

Saint Maur shines in sports



Saint Maur International School students with coaches Craig Wehrle and Gerard Morice, proud of their recent sporting successes. SAINT MAUR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Saint Maur International School in Yokohama, the oldest international school in Asia (established 138 years ago), works hard to produce top athletes, musicians, and artists. The school has a unique cooperation between the Fine Arts and Athletic Departments so that all secondary school students can do both kinds of activities all year long. Despite practising only two or three times per week, students excel in both areas. Most of the members of the jazz and concert bands are also athletes on the school's many sports teams.

This year, in particular, has been a very strong year for sports. The middle school girls recently won the Kanto Plain Middle School Girls' Volleyball Tournament hosted by Yokohama International School (YIS) and Saint Maur. The girls had not only to beat last year's winner, Seisen, but also a strong team from the Christian Academy in Japan. The high

school JV (Junior Varsity) girls won the second-place trophy, after a strong Osaka International School at the Kansai JV Volleyball Tournament hosted by YIS and Saint Maur, which also included schools from Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kansai. One week later, the Varsity Saint Maur Volleyball girls went down to Kansai but again lost to Osaka and came in second.

Recently, in the Far East Cross Country (running) Tournament in Tama Hills, Tokyo, the Saint Maur teams showed their strength by coming out on top and winning a large banner in the Boys Division II, with the girls coming in second in the same division. A combined team of boys and girls won the relay portion on the following day, winning a beautiful glass trophy. The Saint Maur team then won the Overall Championship, obtaining a second large banner.

The school expects to do well in the upcoming winter basketball season. — RICHARD B. RUCCI

Marketing for schools

Tokyo Association of International Preschools (TAIP) members attended an informal seminar on marketing, held by *Japan School News* publisher and author of the *Guide to International Schools in Japan*, Caroline Pover. The seminar took place at the end of November, at Happy Days International Preschool in Ebisu.

The seminar was specifically designed for teachers, administrators, and schools owners who find themselves wearing many hats, including one for marketing.

See <http://www.tokyopreschools.org> and <http://www.carolinepover.info> for more information.

Trick-or-treat at ESIK

Halloween is always the most popular event on the English Studio calendar. Perhaps the students love dressing up? Or they enjoy the fun games and activities organized by the English Studio team? Or the trick-or-treat parades around the local area?

Each of the three English Studio schools (Mita, Setagaya, and Meguro) were overrun by little witches, wizards, princesses, ghosts and pirates, but there were a lot more treats than tricks!

The next big event on the English Studio calendar is Christmas, followed by winter school. Call 03-3798-5829 for more information. — SHANE THOMPSON

Sweet potato digging trip for Treehouse

As part of their Japanese culture studies at Treehouse Montessori School, all children starting from the age of one year participated in the annual sweet potato digging field trip at a nearby farm, located on the outskirts of Yokohama.

The children went to the local farm, which they have visited for the last five years, in a bus hired by the school. The children always look forward to catching up with the bus driver, who has accompanied them for the last three years on this particular trip.

Much preparation is done with the children before the big day on what to expect: rules that must be followed on the bus, what they will be digging up at the farm, how to dig, and guidelines for digging.

The field trip was a tremendous success! Most students dug five or six potatoes each, and were thrilled to be able to take home so many for a tasty meal!

However, the highlight of the day was the picnic at a nearby park. The walk to the picnic site from the parking lot was an adventure as the group walked up and down small hills, passing tennis courts, a large baseball practice field, and a small pond in a Japanese garden before finally reaching their destination, where the children sat together and enjoyed their homemade lunch. The day ended with a group photo at the park.

The sweet potato digging field trip is one of Treehouse Montessori School's biggest events, and is always thoroughly enjoyed by the children. Their happy faces and the mud-stained clothes they return home in accurately reflect this special day—messy, but an awful lot of fun! — JENNY VYVIAL

West Tokyo's Halloween

West Tokyo Preschool held its annual Halloween concert and trick-or-treat party on the last Friday of October. This is the first big event of the school year, and it gives parents their first chance to see how their children are progressing in English, as they perform entirely in this language.

The 30-minute concert features the children wearing costumes that they then show off during a fashion show-style parade. Parents bring along bags of sweets so the children can go trick-or-treating at "houses" set up in a nearby hall.

The next big event for West Tokyo's families is the Christmas play and concert on December 17, complete with a visit from Santa!

