

# JAPAN SCHOOL NEWS

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MONTHLY NEWS FROM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN JAPAN

<http://www.japanschoolnews.com>

## Katoh Gakuen's sports day success



The White Team leader on his majestic "horse." KATOH GAKUEN

Sports Day came early for students at Katoh Gakuen's Elementary School this year.

Sports Day is a Japanese national holiday that typically falls on the second Monday in October. However, this year Katoh had their Sports Day event on a beautiful Sunday in May.

The students were split into two groups—the Red Team and White Team—and this year's event was particularly exciting. The White Team dominated for most of the day and had a massive lead going into the final event. However the Red Team made an unprecedented effort in taking the lead at the last minute and therefore secured the

coveted Sports Day trophy to the astonishment of the entire crowd.

Teacher Danielle Edwards commented on how she was "... very impressed with how the day came together. Students and teachers worked together to help make the day a huge success. It was enjoyable for everyone, and was great to see all the parents come and support their children. The outcome of sports day created a lot of discussion between students for days after the event."

All in all, it was a great day of fun and high spirits for everyone involved. — MICHAEL BOSTWICK

## Local mother's fundraising efforts within the school community

A local mother is looking to introduce her fundraising activities to international schools in Japan. Katie Elliott arrived in Tokyo in February 2008, with her family. Keen to do something productive during her time in Japan, Ms. Elliott was inspired after reading *A Cambodian Odyssey* by Haing Ngor (New York: Macmillan, 1987), and started fundraising for The Tabitha Foundation.

By selling Cambodian hand-woven silk goods, Ms. Elliott has been supporting trade within that country, and has already raised enough money to build four houses there.

"Obviously, being a mother I liked the idea of helping families and giving children a proper roof over their heads," she said, adding that she aimed to raise enough money to build ten houses in total.

To expand on her fundraising efforts, Ms. Elliott has designed and published a cookbook called *Oishii!*, which includes over a hundred healthy recipes from around the world, and collected from parents of international school children in Japan.

Ms. Elliott is also planning a trip to Cambodia with international school students, saying, "I feel it is important that our children who are so fortunate should experience a world so far removed from their own."

To support Ms. Elliott's efforts, contact her by email at [kaelliott@mac.com](mailto:kaelliott@mac.com).



"Oishii!" fundraising cookbook. KATIE ELLIOTT

## Yokohama Montessori teaching position

Treehouse Montessori School is looking for a qualified kindergarten teacher who holds a Montessori diploma and can work part time or full time. Prospective candidates should email a resume to Head of School Jenny Vyvial at [jenny@tms-school.com](mailto:jenny@tms-school.com).

## Japanese and British maths education at Makuhari



**Makuhari International School's teacher Mr. Veness enjoying a "Magic Maths" lesson with students Xavier and Marcus.** MAKUHARI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Over 200 parents and friends of Makuhari International School filled the gymnasium last month to take part in one of a series of very successful curriculum evenings run by teaching staff.

Parents were given a presentation, along with model lessons on how maths is taught at MIS. After this, they went to their children's classes where they were given further presentations regarding classroom daily routines. During the maths seminar parents were given advice on how to help children build up their mathematics skills at home, as well as clear explanations about the text and reference books that staff at Makuhari use to teach the children.

Teachers at MIS were keen to promote the understanding that children learn in different ways and therefore teachers may at times educate them in differing ways. Teachers were keen to explain that textbooks are a guide and help, but are not a bible for teachers to follow—after all, if children are all truly different and unique, how could one

book "work for all?" Teachers were keen to explain why they teach a grade higher in mathematics at MIS than many other schools, and the benefits that this engenders. And lastly, teachers showed how the school's curriculum—although based around the objectives found in the Japanese Curriculum—still incorporates those found in the UK Numeracy Strategy. MIS teachers are proud to be able to produce something entirely unique, yet suitable for the children in their care.

Two Lead teachers from the UK were involved in this evening of information that was one of a series of sessions. Previous evenings have focussed on diverse subjects such as "The Use of SmartBoards," "Reading Strategies for All," and "How we Teach Literacy," as well as on the approach MIS takes to teaching Japanese and Japanese Studies.

MIS puts great emphasis on parents being able to understand and be a part of their child's education and learning experience whilst at the school, and parents found this evening extremely entertaining and useful. — PAUL ROGERS

## Muppets' designer presents on children's book illustration

On May 30, the Tokyo chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) presented a full-day event entitled "The Big Picture: Exploring the Art and Business of Children's Book Illustration" at Nishimachi International School's Yashiro Media Center.

Laurent Linn, Art Director of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, first presented a morning master class for illustrators. Participants had been given an assignment beforehand to create a single full-colour illustration of a scene from a children's story; these were brought to the class to be critiqued.

Lunch was followed by two lectures, one explaining the role of an art director in a major United States publishing company, and the other on art for books. Mr. Linn demonstrated through examples why some book illustrations succeed and others don't. He began his career as a puppet designer in Jim Henson's Muppet Workshop, and later became the Creative Director for Sesame Street, winning an Emmy Award.

