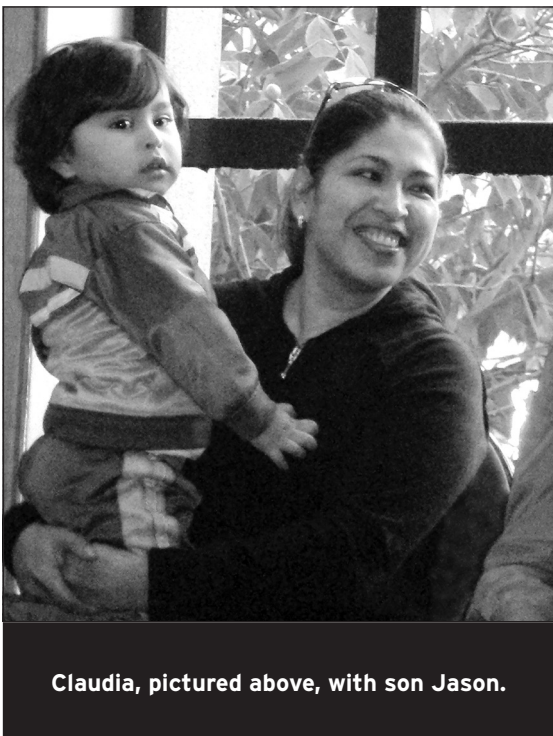




Family Connections

*Parents and Children
Growing Together*
REPORT CARD
Fall
2009

Family Connections, a Place to Connect



Claudia, pictured above, with son Jason.

I will tell you the story about my first school.
It is Family Connections.

It connects me with my mom,
My mom to my teacher,
The teacher to the families,
And we learn all united.

Family Connections,
Family Connections,
Family Connections.

– Written by Claudia Tinoco,
Family Connections parent

Building confidence, celebrating individual talents – some hidden, some not – strengthening parenting skills and, most importantly, “connecting” parents to each other. The simple verses written above by parent Claudia Tinoco beautifully sum up what happens when a parent and child step through our doors.

It is that sense of belonging, both on the part of the child, “are we going to *my* school today?” Claudia’s daughter Michelle would ask, and the parent, that is unique to the preschool co-op experience. An experience that is available to hundreds of families in need each year at Family Connections.

Claudia did not know about Family Connections when her oldest child was born. But when her daughter was attending elementary school on the Belle Haven campus a mother of her daughter’s classmate told Claudia that she used to attend a program called Family Connections. At the time, Claudia had a second daughter who was three years old and was pregnant with her son, Jason, who now attends the program. Claudia began attending with her three-year-old, Michelle, and found that Michelle loved coming to Family Connections right from the start.

“We were new in the area and Michelle was able to make friends and be well prepared for kindergarten. Her time at Family Connections helped her in academics as well as in her social relations,” explained Claudia.

"And what about you?" our Education Coordinator, Ruth, wondered when she sat down to hear Claudia's story.

"Well, not only my children learned but I did also. I was very shy and now I am more outspoken. I also learned to control my temper. I used to get upset for everything and now I can talk calmly. Also, our teacher has become more than a teacher, she has become a good friend and mentor. "

"At Family Connections I have learned how to talk to my children without yelling and I now know that they can learn from me when I read a book to them or tell them stories (something I never did with my oldest daughter). Family Connections is a place where parents and children learn and it becomes a strong foundation for their future."

It was only recently that Claudia shared with us her interest in writing songs. It has been a number of years since we have had an "official" school song and the parents have taken to this simple tune with great enthusiasm and have asked the staff to write it down, record it and share it long into the future. As we get ready to start another school year we look forward to many more parents "connecting" with each other, with our teaching staff and with the broader community in which they live.

Note from the Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Our cover story this fall was simple yet I thought elegant in the way that it illustrated our goal as an organization to change lives through education. The method, of bringing parents along side of the classroom teacher in that process, has benefits that the families will realize for years to come. As you will see in our Alumni Survey results which are shown in the 2009 Alumni Results, parents continue to utilize the skills learned at Family Connections well into their child's elementary school years.

As we begin another school year, Family Connections will continue its focus on the parent participation model of programming. We look forward to our second year in our new location at 414 Fourth Ave. in Redwood City and we will continue to support and grow our sites at Belle Haven School and 1070 Beech St. in East Palo Alto. As an agency the staff and board will be working hard to increase our fundraising revenues while remaining prudent in our approach towards expenses, all with the goal of remaining fiscally strong through these challenging economic times. Your support is what keeps us growing, for that we thank you.

Board Changes

This past summer two of our board members resigned: Julia San Bartolome, who relocated to Oxnard, CA, and Genaro Solorio, who accepted a new job opportunity. Long time board member Lynette York has rotated off the board and will continue to serve in a staff role as Finance Director. We thank them all and wish them the best of luck.

