

Ann Montzka-Smelser began playing the violin at age 3 with help from her parents. When the Montzka family moved to Sycamore in 1970 all four children participated in the orchestra, choir, band and theater programs. The Sycamore Music Boosters supported MANY summer camp scholarships! In between receiving her Bachelors of Music Education and Masters in Performance and Pedagogy at Northern Illinois University, Ann studied with Dr. Shinichi Suzuki at the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto, Japan. During college Ann began teaching and formed the Sycamore Suzuki Strings program that was subsidized by Sycamore Music Boosters.

Ann is currently principal second violinist with Camerata Chicago and concertmaster of the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Ann is on the music faculty at Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University and Roosevelt University teaching Suzuki Pedagogy. She is Director of the NIU CSA Suzuki Strings Program and teacher at the Music Institute of Chicago. Ann maintains a studio of 45 violin and viola students and enjoys working with Suzuki families at Festivals in Lima, Peru, Singapore, Mexico, Costa Rica and throughout the United States. Ann lives in DeKalb, IL with her husband Linc and their dog, Chloe. Their Suzuki-raised children, Benjamin and Genevieve are currently completing music degrees and pursuing musical careers.