SCBWI is an international professional organisation specifically for people who are involved in the fields of children's literature, magazines, film, television, and multimedia. For more information, see <http://www.scbwi.jp>. — HOLLY THOMPSON



**Laurent Linn with the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators in May.** YOKO YOSHIZAWA

## Public seminars at New International School

New International School is happy to announce a series of seminars open to the public on topics such as Dual Language Education, Multi-age Education, Thinking Styles and the Development of Thinking Skills, High School Placement Options, and several others.

Seminars will be presented simultaneously in English and Japanese.

More details available at <http://newis.ed.jp>.

## TAIP's upcoming events for parents and members

The Tokyo Association of International Preschools (TAIP) had its final board meeting of the school year in May. Plans for the coming school year include TAIP's annual conference that, as always, includes a parents' workshop in addition to a special guest speaker.

TAIP is also planning to continue its successful school visits for member preschool directors so that, on behalf of their students, directors become familiar with elementary school options. The organisation will also continue to facilitate

CPR and other workshops for all teachers and administrators within the membership.

The Tokyo Association of International Preschools was established in 2005, with the mission to support international preschools in the Tokyo area in terms of networking, staff development, parent education, and publicity.

Individuals and educational institutions interested in joining TAIP are invited to check out the website at <http://www.tokyopreschools.org>. — ANTHONY TROTTER

## Lifelong learning at TIS

Tokyo International School's grade five students held an exhibition last month, to showcase the skills they learned throughout the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme (IBPYP).

The IBPYP is designed to prepare students to become lifelong learners. Each year, students design and carry out their own, independent large-scale inquiry. Student groups take control of the whole process while teachers sit back as facilitators rather than instructors.

Universal concepts such as poverty, interdependence, health, and exploration shape the content of the curriculum. An emphasis on discipline skills such as experimental design, mathematics, IT, and reading also play a major role.

The exhibition day culminated with multimedia presentations and information booths where students creatively communicated their learning to the whole school community.

PYP Coordinator Christopher Frost said, "I felt great pride and delight in the accomplishment of our grade 5 'exhibitionists.' The children demonstrated with confidence that they were indeed well along the road of lifelong learning!"



**Grade 5 TIS students explaining their exhibition piece to other students and a teacher.** CHRISTOPHER FROST

## End-of-year reflections at PAL Preschool

On June 5, PAL students received their end-of-year diplomas, as staff wondered where the time went!

Reflecting upon how the students had laughed, made new friends, listened to stories, built towers, sang in English and Japanese, made books, painted pictures, and learned their ABCs, staff member Makiko Koide said she was "happy to be a part of the students' early memories and skills."

As the school year at PAL came to an end, each class put on a performance at the end-of-year party. Students sang their favourite songs, danced around, played games, and performed a skit.

Classroom walls were adorned with displays of work the children had done throughout the year as they explored a variety of themes. The four- and five-year-old children were especially excited to show off their rainbow project, where they learned how rainbows were formed, and had fun trying to make them with glasses of water in a nearby park.

## Nagoya IS fifth graders get a birds-eye view

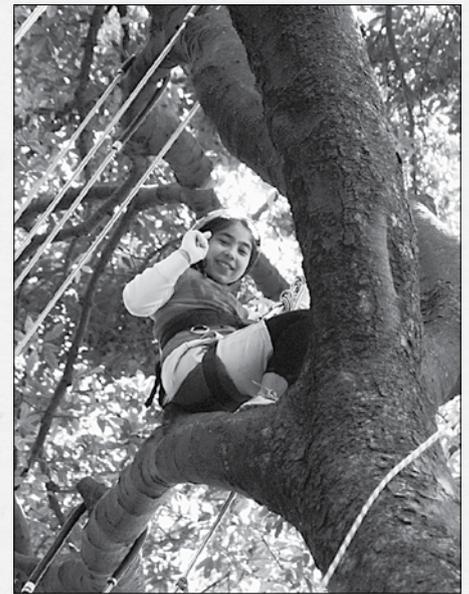
If someone falls while climbing a tree in the forest, does it make a sound? Fortunately, no one in Nagoya International School's grade 5 class found out while on their tree-climbing field trip in the mountains. Only the whoops of excitement and hollers of encouragement from students were heard throughout the forest on a spectacularly beautiful day in late May.

While dangling from rope suspended 10–15 metres in the air, grade 5 students swung, grabbed, pulled, pushed, and mostly smiled while taking in a bird's-eye view and listening to the instructions of one Dr. John Gathright of Tree Climbing Japan (<http://www.treeclimbing.jp/>).

Although it sounds dangerous, a handful of climbing instructors and Dr. Gathright—an NIS parent as well as a professor, media personality, and dedicated naturalist—fitted each student with a helmet, specially padded pant-covers, and a rope-management system that allow climbers the freedom to move up and down their rope at their own pace.

Dr. Gathright talked about his background with nature and trees as a boy and how that transformed into a life's work. His non-profit organization, Tree Climbing Japan, started out ten years ago with the purpose of "bringing people of all ages and physical abilities into the forest to climb trees and enjoy nature." Since then, the organisation has helped over 150,000 people climb trees and allowed many dreams to come true.

