

NEW BUSINESS | SING YOUR WAY TO SPANISH WITH JODY

## ESPANOL MADE FUN

SPANISH INSTRUCTOR JODY DREHER SHOWS CHILDREN HOW LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CAN BE FUN

BY MARCIA FREIDENREICH  
Special to The Herald

On a recent Monday morning, Morgan Bernard, 6, of Hollywood, jumped enthusiastically from one colored square of felt to another as a fellow classmate shouted out instructions in Spanish. Besides using up some of his prodigious energy, the boy was learning a second language.

The children were participating in a "Sing Your Way to Spanish With Jody" class.

Morgan's sister, Felicity Pickett, 8, is also in the class. The two children, who are home-schooled, have been taking the class with other home-schooled children for five years. The class, also offered in the afternoon for children who attend traditional schools, is taught by Jody Dreher of Hollywood. Dreher has a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a master's in linguistics, and has studied in Spain and Mexico.

"It's great because they have fun and they're learning at the same time," said the children's mother, Denise Pickett-Bernard of Hollywood, who attends the class as well. "They listen to the tapes at home for reinforcement, plus ... they're fun to listen to."

Pickett was a good sport during one class as she donned a beard, funny nose, glasses and hat so the children could learn to address an elder using the pronoun *usted*.

Dreher uses a variety of methods to teach Spanish to children age 3-10, including games, some traditional such as Twister, in which the child is given instructions to follow in Spanish, and some that Dreher has invented.

At the beginning of most classes, Dreher asks questions in Spanish such as *Cual es la fecha?* (What is the date?). The children respond by attaching the correct felt numbers and month of the year with Velcro to a felt-covered board. Children get to have a snack, make puppets and play games, all while responding to and tak-

### SMART BOX

#### IF YOU GO

● **What:** Sing Your Way to Spanish With Jody language class for children age 3-10.

● **Information:** For locations and times, call teacher Jody Dreher at 954-981-7278, e-mail [info@singyourwayto.com](mailto:info@singyourwayto.com) or visit [www.singyourwayto.com](http://www.singyourwayto.com), where you can also order Dreher's CD.

ing instruction from Dreher in Spanish.

Dreher will ask real-life questions in Spanish such as "Whose turn is it?" and "What color napkin would you like?" Sometimes the class will go outside and Dreher will ask them in Spanish to find flowers or plants of a certain color. "I like to put the children into real-life, everyday situations where they would use the language," she said.

Music is one of the main methods used by Dreher, a singer and guitarist. Children accompany her on a variety of instruments. Some of the songs have been made into tapes, and one CD is available for children to practice with at home. Her CD, *Sing Your Way to Spanish With Jody*, has been purchased by Broward Schools for use in their elementary-level Spanish classes.



PHOTOS BY MARCIA FREIDENREICH / FOR THE HERALD

**ON THE MOVE:** Morgan Bernard, 6, of Hollywood jumps from one square of colored felt to another as instructed — in Spanish — by classmates.



#### MAKING MUSICA:

Instructor Jody Dreher employs her singing and guitar-playing talents to use music and lyrics to teach children Spanish.

children out early learning a language, it's possible for older children or adults who are motivated to learn languages as well," she said. "As kids get older, it's not that their neurons for learning language shut off, as we have been told, but that their ego 'shuts on.'"

"They are afraid of speaking in another language incorrectly, so they totally draw back."

Dreher appears frequently at local libraries, schools and other venues and leads bilingual birthday parties. Classes can be purchased individually or in packages at a discounted rate. Group or individual classes are available.

"I like to teach children physically and emotionally, not just intellectually," Dreher said of her eclectic methods. "If you have children partici-

ally, they have to focus and they learn."

Dreher also tutors middle- and high-school students in Spanish.

"Though it's good to start