreign languages with the Bennett Park Montessori community. The six workshops targeted two goals:

- Inform parents about the benefits of learning a second language, such as enhanced memory, increased SAT scores, improved higher order thinking skills, and increased understanding of other cultures.
- Enable parents to see how Italian is taught at school.

Current job opportunities for individuals that become foreign language speakers also were reviewed.

Each age group was invited for an evening workshop at school. The parents observed their children participate in a typical Italian lesson. The children were then treated to Italian refreshments (pizza, grape juice, and chocolate spread on crackers) and “Muzzi” the education language cartoon. With the children entertained, the parents received a lesson in Italian. Parents learned memory tricks to show the many ways the brain learns and links information. Parents were also taught ways to help their children increase memory, improve comprehension, and value diversity. Information sheets included memory hints and Italian terms. About forty parents attended each of the six workshops. A federal grant covered the workshop expenses.

At the workshops, the students showed their parents how well they understood and enjoyed their foreign language studies. Other schools wishing to encourage foreign language skills or provide parents with information about the foreign language study benefits and improvements to cognitive skills might enjoy a similar workshop.

Kim Lennert Walek, Action Team Chair

(716) 851-3790