While we lost three board members, we were fortunate to gain two! Welcome to former staff member and newest member of the board, Debbie Denton. Debbie brings years of experience working at Family Connections and in the community at large to our board. Additionally, Laura Abram, former RPNS parent, marketing and PR consultant in the tech industry and Redwood City community member, has joined our board when we could use her skills most. We all look forward to working with these newest members and thank them for making this commitment to our organization.

In Good Happiness and Health this Fall,



Renée Zimmerman, Executive Director

Upcoming Family Connections Fundraising Events

October 2009

- Annual Campaign begins
- Family Carnival
Sat, October 24, 11 - 2 PM
East Palo Alto site
(Please join us!)

November 2009

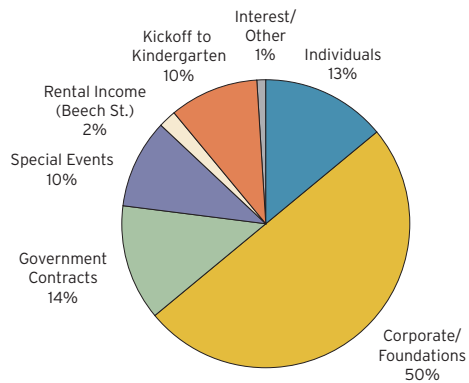
- 11th Annual Evening with Children's Authors
Wed, November 4, 6 - 9 PM
Hiller Aviation Museum
(Please join us!)

February 2010

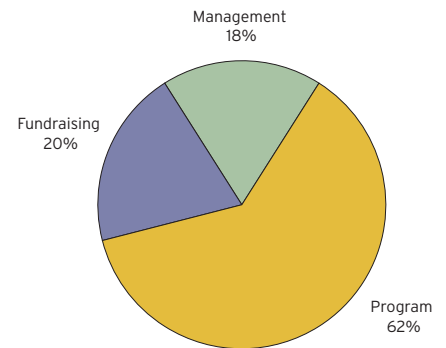
- Redwood City Rotary Car Raffle begins

2009/2010 Family Connections Agency Profile

FY 09-10 Planned Funding Support
Total Income



FY 09-10 Planned
Functional Expenses



2009 Alumni Survey Results

Family Connections surveys its alumni parents each year in an effort to track their children's progress in school and discover the extent to which parents have incorporated the skills learned at Family Connections into their daily lives.

Current Age of Child
(average)

7
years old

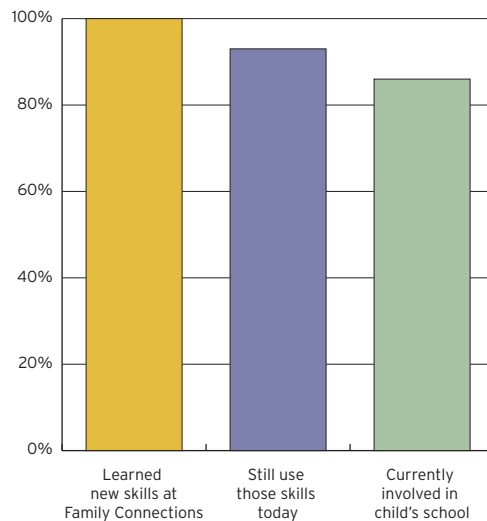
Current Grade in School
(average)

2nd
grade

Total Number of Years Attended
Family Connections
(average)