Katoh Gakuen fifth graders go to the United States



Katoh students enjoy the sand dunes in Utah's Snow Canyon. KATOH GAKUEN

For the grade 5 immersion students at Katoh, the school trip to the USA is the highlight of their elementary school career. This year, 39 students embarked on a two-week journey that

covered over 10,000km. This adventure was divided into two parts—Utah and Oregon.

In Utah, students experienced the outdoors while camping and hiking in the splendid scenery of Zion National Park. For many, this was their first time camping out in a sleeping bag and tent under the brilliant stars of southern Utah's night sky. Campers were given the opportunity to marvel at the world's tallest sandstone cliffs and develop a lifelong appreciation for the wonders of nature.

After roughing it in the wilderness of Utah's desert, the second stage of the trip took place in Portland, Oregon. Here, students were fortunate to enjoy a home stay and attend five days of school with their new American buddies.

Katoh students are always impressed by the warm welcome and friendliness of their new American classmates and home stay families. Many comment on the fun and interesting activities they experience in school and at home, with this week-long event culminating in the chance to participate in an authentic night of Halloween festivities, including trick-or-treating.

The long-lasting effects on and benefits for student growth are immeasurable. Students are given opportunities to broaden their horizons and use their English skills in a real-world setting. Their increased understanding of a different culture fosters a more caring and wiser global citizen. This year's US trip was a success, as students returned to Japan happy, healthy, and with a bounty of Halloween candy. — TROY SHANKS

VEX Robotics Competition hosted by American School in Japan

The American School in Japan (ASIJ) hosted its second VEX Robotics Competition on November 9 with the leadership of high school science teacher and Robotics Club leader Don Chambers.

Six international schools sent teams to join ASIJ for the competition, including the Thai-Chinese School in Bangkok, Taipei American School, KAIS International School Tokyo, and three schools from Hawaii—Kohala High School, Waiakea High School, and Waialua High School.

ASIJ also welcomed several special guests. Robin Bradbeer, Director of the Marine Science and Engineering Laboratory at City University Hong Kong, is a scholar-in-residence at ASIJ for six weeks, working with Advanced Physics and Marine Studies classes to build underwater robots. She has also been busy introducing robotics to ASIJ's middle school students, and encouraging creative building projects in the kindergarten.

Ms Bradbeer was one of the competition's judges along with ASIJ parent Tadahiro Kawada, who is the head of Kawada Industries Inc., an innovative leader in the robotics field. They were joined by Art Kimura

from NASA Space Consortium, and Lem Fuggit, an ASIJ alumni parent and renowned robotics writer and blogger.

Both the students who entered their hand-built robots into the event and the spectators had an amazing time. The excitement in the room was palpable as students controlled the robots through a variety of challenging games where they worked in alliances to score points on a complex field. One of ASIJ's high school teams was honoured to receive the Excellence Award for the second year in a row, which qualifies the school to compete in the VEX Robotics World Championship in Orlando, FL in April 2011. The middle school team also won one of the judges' awards for quickly adapting their robot after major mechanical failure.

In the spring, Ms Bradbeer will be returning to ASIJ to help the school host a MATE Underwater Robotics Competition with the use of its 25-metre indoor pool. The school is not only excited about the way in which its robotics program is continuing to enhance the ASIJ curriculum, but is also looking forward to the energy and excitement that the event brings to campus. — MATT WILCE



ASIJ students steer their robot during the VEX Robotics Competition. ASIJ

A visit from Dr. Che at J's



Dr. Che at J's International School, teaching the children about healthy habits. J'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

November was a busy month for everyone at J's International School.

Students were visited by Dr. Che from the National Medical Clinic—together they discussed healthy habits such as washing hands, brushing teeth, keeping warm, sleeping, exercising, and eating properly.

At the annual Halloween Ball, parents, teachers, and children dressed to impress for the parade. The children put on a spectacular performance to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" and Bobby Pickett's "Monster Mash."

There were beautiful blue skies for the kindergarten classes' field trip to Ueno Zoo, where everyone thoroughly enjoyed visiting the

animals and petting zoo, and later picnicking at the Shinobazu pond terrace.

Students at J's were excited to invite their parents to an open house, allowing parents and children to play, sing, and dance together, as well as have circle time and make crafts. Teachers and parents alike are thrilled to see how eager the children are to come to school every day. Fostering this love of learning is at the core of J's philosophy as they set their students on the road of life full of confidence and pride.

