



## Montgomery School Offers Chinese Class

Currently in the Montgomery area, only one school offers a Chinese language class. Dr. Huey-Ling Lin, the owner of this new private school, says The Learning Express Center is “the one and only school in Montgomery offering Chinese for Beginners.” Available to anyone interested in learning, Lin, an area university professor and published author in the field of Early Childhood Development, says that The Learning Express Center provides opportunities to obtain basic knowledge of the Chinese culture, history and people, using creative learning methods such as dancing, drama, role-playing and lots of conversations with peers. Though focusing mostly on the needs of children and young people, Lin says, “We welcome anyone who is interested in learning Chinese.”

The modern, state-of-the-art facility is Asian-inspired in design, offering a pleasant and airy learning environment with courtyard. A native of Taiwan, Lin says that the instructor of the school’s Beginner’s Chinese class is “a highly qualified Chinese Language and Literature graduate from Guangxi Normal University, with more than 10 years’ experience teaching and tutoring Chinese.” In a global environment, The Learning Express Center offers a cutting edge service to area students who may benefit from the wide range of advantages offered by learning another language, especially Chinese. To inquire about class times and availability, call 262-8840.

# Learning Foreign Language Offers Children Many Advantages in a Changing World....

With so many stories on the condition of the U.S. and global economies blanketing the news, it comes as no surprise that many experts agree on the importance of learning a foreign language in our changing global society. Studies released in

recent years by sources ranging from the Modern Language Association to numerous language research experts reveal that English may be on the decline as the preeminently-spoken language worldwide, while increasing numbers of students across the country are turning their attention to foreign language study.

According to British language researcher David Graddol, the idea of English remaining the world language to the exclusion of others is "past its sell-by date." While English remains strong as a second language and teaching it has become a growth industry, notes another source, Graddol asserts that, "in the next decade the new 'must learn' language is likely to be Mandarin (Chinese)." In the globalized workplace of tomorrow, he says the ability to speak other languages could be extremely advantageous and that, given the boom in the Chinese economy, "kids who learn Chinese will put themselves at the top of the multilingual list."

Global economies aside, there are many other useful advantages children may derive from studying foreign language. One of these benefits includes higher test scores and improved academic achievement. Multiple sources confirm that students who study a foreign language perform better than their monolingual peers on many standardized tests, including all sections of the SAT. During an interview by the Duke University Tal-



**This class of 2nd graders learn Chinese dance and culture along with their lessons in Mandarin Chinese at Learning Express Center in Montgomery.**

ent Identification Program, language study expert, Therese Caccavale, said studies have repeatedly shown that "foreign language learning increases critical thinking skills, creativity, and flexibility of mind in young children. Students who are learning

a foreign language out-score their non-foreign language learning peers in the verbal and, surprisingly to some, the math sections of standardized tests." According to Caccavale, foreign language instruction may be helpful to gifted students, in particular. "Because second language instruction provides young children with better cognitive flexibility and creative thinking skills," she said, "it can offer gifted students the intellectual and developmental challenges they need and desire."

In addition to academic advantages such as higher test scores, learning a foreign language may actually offer health benefits throughout life. While Caccavale notes that learning a foreign language beginning in early childhood enhances children's cognitive development, current science has established brain health benefits for older people, too. Those who learn languages, it has been shown, can keep their brains sharper for much longer and are less susceptible to Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. "One of the lifelong benefits of learning another language is that you're always learning," said Ken Stewart, a National Language Teacher of the Year. Although languages are best learned at Pre-K, when children have a special "window of opportunity" during which language learning is intuitive and natural, experts agree it's never too late to start learning another language.

*Contributed by Tillie McQuaid Jones and photo by Rick Wood.*