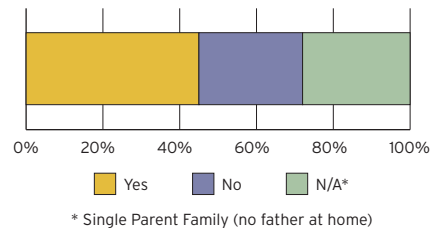
1.75
years

Parents

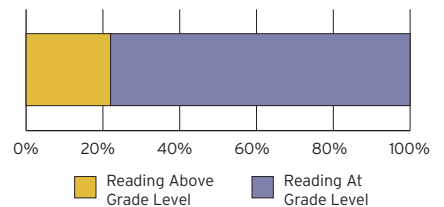


Father Involvement

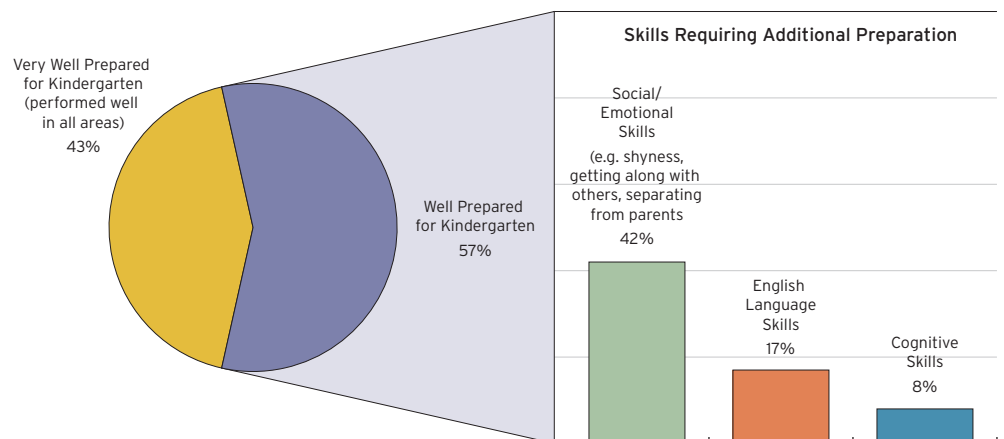
Has the father been involved in their child's education since leaving Family Connections?



Child's Current Reading Skills



Children



Annual Giving Campaign

The following donors contributed to our 2008/09 Annual Giving Campaign and/or one of our newsletter solicitation requests. (Excludes donations to support special events and fundraisers.)

Platinum Partners (\$9,999+)

Atkinson Foundation
County of San Mateo Human Services Agency
Hurlbut-Johnson Charitable Trusts
Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health
Palo Alto Community Fund
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund (SV2)

Gold Partners (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Anonymous
Bohannon Organization
Intero Real Estate Services, Inc.
Junior League of Palo Alto-Mid Peninsula
Redwood City Rotary Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation

Silver Partners (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Driscoll Foundation
Emily and George Jaquette
Steven Kaufman
San Mateo County Department of Health
Katie Peters and Ron Scheldrup
Amy and Eric Sahn
The Morrison & Foerster Foundation

Contributors Circle (\$1,000-\$2,499)

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Kerry Bitner and James Taschetta
Janet and Richard Hart
John Kendall
Palo Alto Medical Foundation
Rathmann Family Foundation
Ronald C. Wornick Jewish Day School

San Carlos/Belmont Mother's Club
Target Stores
Renée and John Zimmerman

Family Circle (\$500 - \$999)

Cris and Todd Adair
Lorena Alcayaga
Auction City (on behalf of Lorena Alcayaga, Curtis Chen and Piming Lai)
Missy and Rich Bechtel
Bernstein Family Foundation
Curtis Chen and Piming Lai
Kimberly Chisholm
Sian Davies and Nick van Bruggen
Debbie and Paul Denton
Jennifer Overholt and Bharat Mediratta
April and Mike Pardini
Mike Sundermeyer and Carolyn Anderson
Trinity Presbyterian Nursery School
Lynette and Tim York

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Windmill School

Friends (Up to \$99)

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Mike and Nancy Wright
Jenny Wucher
Ellen and Tom Wyman

Family Connections also thanks "An Evening with Children's Authors" sponsors, attendees and raffle ticket purchasers, and "VW Beetle Raffle" ticket purchasers.

We would also like to thank our large in-kind donors:

Ravenswood City School District
Second Harvest Food Bank
Sequoia Adult School
Sequoia Union High School District

Recent Funding News

Thank you to the following foundations for their recent grant awards:

Shutterfly Foundation

\$10,000 – general preschool program support

Junior League of Palo Alto–Mid Peninsula

\$5,000 – general preschool program support, East Palo Alto Site

Palo Alto Community Fund

\$10,000 – general preschool program support, East Palo Alto Site

The Fatherhood Collaborative

\$2,500 – Father Involvement Program

The Westly Foundation

\$5,000 – summer program support

The Franklin & Catherine Johnson Foundation

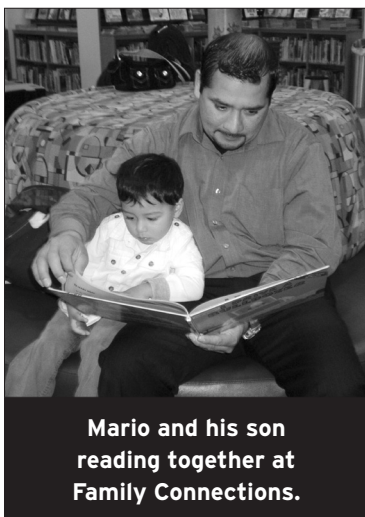
\$15,000 – general preschool program support, East Palo Alto site

The Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health

\$20,000 – Parent Leadership Project, child abuse prevention

SV2

\$52,000 – organizational capacity building



Mario and his son reading together at Family Connections.

Great Things Happen When Fathers Get Involved

At Family Connections, most of our day to day participants are mothers, with the fathers attending Parent Nights, field trips and other special events. But every site has a few fathers, who because of their work schedule, are able to attend the program during the day.