J's International School is a preschool and kindergarten in the Minato area. For more information see <http://www.js-international-school.com>. — ANGELA ORTIZ

TIS grade 6 students learn to use their brains!



Grade 6 students at Tokyo International School with an RBR Art instructor. TOKYO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Tokyo International School (TIS) grade 6 students took part in a unique art seminar last month, which expanded their skills in the area of drawing. But this was no ordinary drawing session.

The five-day workshop called "Drawing from the Right Side of the Brain" is a unique way of looking at and learning drawing techniques. The course

focuses on making the shift from the left side of the brain—which is involved with linear reasoning and language—to the right side, which controls spatial manipulation and artistic ability.

Students had the opportunity to create some impressive works of art, but it wasn't an easy task. Instructors had the grade 6 students on their toes all week, preparing them for the culminating assignment on Friday: a fully rendered realistic drawing.

On the first day, students did a series of activities to exercise both sides of the brain, focusing on illusion and relative scale. Teachers emphasized drawing without language, relying on the eye, and using the power of close observation.

During the week, teachers pointed out that many abstract artists who appeared to create art in a random way learned to draw realistically before making the transition into more abstract painting.

The course was presented by RBR Art in Tokyo. — ANDY MCGOVERN

Picnic and field day at New International School

New International School's 10th annual Picnic and Field Day was held on the grounds of Takada Elementary School in Zoshigaya, Tokyo on October 29 as part of their Autumn Festival Week Activities. Great fun was had by all.

Last month was also busy for New IS, as they hosted Dr. Sandra Stone's workshops on "Authentic Assessment" and "Pre-Primary to Early Primary School Mathematics Activities."

For more information about New International School special events and upcoming workshops for parents and educators, see <http://newis.ed.jp>.



Multi-age teams see how many beanbags they can get in the basket on the back of a running teacher. NEW INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Nagoya International hosts EARCOS workshops

As part of Nagoya International School's work to support learning and expose teachers to different pedagogies, NIS hosted two weekend EARCOS workshops that involved two published authors.

Debbie Miller, author of *Reading with Meaning*, and Stephanie Harvey, author of *Comprehension and Collaboration*, joined a packed room of over 60 participants from all over Asia, who flew in during February and September. The school was fortunate to have both Ms Miller and Ms Harvey continue their work in the classrooms beyond the weekend sessions.

Ms Miller's tone throughout her two-day conference—"Reading With Meaning: Creating Cultures of Thinking and Understanding"—included discussions about the reading workshop approach, creating thoughtful classroom environments, sample lessons and output from her previous work with students, and two days of demo lessons with second grade students from NIS.

Ms Harvey's conference—"Reading is Thinking: Comprehension, Collaboration, and

Inquiry"—focused deeply into concepts that directly relate to the school's recent shift to the PYP (the IB Primary Years Programme). With a stress on displaying different kinds of inquiry as well as teaching students first and foremost to think, Ms Harvey presented examples of the kinds of real thinking that students should be doing in classrooms every day, including making annotations to "track" thinking within a text, continually asking and answering questions, and engaging in thoughtful conversation with peers.

Participants from other schools throughout Asia were also glad to have the opportunity to spend time at Nagoya International School for both weekends. Teachers left classroom doors open, and workshop participants could be found browsing in and out of classrooms, snapping photos, and talking to NIS teachers about their work. One participant, a second grade teacher from Tokyo, commented, "Your school really is doing some wonderful things and should be commended for it." — WENDY FOREMAN

Makuhari info session

Makuhari International School (MIS) held an information session at the school on October 23. This event was for families of children interested in applying for admission to MIS kindergarten or elementary schools for the 2011–2012 school year.

A large turnout of parents attended and they were given a presentation in the school hall by Mr. Paul Rogers, Head of School. Following this, teaching staff showed parents and children around the school.

Makuhari International School is open to all Japanese returnee, non-Japanese, and dual nationality children who meet the school's admissions criteria.

MIS currently has 250 children enrolled, and expects this to rise to at least 300 for April 2011.

Parents who missed this information session and want to visit the school are welcome to contact Makuhari International School. Please see the school website for more information—<http://www.mis.ed.jp>.