The NIS students recently finished a Biomes unit of study in their Primary Years Programme, and travelled about 20 minutes from NIS to the mountains of Seto for this exploration. They went on a nature walk, learned about sustainable



**NIS student Elyssa, ten metres up in the Seto mountain forests.** YOKO YAMAMOTO

forestry, tried to spot any of the boars and foxes that roam the area (they found only footprints), absorbed key principles of camouflage, reviewed historical aspects of the Tokugawa land they were exploring, and were amazed by the huge miso barrel tree house nearby that had been built by Dr. Gathright and friends.

Dr. Gathright certainly planted a few seeds of thought in these students for career possibilities as conservationists, ecologists, or arborists. Much detail and many vivid descriptions were scattered throughout the students' reflection journals about the importance of the forest and why we need to protect it. — BRIAN WEBB

## Year-end celebrations at ABC International

June was a busy month for the ABC International School community. Graduation and year-end ceremonies were celebrated in the middle of the month, followed by a special visit from the students' dads to accept Father's Day gifts their sons and daughters had been making.

Toward the end of June, ABC hosted its year-end ballet recital. The little ballerinas practised all year for this special performance for family and friends.

And finally, the ABC summer school has begun, where children are enjoying lots of outer space, beach, science, and Japanese festival fun.



**ABC students singing at their graduation ceremony.** ABC

**SUMMER PROGRAMS**

## Summer open days at Joy to the World



**American International School Joy to the World faculty and Pink Bunny getting ready for their summer open days.** AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the World in Bunkyo-ku will host two open days during the summer, on Saturday, July 10 and Tuesday, August 31, both from 10am–2pm.

All families with children from babies up to 12-year-olds are welcome to have a look inside the kindergarten. Teachers and bilingual administration staff will be on hand to guide parents through the classes, and explain Joy to the World's daily activities and routines. An overview of the curriculum will be clearly on display.

For accompanying children, there will be opportunities to play and interact with native English-speaking teachers. Games, colouring sheets, and balloons will be available and, after all the fun, there will be plenty of time to relax with a snack and a refreshing drink. Look out for the big Pink Bunny!

Call Joy to the World on 03-5684-0247 or visit the website at <http://www.joytotheworld.info>. — EUFT VAN DEN BERG

## English Studio's summer

With summer just around the corner, many parents and their children are making plans for the holidays. English Studio has put together four weeks of summer school classes, starting August 3, designed to meet the needs of both students and parents—fun, yet educational; exciting, but safe.

The classes are based on proven curricula that promise to offer a wide range of learning outcomes for students of all ages (kindergarten to upper elementary) and levels (EFL and returnee). Each four-day week has a set topic and this year students will be exploring sports, technology, culture, and the Seven Wonders of the World.

With an excursion every Friday, students joining English Studio's summer school are sure to have a blast this year. — SHANE THOMPSON



**Students enjoying an English Studio summer school excursion.** TEDROS BASIL

## Beach and water activities at RLC Preschool

RLC Preschool is planning its eight-week summer school, which starts July 5. The summer program is open to RLC students and siblings up to six years old, but is also open to non-RLC families.

This year the summer school is based on beach and water themes. Activities include playing with games and puzzles, reading books, and water and sand projects. There will also be an excursion to an aquarium. Children can attend for the full program, or for a few weeks, or even just a few classes.

In general, the summer program shares the same goals as the preschool: to provide a safe environment where children can learn early social skills, have fun, and engage in stimulating and challenging activities.

RLC Preschool is located at Roppongi Lutheran Church and conducts a variety of activities between 9am and 2pm for children aged 18 months to four and a half years. Contact Jacqui on 090-3007-1097 for further information.

## A magical summer at Ohana International

Newly-opened Ohana International School in Azabu-juban is accepting enrolments for its August summer school. From August 2–18, children aged 2–5 years can explore various projects involving cooking, water, magic, and science. Interested parents should contact Shelley Sacks by email at [Ohana.International.Sch@gmail.com](mailto:Ohana.International.Sch@gmail.com) or call 03-3451-0087.



**ASIJ students learn about the folk music of Polynesia during the Summer Studies Program.** ASIJ

## Record attendance at ASIJ's summer program

With over 500 students ranging from kindergarten to grade 11, The American School in Japan's 2010 Summer Studies Program from June 14–July 2 was the biggest yet. Students from over 30 different schools, some coming from overseas especially to participate, spent three weeks exploring a diverse range of subjects from advanced algebra to digital video production.

"The kids really hit the ground running this year and were motivated and engaged in their activities from the first day," said Karen Rossetto,

the program director. "As there are no exams and no homework, the pressure is off and the students just really enjoy learning about the subjects they have chosen."

The program, now in its 13th year, also features a selection of SAT prep courses and READAK, an advanced learning studies course for grades 5–11. Although this year's courses are now over, information and applications for next summer will be available on the ASIJ website from February 2011. — MATT WILCE