Fathers bring a different element of play and interaction to the program. On the whole, they tend to be more physically active with the children. We rarely have to encourage them to get down on the carpet and play with the children, it is something they tend to do instinctively. Fathers also bring different talents and gifts to the program.

One such father, Mario Lopez, taught us all about keeping our facilities clean through his profession working for a cleaning company. Mario's son recently graduated from Family Connections and attended the four-week Kickoff to Kindergarten program supervised by Family

Connections at Belle Haven School in Menlo Park. His son will be ready for Kindergarten and Mario will be ready for his role as an involved parent in elementary school. Even though he has left Family Connections, Mario volunteered six hours of his own time on a weekend at the end of the summer to clean and resurface our floor at the Belle Haven site. It was a welcomed and appreciated gift to help us start the new school year with a clean and shiny floor. Thank you Mario for all that you have given our school. We wish you and your family the best of luck in your new educational adventure.



Betsy and her family.

Betsy Carter Joins Family Connections Staff

Hello, I am Betsy Carter and I am so happy to have joined the Family Connections staff as the new Volunteer Coordinator this summer! I've been a part of the "family" for many years, participating in the classroom with some scrapbooking activities and being part of the fabulous Authors' Night committee. In my new role, I hope to match the many willing volunteers out there with the many needs and wishes we have at Family Connections.

We will soon have a special link on our newly revamped website (www.familyconnections.org) just for volunteers, where you'll find many varied projects such as: painting hopscotch stencils on our playgrounds, reading to the children in the classroom, fixing the plumbing in the children's bathroom, to planting child-friendly plants in our gardens. We even take suggestions! If you or a group you are involved with (such as church or temple groups, scouts, high school students and their community service clubs, mothers' clubs, etc.) might be interested in supporting Family Connections through volunteering, please contact me at bcarter@familyconnections.org.



Family Connections

Mailing Address:

Family Connections
P.O. Box 358
San Carlos, CA 94070

Site Locations:

Belle Haven School
Menlo Park
414 Fourth Avenue
Redwood City
1070 Beech Street
East Palo Alto

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If you know of someone who would be interested in receiving the Report Card, please let us know. Or, if you received this newsletter and would like your name removed from our mailing list, contact us at 650.369.6467 or director@familyconnections.org. Thank you to LOOK Design for our newsletter design and layout.

11th Annual "An Evening with Children's Authors" Coming on November 4, 2009

Our 11th Annual "An Evening with Children's Authors" fundraising event is a special evening with three award-winning authors/illustrators scheduled to speak and personally sign books. The event will be held at the Hiller Aviation Museum in San Carlos on Wednesday, November 4, 2009 from 6 to 9 p.m. Our 2009 Authors Night Chair, Kim Hartman, would be thrilled to see you there so mark your calendars now for this exciting annual event.

Author **Pamela S. Turner** grew up in Southern California as a child who loved to read, loved to write, and loved animals. She spent a year in Kenya during college and with her husband has lived abroad in countries including South Africa, the Philippines and Japan. Her many interests came together in her first book **Hachiko: The True Story of a Loyal Dog**. Turner makes science accessible and fascinating to children in her many books including **Gorilla Doctors: Saving the Endangered Great Apes** and **The Frog Scientist**. Turner resides in Oakland.

Author and illustrator **Jim LaMarche** grew up exploring the Milwaukee River that ran through his Wisconsin hometown. Rivers and LaMarche's love for the natural world show up in many of his award-winning picture books, including **The Raft**, **Little Oh** and **Rainbabies**. In addition to writing his own stories, LaMarche has illustrated classic children's stories such as the Grimm brothers' **The Elves and the Shoemaker**. LaMarche lives with his family in Santa Cruz.

Award-winning author **Jennifer Holm** was raised in Pennsylvania in a house overrun with brothers and her childhood has been an important influence in her writing. Her first novel, **Our Only May Amelia**, won a Newbery Honor Award and Holm received a second Newbery Honor Award for her novel **Penny From Heaven**. Her childhood years spent with comic books and cartoon strips led her to collaborate with her brother Matthew Holm on the entertaining graphic novel series **Babymouse**. She lives and works in the Bay Area.

Go to www.familyconnections.org for more information and an order form for tickets.

Get your tickets early – our event traditionally sells out!



Our Mission

At Family Connections, a parent participation preschool for low-income families, parents learn positive parenting skills while their children develop the skills necessary to succeed in Kindergarten and beyond.

Our vision is that involved parents and well-prepared children will be able to participate successfully in their families, communities, and schools.

Board of Directors:

Amy Sahn, President	
Laura Abram	George Jaquette
Cris Adair	Alisa Greene MacAvoy
Curtis S. Chen	April Pardini
Debbie Denton	Joyce Romeo

Executive Director:

Renée Zimmerman

Contact Us:

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