

## *Family Involvement - F.A.Q.'s about Volunteering*

The evidence is overwhelming: Students who have highly-involved families get higher grades, have fewer discipline problems, and are more likely to be successful throughout their entire life. We encourage a strong sense of community and invite every family to contribute time to our school. If you would like to learn more about your child's school experience or help out at your school, keep reading!

### Why should we volunteer at our school?

Volunteering helps you stay connected with what is happening at school and closer to your child's educational experiences, which enriches both your school and your family.

Research shows the strongest determiner of a child's success in school is involved family members. Research also confirms that family involvement in children's school experiences has a positive effect on children's attitudes toward achievement in school, regardless of how much money parents have or how many years of school they completed.

### Why is family involvement and volunteerism so important to Sterling?

Not only does volunteerism provide additional support for our faculty, classrooms and other educational school experiences and events, it also demonstrates commitment from our school community. *Volunteer hours and percentage of involvement are important components when competing for grant money. Grants can significantly enhance many areas of our school.*

### What is my family's volunteer commitment at Sterling?

As outlined in Sterling Montessori's *Parent Handbook*, there is an expectation of a minimum of 15 hours of volunteer service time per enrolled student each year.

Please sign the *Partnership Pledge* committing your support to your school and return it to your classroom teacher or drop it off at the front desk in the office.

### How do I fulfill my volunteer hours?

There are a myriad of ways to volunteer at Sterling. A list of volunteer opportunities will be sent home to each family, posted on the website under the "Parents" tab, posted in each building and in the office as well. You may also contact a classroom teacher, section head, Parent Faculty Association (PFA) member or other involved parents to find out more. Reading classroom and school newsletters to stay informed will help you find ideas as well.

Just think...15 hours of time over the 10 month school year equals about 1.5 hours a month. You can front-load or back-fill or spread it out over the year. You can help a little in a lot of ways or a lot in one area.

## How do I volunteer if I cannot be on campus during the day?

There are lots of off-campus opportunities! Here are just a few:

- Assist classroom teachers with take-home projects – cutting, laminating, etc.
- Assist with large special events such as Science Night, the Sterling Film Fest, the Walk-a-thon or the annual end of year picnic
- Help with the classroom gardens or grounds maintenance on a regular basis, on scheduled work days, or with material donations

## What can I count as volunteer hours?

Basically, you count any activity done by you or your family members in support of events or programs of the school. Classroom support, PFA involvement, fieldtrip time, special event work and committee meetings/involvement all count toward your volunteer commitment. Remember to count hours for each family member involved and record the hours monthly via Sterling's website or the Monthly Volunteer Service Review Form.

Donations of all kinds are greatly appreciated but don't count as volunteer service hours except for the time spent planning, shopping, preparing, or delivering items. Dollar amounts given do not count as volunteer service hours. In addition, any attendance by you at any school activity related to your child's education, such as a parent/teacher conferences, science night, concerts or curriculum information night, does not count toward your volunteer hours commitment.

## Who can I personally speak with for volunteer ideas?

For the 2010/2011 school year, Terri Hegeman will manage family involvement at Sterling Montessori. You can contact her by email at [volunteering@sterlingmontessori.org](mailto:volunteering@sterlingmontessori.org).

## How do I keep track of my volunteer activities?

You may track your volunteer hours online through the Sterling website, which is very quick and easy. You will also receive a Monthly Service Review Form from your teacher once a month. *Return the completed form each month noting your activities for the current month and plans for the future.* This form will also give you an opportunity to share your thoughts on family involvement specifically or in general. Forms are also available in the Main Office at the reception desk or online at any time of the school year.

Remember, we are a community school and your input is important. It is vitally important for you to document your volunteer hours, so be sure to fill it out every month. *We must show potential granting organizations how involved our families are in order to receive grant money to enrich our school.*

“Many hands make light the work.”

Thank you for your help!