A-JIS wishes for peace

Aoba-Japan International School (A-JIS) has shared a commitment with families to build social and moral character in students and has adopted the Living Values Education Program (LVEP), founded by Diane Tillman and Diane Hsu, as a guideline for implementation of a school-wide values program. This is an internationally utilized curriculum supported by UNESCO and UNICEF.

The values program at A-JIS allows students to explore a number of core values, focusing on a different set of values each month. As a culminating activity to a recent Peace and Unity segment, students in the elementary school wrote wishes for peace and attached them to helium-filled balloons. And in a ceremony to mark the beginning of United Nations Week at A-JIS, students gathered on the playground to watch their wishes soar, as they sent their hopes skyward to be shared with the world. — NEAL DILK



Aoba-Japan International School community releasing their wish-filled balloons. A-JIS

Robbie Reindeer running round Aichi



Members of the "Robbie Reindeer" cast in their costumes (left to right): Koha Kawamoto (grade 1), Ulysses Morgan (grade 3), and Hikari Takemoto (grade 1). MARK REED

Following last year's successful *A Kidnapped Santa* production, Aichi International School (AIS) is pleased to announce that on December 10, students will be performing in the annual Christmas Show.

This year's story is an adaptation of the BBC animated story *Robbie Reindeer, Hooves of Fire*. The story is based around Robbie, son of Rudolph, and his efforts to make it onto Santa's sleigh team.

All students, from both the kindergarten and the elementary schools, will be taking to the stage to perform exclusively in English. Students will be showcasing not only their language, dancing, and acting abilities, but also their recorder and violin playing skills.

The show is at Moriyama Bunka Shyo Gekijyo, next to Obata train station on the Meitetsu-Seto line. Doors open at 5pm, and the show begins at 5:30pm. Tickets for non-AIS students are priced at ¥1,050 per person. See <http://www.nipais.com> for more information.

— MARK REED

Joy's Winter Fun Program

Joy to the World is in full preparation for their annual Winter Fun Program, for parents from inside the school, but also for outsiders who want their children to have fun and some extra exposure to English.

This year's Winter Fun Program falls in the week of December 20th to 24th. The children participate in a variety of activities that reflect a true American-style Christmas, such as decorating a Christmas tree and enjoying the warm feeling of singing Christmas carols. The school is hoping for cold and snowy weather for extra winter fun!

See <http://www.joytotheworld.info> for an application form for this year's Winter Fun Program. Late enrolments may be accepted if space allows. — EUFT VAN DEN BERG

Children having fun at last year's Winter Fun Program at Joy to the World. JOY TO THE WORLD

Seasonal celebrations at PAL International

The holiday season is right around the corner and PAL's boys and girls have been busy with the many events that are held during this time of year.

Last month, they celebrated *shichi-go-san* at Sakurada shrine, and hosted their annual Thanksgiving lunch for all students, in addition to learning about occupations as they welcomed a visiting doctor and took a trip to the local fire station.

Their Christmas party is planned for December 10, and the general public is welcome to enjoy watching each class sing holiday songs. These special seasonal activities continue until December 17, and non-PAL students are very welcome to join in.

Contact PAL International School by email at info@pal-school.com. — MAKIKO KOIDE



Anna celebrating shichi-go-san with a special portrait taken at PAL. PAL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Rainbow International Montessori: Winter program and soon open until 8pm for busy parents



Rainbow children enjoying their climbing frame. RAINBOW INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SCHOOL

There are a lot of changes going on at Rainbow International Montessori School!

Two new and experienced teachers with backgrounds in child development have joined the school, and registration and tuition fees are reduced by 50 and 18% respectively for all families signing up throughout November and December.

Rainbow specializes in the Montessori method of education for children aged up to six years old. Research has shown that children from Montessori

schools typically have both advanced intelligence and social skills for their age group.

The school environment is rich and stimulating, with numerous activities for mathematical, linguistic, and practical development. There are also weekly lessons in yoga, hula, and music, along with outside excursions. English is used as the principal language of instruction.

To ensure that every child has lots of attention, class sizes are kept small. And from January, the school will be open from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday, to support working parents. In addition, Rainbow has a daily bus and lunch services.

Winter school is in session December 13–29. This program is open to all children, not just Rainbow students. The program includes lots of fun activities and rewarding experiences.

Rainbow International Montessori School is a Tokyo-based school near Azabu-juban and Roppongi stations.

For more information, send an e-mail to info@montessori-rainbow.com or go to <http://www.montessori-rainbow.com>. — ERIKO SALAMACK

